

The Keys To Wisdom

Love

Patience

Obedience

Mercy

Trust

Understanding

Truth

Discretion



Proverbs

WEEK 6

“Words of Blessing”

Study: Proverbs 10:9-11

Reading: James 3:1-18

Memory: Isaiah 40:24

Think about your favorite sports team. Would that team be successful if every time they made a mistake, the person who messed up was punched by many of his teammates? I guarantee you that a team that did that wouldn't win many games. They wouldn't be able to work together as a team. That team would also have problems attracting free-agents because no one would want to have to put up with getting punched after they made a mistake.

You would probably change favorite teams if your team started acting that way. The sad thing is that we as Christians can find ourselves doing that very thing. Today, we are going to see how we can commit violent acts with the words that we say. We will see how we should encourage our team mates rather than hurt them.

What Does the Bible Say?

A person of integrity will live a secure and happy life. He doesn't have to worry about hiding or trying to cover up sin. He practices what he preaches which gives him great freedom. When he commits sin, he confesses it and gets things right with God and others. On the other hand, the foolish man will try to cover up his sin. He will attempt to live a double life and will be trapped in the prison of his own deceit (vs 9).

Verse 10 doesn't give contrasting ideas, but talks about two different types of fools. The first one is the one who “winks with his eye.” That is a phrase for a person who is crafty and deceitful. It is like the man who is deceiving a person and he winks at his friends as if to say, “Look what I am doing.” The second type of fool is one who talks foolishly. This man is similar to the one mentioned in verse 8. This man is a consistent talker, and because of that, he allows many foolish statements to come out of his mouth (vs 10).

The tongue can be used to do great things, but it can also be used to do great harm. For those who live righteously, the tongue can be used to bring

great life. Solomon described it as a “fountain of life” because of the good things that can continually flow out of the mouth. With our tongues, we can speak the truth, teach the Word of God and lead people to Christ. One of the most important ways that the tongue can be a “fountain of life” is by using it to build others up and to express love towards them. Too often, we use our tongues to hurt others and tear them down. That is how a wicked man uses his tongue. Many times verbal abuse can be more violent and cut deeper than physical abuse. Often, the tongue is used to commit violent acts towards other people, even in the body of Christ (vs 11).

How Does this Apply to Me?

How do you use your tongue? Do you use it as a weapon or do you use it like a healing ointment? One of the saddest things that some Christians do is attempt to kill their own wounded. When someone has messed up and has chosen to commit sin, it is very easy to badmouth them behind their backs as well as to their faces. We use our tongues as swords, giving them greater wounds than they already have. You have the choice to hurt others or to help them heal. Instead of hurting them with your tongue, you should use your tongue as a healing ointment that helps sooth the pain of their wounds. No, you shouldn’t overlook sin, but you can come along side that person and encourage him with words of love and affirmation.

Carefully examine what you say or have said today. Have your words built others up or have they torn others down? Maybe you haven’t hurt others with your words, but are you building them up? Make it your purpose to show others your Christian love by the words that come out of your mouth every day.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for restoring you when you sin.*
- * *Ask God to help you build others up by the words that you say.*
- * *Thank God for giving you His Word to help build you up.*

Thought for the day

What do you think it means to walk with “integrity” (vs 9 - ESV)?

What will happen to those who walk with integrity (vs 9)?

Describe how you are choosing to live this way.

What is the opposite of walking with integrity (vs 9)?

What are the results of not walking in integrity (vs 9)?

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

Who causes trouble (vs 10)?

What do you think this means?

Who will come to ruin (vs 10)?

What do you think it meant to be a babbling fool (vs 11 - ESV)?

What will the mouth of a righteous person be (vs 11)?

Why were streams so vital
in Bible days?

How does this reveal the great importance of your words?

What does the mouth of the wicked do (vs 11)?

What do you think the end of verse 11 means?

What do you think there are many references in Proverbs and all of Scripture about the way you use your words?

