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Standing Strong in the Storm
24: 3-12

A proverb is a short and memorable saying designed to be our blueprint for living in the world that ADONAI has created. It is important to note that proverbs are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal.

The fourth unit of the **Thirty Sayings of the Wise: (Cz) 22:17-21, (Da) 22:22** to **23:11, (Db) 23:12 to 24:2,** and here in **(Dc) 24:3-12,** motivates **the son** to take hold of **the wisdom** that will give **him strength** when the storms of life come. After the typical initial educational saying in **24:3-4**, the next **saying** introduces the theme in **24:5-6**. **He** is encouraged to strategize **wisely**, discounting the ability of **fool**s to do likewise **(24:7-9)**, and **24:10** reveals when toughness and character can be tried. **Those** who fail to act righteously for those who are **unjustly sentenced to die,** will be judged. **They** can't say **they didn't know (24:11-12).**[456]

The twentieth saying (24:3-4): By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established, and by knowledge all its rooms are filled with all sorts of precious riches and valuables (24:3-4 Hebrew). Elsewhere the sage has made a similar connection between wisdom and house building. Here the house is not just the physical structure, but would include it. **Wise** living would bring the resources and smooth the way for the construction of a fine **house** building. However, the deeper meaning is more relevant, and that has to do with family relationships. **Wisdom** implies the ability to say the right thing and act in the right way to build up community and not destroy it. We should also remember that **ADONAI** constructed the universe by means of **His wisdom (3:19-20, 8:22-31)**. We also think the **virtuous and capable wife** builds **her house** through **wisdom** (see **Dz – Wisdom for Women**).



The twenty-first saying (24:5-6): The wise are mightier than the strong, and those with knowledge grow stronger and stronger (24:5 NLT). Surely you need guidance to wage war, and victory is won through many advisers (24:6 NIV). In this **"better-than" proverb,** we learn that **wisdom** is more important than **strength**. Again, as is the case with **"better-than" proverbs,** it is not a matter of **strength** being wrong or bad, but that **wisdom** is so much **better**. Indeed, the value of **wisdom** is not that it necessarily avoids **war**; but that it can provide the strategy through which strength can find its most efficient expression and thus lead to victory. **Ecclesiastes** provides statements and stories that back this up, and yet also acknowledge that ultimately even **wisdom itself** has limits **(Ecclesiastes 7:19; 9:13-16)**.[457]

The twenty-second saying (24:7): Wisdom is too lofty for fools. Among the leaders at the city gate, they have nothing to say (24:7 NLT). Fools can be smart, but they cannot be **wise**. In **Chapters 1-9** those who choose **the path** of **wisdom** reject the way of foolishness and build **their** lives on **the fear of ADONAI** (see **Ai – The Fear of ADONAI is the Beginning of Wisdom**). One practical application of this occurs at **the city gate**, the place where public and legal decisions were made in a community.[458] The second colon is the consequence. Since **he** is not willing to be corrected, **he** never attains the maturity to speak constructively to anyone else. If **he** had any **prudence (1:4a)**, which **he** does not, **he** would **keep his mouth shut**. **For even fools seem wise when they keep silent; with their mouths shut, they seem pretty intelligent (17:28 NLT).**[459]

The twenty-third saying (24:8-9): Whoever plots evil will be known as a schemer (24:8 NIV). The schemes of a fool are sinful; everyone detests a mocker (24:9 NLT). The general public detests **a wicked person** who plots **evil things**. The picture of **the wicked person** is graphic: **he** devises **evil** and is **a schemer**, **a sinner**, and **a mocker**. **Scheme** (Hebrew: *zimmah*), elsewhere,

describes outrageous and lewd behavior **(Leviticus 18:17** and **Judges 20:6)**. Here, the description of a **schemer** portrays **him** as a cold, calculating **person. He** is capable of intense mental activity, but it all adds up to **sin**. This type of **person** flouts all morality, and sooner or later the public will have had enough of **him**.[460]

