

Studies in the Book of Proverbs by [John T Polk II](#)
For [The Fellowship Room](#)

(#109) The Proverbs of Solomon 16:14-15- Governing the Government (#4)

Since God Created humans, only God can provide specific understanding of human behavior. God gave Solomon Divine Wisdom (**1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10**) to explain what and why behavior is as it is, and **Proverbs 10:1 - 24:34** are randomly written, as if they were Judgments Solomon made about individual cases brought to him for Divine Wisdom (**1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10**), or simply God-given explanations about life. New Testament passages may help see the continuation of Wisdom offered through Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 16:14-15:

As messengers of death is the king's wrath, but a wise man will appease it. 15 In the light of the king's face is life, and his favor is like a cloud of the latter rain.

Verse 14: When all authority in government is invested in one person, judgments and rulings are purely arbitrary, whimsical, and capricious. The purpose of having a constitutional "rule of law" is to avoid the abuse of power so easily entered into with only a king, or tsar, or fuhrer, or dictator. People who are subject to the whim of "the king's wrath" might expect the least provocation to "set him off."

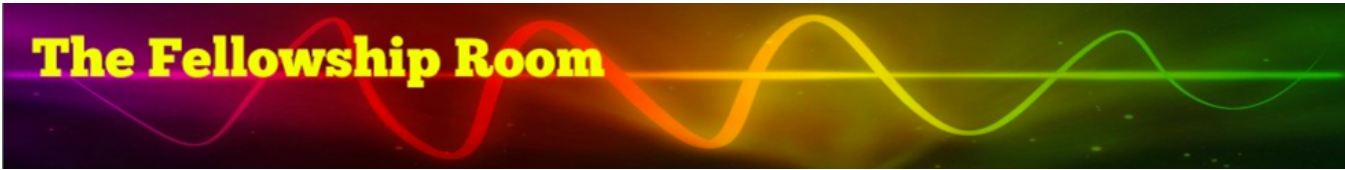
King Saul showed Ahimelech the priest, and those with him, the wrath of a king (**1 Samuel 22:11-19**). Other proverbs reflect danger in a too-powerful king:

- The king's wrath *is* like the roaring of a lion, but his favor *is* like dew on the grass. (**Proverbs 19:12**)
- The wrath of a king *is* like the roaring of a lion; *whoever* provokes him to anger sins *against* his own life. (**Proverbs 20:2**)
- *Like* a roaring lion and a charging bear *is* a wicked ruler over poor people. (**Proverbs 28:15**).

Solomon, later, expressed this absolute power of a king:

Do not be hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand for an evil thing, for he does whatever pleases him. Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may say to him, 'What are you doing?' (**Ecclesiastes 8:3-4**)

A "wise man" will surely tread lightly around such a person. There is no better time to apply another proverb:



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A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.
([Proverbs 15:1](#))

Verse 15: On the other hand, however, a happy king makes life last, and refreshes like "the latter rain" of a growing season, and which helps produce a good harvest.

Under Moses' Law, kings were supposed to follow their own personal copy of God's Word ([Deuteronomy 17:18-20](#)), and that should have been their "constitution" to guide their rule. Even under Jesus' Law, obedience to government is predicated upon one's humility before God:

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ([Romans 13:1](#))

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