Understanding Moral Character and Its Descent
The Use of “Fool” in the Book of Proverbs

PROVERBS 1:7 (plus footnote), 1:22

PROPOSITION: It is “foolish” to live by any other value system than the one found in the Bible. The book of Proverbs shows us 4 stages of descent that can happen when we start going by our own feelings.

I. The Naïve Fool
   Hebrew = pethi (pe-THEE)
   A. Easily enticed (morally gullible)  
      Prov 14:15; (Pictured in Prov 7)
   B. Won’t honestly consider consequences  
      Prov 22:3 (27:12)
   C. Often requires pain to change  
   D. Leads to deeper sin  
      Prov 14:18; 1:32

II. The Self-Confident Fool (obstinate)
   Hebrew = kesil (ke-SEEL)
   A. Stubborn; do what they want  
      Prov 13:19; 10:23
   B. Unchecked mouth  
      Prov 18:6-7; 15:2
   C. Challenge but don’t expect to get through  
      Prov 26:4-5

III. The Committed Fool (insolent)
   Hebrew = evil (eh-VEEL); Variation “foolish” Hebrew = ivveleth which is from same root as “evil”
   A. Haughty (arrogant, disrespectful)  
      Prov 12:15-16
   B. At war with wisdom  
      Prov 19:3, 14:9
   C. Reform impossible (miraculous conversion needed)  
      Prov 27:22
   D. Shameless fool; Hebrew = nabal (nah-BAHL)  
      Prov 17:21; Ps 14:1

IV. The Scoffer/Mocker – The Terminal Stage
   Hebrew = luts (rhymes with “boots”)
   A. Contemptuous (scoff, mock, scorn)  
      Prov 21:24
   B. Morally un-teachable  
      Prov 15:12; 9:7-8
   C. End is judgment  
      Prov 19:29; 21:11; 22:10

Use of “fool” in Proverbs 14: v 1 (ivveleth which is a form of evil); v 2 (luts); V 3 (evil); v 6 (luts); v 7 (kesil); v 8 (ivveleth, kesil); v 9 (evil); v 15 (pethi); v 16 (kesil); v 17 (ivveleth); v 18 (pethi, ivveleth); v 24 (ivveleth, kesil, ivveleth); v 29 (ivveleth); v 33 (kesil)

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