The twenty-fourth saying (24:10): If you fail in the time of crisis, your strength is too small (24:10 Hebrew). "If" represents the hypothetical condition of being discouraged, entailing cowardice, fear, laziness and/or carelessness, a lack of resolute **strength**. In **25:19, in time of crisis** points to disappointed confidence. A person reveals the degree and extent of **his strength** by **his** conduct **in crisis**. It is then, that toughness and character can be judged.[461]

The twenty-fifth saying (24:11-12): Rescue those who are unjustly sentenced to die; save them as they stagger to their death (24:11 NLT). Don't excuse yourself by saying, "Look, we didn't know." For God understands all hearts, and He sees you. He who guards your soul knows you knew. He will repay all people as their actions deserve (24:12 NLT). God holds us responsible to be our brother's keeper. Who is suffering among the people you know, someone you can help, and what are you doing about it? Or are you merely talking about it, or worse, even looking the other way? When action is required, words are empty, and **ADONAI** is not fooled. Here is another limitation. Your words cannot protect you, and they can expose you. In fact, they might give your enemies ammunition against you. **Those who control their tongue will have a long life, but those who speak rashly will come to ruin (13:3 Hebrew).**

Yeshua was the only person in all of history who never spoke an unguarded, self-indulgent word. **He** never spoke in a wrong way, not once, ever. In a way, **Yeshua** disproved **Proverbs 13:3**. **His** words were perfectly wise, and we felt outclassed, we felt threatened, we felt ashamed, so we killed **Him** – and **He** took it. Why? What happened at the cross? On the cross, **Yeshua** loved us so much that **His** sacrifice deleted the damning record before **YHVH** of every **foolish** word you and I have ever spoken. **He** took the divine condemnation for our lies, insults, gossip, put-downs, bragging, false promises, and griping, as well as our guilty silence when we should have spoken up. **He** took it all onto **Himself** and hit the delete button. Look at **Him** on the cross, dying for what you and I have said and left unsaid. See **Him** there, trust **Him**, and you are finally free of it forever.

As we consider these proverbs about the use of **the tongue**, every one of us is

responding right now in either one of two ways. Perhaps you are saying, “Thank you. Now I know what to do. And I can do this. These **proverbs** are so practical. **They** give me **the wisdom** I need. So here I go.” Or perhaps your response is, “Oh no, now I see how stupid I’ve been. I’ve alienated my wife. I’ve injured my children. I’ve lost friends. I’ve been a **fool**, and I’m so defeated. What’s the point of even trying.” In other words, every one of us is either on the front end of **foolish**, disobedient words, and we don’t see it coming, or we are on the back end of **foolish**, disobedient words, and we are suffering for it. But here is the **Word of God** for all of us who are trusting in **the Lord**: **So now there is no condemnation for those who are in union with Messiah Yeshua (Romans 8:1).** If you are willing to believe that, can you let **Yeshua** be your speechwriter from now on? The Bible calls Him **the Word (John 1:1, 14)**, everything that needs to be said, the only thing that needs to be said.[462]

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for **Your** infinite and perfect **wisdom** in all things. Please guide me with **Your love** and **wisdom** to speak only the words that would bring honor to **Your** holy **Name**. Since **the heart** is the source of one’s words and actions, help me strengthen my **heart** by meditating on how wonderful **You** are**.** As **Messiah Yeshua** explained, words are a reflection of **the heart’s** true nature. **For from the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man from his good treasury brings forth good, and the evil man from his evil treasury brings forth evil (Matthew 12:34b-35). You** can see clearly into **the heart**. **ADONAI** said to **Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or his stature, because I have already refused him. For He does not see a man as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but ADONAI looks into the heart” (First Samuel 16:7). May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable before You, ADONAI, my Rock and my Redeemer.** Thank **You** for always being with me and never leaving me. In **Messiah’s** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*