“Love Covers Sin

Study: Proverbs 10:12-13

Reading: Matthew 18:21-35, Matthew 5:21-26

Memory: Isaiah 40:24

There is a simple, yet fun game that many people played at one time or another. The game is called “Rock, Paper, Scissors.” On the count of three, each participant will either make their hand in the form of a rock, a piece of paper, or a pair of scissors. The scissors beat the paper by cutting it, but they lose to the rock because they get crushed. The paper has the distinct privilege of beating the rock because it covers the rock.

Today, we are going to see that we can defeat anger and hatred by covering it with love. Just as in the game, paper defeats the rock by covering it, you can defeat the arguments and fights that anger causes by covering your anger with love.

What Does the Bible Say?

Verse 12 is a simple verse, but at the same time, it is deeply profound. Following the advice of this one verse can save you from hundreds of potential problems and conflicts throughout your life time. You don’t just automatically hate someone the first time that you see them. Hatred is a result of a process. It first starts when you are bothered by something that a person does, says, or something that someone else has told you about that individual. If that initial reaction is not taken care of, it then turns to anger. When anger is not taken care of, it quickly turns into hatred. The next result is constant fighting and squabbling that will never be resolved until both of the parties are willing to humble themselves and admit their sin. James 4:1 tells us that fights and quarrels are a result of selfishness and desiring to have things our own way.

The opposite of selfishness is presented as the solution to the problem. The second part of verse 12 talks about the need for love. When we love others the way Christ loved us, we will look past their sins and care for them in spite of what they have done. God doesn’t care how many times we hurt Him or continue to hurt Him. He loves us unconditionally, even though at times He does have to punish us for our sin. We can’t love and hate at the

same time. Each one of us needs to learn to love, no matter how bad someone else has treated us.

Verse 13 gives us the best way to avoid discipline from our authorities and from God. The reason that we are disciplined is because we have done something that is not right. Discipline is meant to bring us into conformity with the will of our authorities. A wise man understands what the results of his actions will be. He obeys his authorities and thus avoids having to be disciplined.

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you currently in an ongoing feud with another person? Can you honestly say that you aren’t angry at anyone right now and that you have no animosity in your life? If you will listen to the advice that this simple verse gives, it will help you tremendously. When someone does something to you that you don’t like, love them and pray for them. In fact, if you know that someone is angry with you, then you should go out of your way to show them that you love them. It is very difficult for a person to be angry at someone who is being kind to them. You will also be able to avoid fights and arguments because it is very difficult to have a one-sided quarrel. I am not saying that it will be easy, especially when someone is purposely trying to hurt you. With God’s strength and a proper understanding of how God loves you in spite of how many times you have hurt Him, you will be able to love others the way that God loves others. Christianity is not just going to church and trying to do what is right, but it goes deeper than that. True Christianity is displayed by the way that you love others.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Ask God to help you love your enemies.*
- * *Thank God that He loves you.*
- * *Praise God because He is a God of love.*

Thought for the day

What stirs up problems (vs 12)?

How would you define hatred (vs 12)?

What do you think leads a person to hatred?

How can you avoid hatred towards others?

What covers many problems (vs 12)?

How do you think it is able to do this?

How can you love a person who you don't like?

Describe a practical example from your life or the lives of others how you have seen the truth of these verses.

Where is wisdom found (vs 13)?

Why do you think this is found on a person's "lips" (vs 13)?

What is the first part of verse 13 teaching?

What is reserved for the person who "lacks sense" (vs 13 - ESV)?

How would you describe this type of person?

What can you do to make sure you are the person who has understanding rather than the person who "lacks sense"?

What role do you think your emotions might play in living out this verse?

How can you practically apply this verse to your life?

“A Buffet of Truth”

Study: Proverbs 10:14-18

Reading: Proverbs 10

Memory: Isaiah 40:24

When I worked for my college soccer team, we often ate at the Old Country Buffet restaurant. Our coach enjoyed Old Country Buffet and thought that it was a good deal for the team since we could eat all we wanted and there was something for everyone. One nice thing about the restaurant was that you could eat there for every meal but not get too tired of the same thing because of the variety. With one stop and for one price, we could eat as much as we wanted and could eat a variety of foods.

