

Mishlei 21-22

Wisdom and Power

Key Concepts

When we think about wisdom, it may seem to be an abstract, insubstantial phenomenon. And yet wisdom is directly related to the physical world that we see with our eyes. Mishlei wants to remind us that even though wisdom is invisible, it is more real than the qualities of our physical world. In fact, it is the basic element of Creation, as we have seen in Segment 3-19, "Hashem found the earth with wisdom."

In a previous segment (21-20) we have seen that there is a clear relationship between wisdom and wealth. Mishlei now offers a way of thinking about the relationship between wisdom and physical power.

Exploring Mishlei

To help us visualize the physical significance of wisdom, Mishlei shows how it has a key role in a simple story. Despite the fact that a city was defended by many mighty men, it was possible for its stronghold to be brought down by a single wise man who relied on his wisdom rather than physical strength.

(כב) עיר גְּבֹרִים עָלָה חָכָם וַיִּרְדּוּ עוֹז מִבְּטָחָה :

(22) *A wise man ascended to a city of mighty men and brought down the stronghold in which it trusted .*

Learning Mishlei

(22) There was a city of mighty men. — עיר גְּבֹרִים
A wise man climbed upon it, — עָלָה חָכָם
and brought down the stronghold, — וַיִּרְדּוּ עוֹז
in which it trusted. — מִבְּטָחָה.