



QUESTION: Prov 19:13 says, "Fear of the Lord gives life, security and protection from harm." 'Protection from harm': is not always true, right? Am I taking this verse too literally? I just want to understand the meaning of that since I know that many ancient prophets and Christ followers in the past and now have been persecuted, harmed and killed for their belief or other reasons.

ANSWER: No, not always true. Proverbs gives general principles for life that are often true; generally true. They are the rule of life to which you can find exceptions. But the exceptions prove the rule, as they say. So while we are not always protected from harm by following God's ways, we are generally protected. We follow God's principles for truth telling, sexuality, money management, relationships, all the things addressed in Proverbs, and we will **generally** be blessed.

The trouble that comes to us from following Jesus is a unique sort of suffering that is different from the suffering that comes from making dumb life choices. Proverbs is talking about the general blessings and protections that are built into God's moral economy. Said another way, "A man reaps what he sows," Gal 6:9. And Peter, in 1 Peter 3 makes the distinction between the suffering that comes from disobeying basic Proverbs wisdom and from that which comes from loyalty to Jesus. We should never choose the former, but always choose the latter.

So we won't always be protected by Fearing God and living according to his ways, but Proverbs is never talking about what is ALWAYS true, but what is usually true.

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