Today, we are going to see how Solomon gives us a buffet of different truths. Each of these truths are extremely important and can help us grow spiritually.

What Does the Bible Say?

The idea found in verse 14 has already been talked about a few times in this chapter. Since this idea is repeated, it is something that we should take special note of. A person who is wise will listen and study so that he can become knowledgeable about a subject before he speaks on the subject. A fool just speaks his mind and doesn't take the time to know what he is talking about (vs 14).

The Bible often warns about being rich and loving money. Solomon is no exception to this, but he also warns about being poor. A wise man will save some of his money as a protection against disaster, but the poor will not have that protection. The word "poor" in this passage suggests weakness and inability to help one's self. A person still needs to trust in God no matter if he is rich or poor (vs 15).

Solomon adds the statement in verse 16 so that we will not get the idea that God wants us to seek after riches. He tells us that we will be rewarded for living righteously with abundant life. Seeking righteousness is far more important than seeking after wealth. Those who live in wickedness will also receive an income for their evil works. They will receive punishment from

God (vs 16).

When describing a wise man, Solomon pointed out that one of the key marks of wisdom is the ability to take instruction. Those who listen to instruction are on the path to abundant life. Those who don't listen to instruction will stray off the path that God has set for them (vs 17).

Yesterday, we talked about the importance of removing hatred and anger from our lives. Solomon refers to those who try to cover up their anger as liars. Anger should be taken care of and not hidden or disguised. A fool will try to cover his anger by spreading gossip and lies about the person he is angry at (vs 18).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Each verse that we have looked at has presented different applications. Ask yourself the following questions as you briefly look at the spiritual challenge of each one. Are you open to hearing instruction? Do you just say things whether they are true or not? You need to approach every situation with an open mind and be willing to learn what God is trying to teach you. Are you being wise with your money? Most people in our society that have money problems struggle because they have not learned how to spend and save properly. Is your purpose in life to please God? When you live righteously, God will bless you. Do you find yourself falling into sin and straying away from God? This is normally a result of you not listening to what God is trying to tell you. Make it your goal in life to learn every time that you hear or read the word of God. Have you taken care of the anger that is in your life? Are you still holding on to bitterness or hatred? If you didn't take care of it yesterday, you need to take care of it today.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Ask God to show you any area of your life where you need to change.*
- * *Thank God for the instruction He gives you in His Word.*
- * *Praise God for being a God of wisdom.*

Thought for the day

What do wise men do (vs 14)?

What do you think this means?

What does the mouth of a fool do (vs 14)?

According to this verse, what is the biggest difference between a wise man and a fool?

What helps protect a rich man (vs 15)?

What brings destruction to a poor man (vs 15)?

What do you think the point of verse 15 is?

****It appears that verse 15 is a setup for what was said in verse 16. People who have money have more advantages and opportunities than those who don't. This has always been the case in pretty much any society.*

What leads to life (vs 16)?

How does this compare to the riches mentioned in verse 15?

What do the wicked gain (vs 16)?

How does this compare with the poverty mentioned in verse 15?

What does the beginning of verse 17 encourage you to do?

How can you leave others astray (vs 17)?

What do you think it means to hide hatred (vs 18)?

What does it mean to "utter slander" (vs 18 - ESV)?

What do you think verse 18 is teaching?

“Pleasure In Understanding”

Study: Proverbs 10:19-23

Reading: Proverbs 17:17-28, Matthew 12:22-37

Memory: Isaiah 40:24

One of the things I enjoy about modern technology today is the ability to easily and quickly get answers to our questions. There are many times where I will wonder about something or be in a conversation and some type of uncertainty comes up about a topic. In years past, much research would have to be done to find the correct answer, where as many correct answers can be found today with a quick search on the internet, or by speaking the question to a device. Withing seconds, we can find answers that at one time would have taken hours to find. One of the things I love about this is how easy it is to increase my understanding of many different areas in life.

Today, we are going to be reminded how a person who understands more about wisdom and God’s desires will use their tongues in a way that produces valuable riches.

What Does the Bible Say?

Throughout Proverbs, we have seen that Solomon places great emphasis not only on what we say, but how much we say. He had realized that the more a person talked, the less they would listen. He knew that listening would lead to wisdom, while abundant talking was the mark of foolishness. I don’t believe that he was saying that we should become mute people where we don’t know how to carry on conversations. I believe that he put the emphasis on learning. To learn properly, we must avoid excessive talking (vs 19).

A tongue that says the right things is very valuable. That is why Solomon compared it to the finest silver. In contrast, those who speak evil devalue themselves (vs 20). One of the reasons that the tongue of a righteous person is so valuable is because it can benefit many people. The righteous tongue will strengthen others spiritually because it will be used to feed them spiritual food. It will also be used to encourage others when they are down and give them the emotional strength to go on. The foolish tongue

does the opposite. It causes spiritual and emotional death and destruction (vs 21).

Where do all the riches and blessings that we receive come from? They come from God and God alone. It is God who blesses us when we live righteously. It is God who provides for our every need. We will avoid the sorrows that come with foolishness and sin if we walk in wisdom and righteousness (vs 22).

A fool will make light of sin. In fact, he will make it like a sport which makes it fun and challenging to him. He will make it his goal to see how much evil he can get away with without getting caught. On the other end of the spectrum, a wise man will delight in becoming more wise. He will make it his goal to seek more ways to become wise (vs 23).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Continual contrasts are given in the book of Proverbs which compare wisdom with foolishness. Wisdom and foolishness both show themselves in a variety of ways and are given several different names which display the different aspects of these two terms. One of the parts of wisdom mentioned in today’s reading is understanding. Understanding gives the idea of thinking through the results of your actions and having a greater understanding of how life works. The specific examples of this given in today’s reading has to do with understanding the impacts of the words you say, and in our society, the words you type. When you understand that your words have a powerful impact on those around you, it will cause you to think much more before you speak and also encourage you to limit what you say. The fool says everything that is on his mind, while the wise person guards what he says and choose to speak in a wise manner. Make it a practice in your life to understand the importance of your words.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Ask God to show you where you are making a sport out of evil.
- * Thank God for the blessings He has given you.

Thought for the day

What happens to people who speak a lot of words (vs 19)?

How have you seen this to be true?

What is the person who chooses not to speak too much called (vs 19)?

How can you know if you talk too much? What do you think the practical application of this verse is?

What is the tongue of the righteous person compared to (vs 20)?

Why do you think it is described this way?

What is of little worth (vs 20)?

What do you think the “heart of the wicked” is (vs 20 - ESV)?

****The term “wicked” may give the wrong impression. It is easy to see that term as complete evil. Something that looks awful and is clearly distinguishable. The NLT translates the same word as “foolishness” which gives a completely different picture than “wicked.”*

What do the lips of a righteous person do (vs 21)?

How can lips feed someone (vs 21)?

What happens to fools (vs 21)?

What comes when the Lord blesses (vs 22)?

What does not come with the blessing of the Lord (vs 22)?

What do you think that means?

How does a fool view doing wrong?

“A Firm Foundation”

Study: Proverbs 10:24-28

Reading: Matthew 7:24-29, I Kings 19:1-18

Memory: Isaiah 40:24

The first step in any building process focuses on the foundation of that structure. The first inspections that are made before a nail is hammered have to do with the foundation of a structure. Local building codes often go into far more detail about the foundation of a building than they do other aspects of how a building is framed. This is because the foundation is vital to all other aspects of the structure. Without a firm foundation, the finest craftsmanship on top is bound to fail. The foundation of any structure is vitally important.

Today, we are going to see that we need a firm foundation in our lives. We will be reminded that when the storms of life come our way, we can hold fast because God gives us a purpose for living.

What Does the Bible Say?

Some people get the idea that putting the effort into doing what is right isn't worth it. They think it is much better just to go out and do what they want to do instead of obeying God. Scripture reveals over and over again that living for Christ is worth it. That is what Solomon also told us in verse 24. Those who live in evil will have many fears, and many of those fears will come true. But those who live for God will receive all that they need and desire. Psalms 37:4 tells us that if we delight in God, He will give us the desires of our hearts. What often happens is that God changes our desires so that they become like His desires (vs 24).

The life of the wicked is like an unstable building. When a strong wind blows against it, it is quickly destroyed. The wicked have no stability and no purpose in life. No matter how much fun they seem to be having, their life is empty on the inside. Those who live in righteousness have a purpose in life. Their foundation is Christ who will hold them firm and give them hope through the storms of life (vs 25).

Both “vinegar to the teeth” and “smoke to the eyes” are used to describe how something causes irritation. Just as vinegar and smoke cause irritation, a lazy person will cause irritation to those in authority over them.

As Christians, we should have a work ethic that is far removed from laziness as we work to please Christ and not our earthly masters (vs 26).

Proverbs gives us many references to the promise of long life to those who are righteous. Solomon reiterates that idea by telling us that if we have a proper respect and reverence for God, we will have an abundant life. This is not the case for the wicked. Their lives will be marred by misery and pain. This does not mean that the unrighteous will be devoid of pleasure, but the long term results of sin is pain (vs 27).

As Christians, we have an abundant hope and a wonderful peace that is found in God. We will reap the benefits of Christ, not only in this world, but in the world to come. While we have a wonderful outlook on life, the wicked have nothing to look forward to. All they have to live for is the here and now. They have no true peace in life, because they have no purpose in living (vs 28).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you ever get tired of trying to live the Christian life? Do you get made fun of by your friends and even your family when you take a stand for Christ? Does it seem like it would be better if you just gave up and decided to live like everyone else? Don't let Satan trick you into quitting. He wants you to be discouraged and get down when it seems that no one else is living for God. As you can see from the reading today, the benefits of righteousness far outweigh the persecution that you might have to suffer for Him. Whenever you get discouraged and feel like quitting, take a look down the road. What will your life be like in ten years if you quit on God? You would reap the misery, the dissatisfaction and the pain that sin brings, rather than the blessings of God.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Ask God to give you strength to live for Him every day.*
- * *Thank God for the blessings that He gives to you daily.*

Thought for the day

What will come upon the wicked (vs 24)?

What do you think the beginning of verse 24 means?

What will happen to the righteous person (vs 24)?

How have you seen this verse to be true?

What often happens to people who don't follow God during times of trials and difficulties (vs 25)?

Why will the righteous often be much more grounded and able to face the trials of this life (vs 25)?

What are lazy people compared to (vs 26)?

Why do you think this comparison is made?

How have you experienced this in your life?

Describe how you are a worker who is not lazy.

What helps prolong life (vs 27)?

Why do you think this is true (vs 27)?

What will happen to the wicked (vs 27)?

Is this proverb true 100% of the time?

****Remember that proverbs are general principles to be a guide in life.*

What brings joy (vs 28)?

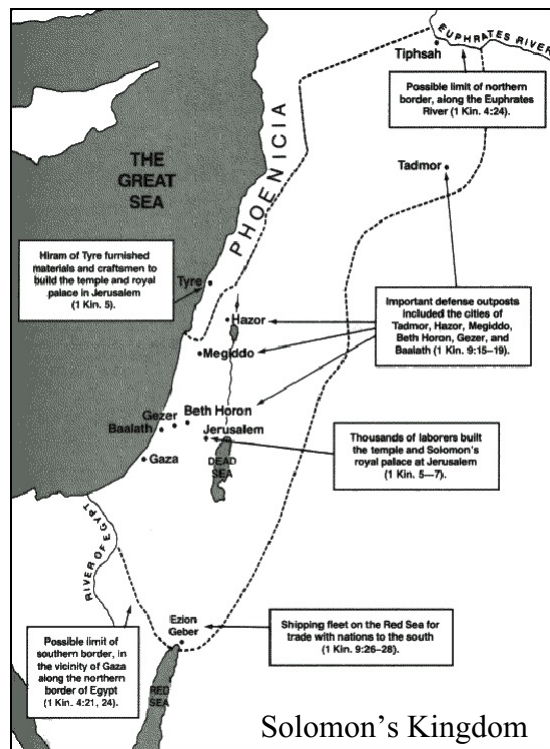
What does a person who does not live a godly life have to hope for in the future (vs 28)?

“Safety for the Righteous”

Study: Proverbs 10:29-32

Reading: Psalms 46:1-6, 64:1-9

Memory: Isaiah 40:24



What Does the Bible Say?

When we follow the way of the Lord, He will be our strength and will give us strength. The word “strength” means a place or means of safety, protection, refuge, stronghold. Strongholds in the Bible were places that people would go to help them fend off their enemies. They were places of safety where a person could have trust and confidence that they would be protected. When we are obedient to the Lord, we have that safety and strength that God has promised. We can rest assured that nothing will happen to us that God doesn’t want to happen to us. But when we are doing our own thing and not following Him, we are going to bring ruin to

ourselves. Our sin will lead us into situations and problems that could have been avoided if we were doing what God wanted us to do. This verse supports the statement, “The safest place to be is in the will of God.” (vs 29).

Because the Lord is the protector of the righteous, they won’t be removed from the position God wants them in. This verse makes reference to the fact that as long as the Israelites were obedient to God, they would be able to keep the land which God had promised to them. At the time that Solomon wrote Proverbs, Israel was a great nation. They were great because they had leaders and people who sought after God. Their prosperity didn’t last. Just a couple hundred years after Solomon was king, the nation of Israel was destroyed. They were taken captive by other nations because of their sin (vs 30).

Righteousness and wisdom walk hand in hand. The man who is wise and gives words of wisdom is a righteous man. The unrighteous man will not have wisdom and it will show in his speech (vs 31-32).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you scared to step out by faith to do something that God wants you to do? Maybe God wants you to serve Him on a missions trip or a mission field, but you are afraid for your safety if you travel out of the country. There could be several other things that God has called you to do in life, but fear of the unknown could cause you not to obey. When you live righteously, you have nothing to fear. God will protect and provide for you through every circumstance and situation that might come your way. All you have to do is strive to live in accordance to His Word and He will take care of the rest.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Ask God to help you have the faith to trust Him.
- * Praise God because He has the power to do all things.
- * Thank God for promising to take care of you.

Thought for the day

What is a “stronghold” (vs 29 - ESV)?

Who will find their peace and security in God (vs 29)?

What do you think it means to be blameless (vs 29 - ESV)?

What comes to evildoers (vs 29)?

How does verse 29 encourage you to live a life of trust in God?

What will not happen to the righteous (vs 30)?

What do you think is meant by this?

What will happen to the wicked (vs 30)?

What do you think the end of verse 30 means?

What comes from the mouth of a righteous person (vs 31)?

How do wisdom and righteousness go hand in hand (vs 31)?

What will happen to the deceiving tongue (vs 31)?

How have you seen this principle come true?

What type of words does a godly person speak (vs 32)?

Why is wisdom so important when it comes to knowing what to say (vs 32)?

****Wisdom is the foundation for what comes out of our mouths. Matthew 12:34 says, “For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.” What comes out of your mouth reveals what is in your heart.*

How does this reveal that the control of your tongue is not just an outward discipline?

Memory Verses

Isaiah 40:1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. 3 A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God? 4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. 5 Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. The LORD has spoken!” 6 A voice says, “Cry!” And I said, “What shall I cry?” All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. 7 The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. 8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. 9 Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!” 10 Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. 11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young. 12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? 13 Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? 14 Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? 15 Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. 16 Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. 17 All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. 18 To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? 19 An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains. 20 He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move. 21 Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; 23 who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. 24 Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.