

Stupid 'Entertainment'

Folly and Modern Entertainment

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Last Sunday, CBS presented the 63rd annual Grammy Awards, hosted by Trevor Noah. I am sure all of you were watching. From what I heard about it, most of it was forgettable, and a precipitous drop in viewership seems to back up that sentiment. It was the lowest rated Grammy Awards in its history, and it had lost about 10 million viewers just from last year—from 2020 to 2021, it dropped almost 53% in viewership. I imagine that the public is tired of their "woke" messaging, and, frankly, the show is just not entertaining.

Which brings us to the second-most talked about takeaway from the awards show. Most of it focused on the raunchy, very "adult" number performed by Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion. One reporter for Billboard magazine called it "a sci-fi strip club fantasia." Do not even try to imagine—just go on with that. Enough said. But those two were not alone in their blatantly lewd dancing. It was pretty much sprinkled throughout. What was on display there at the Grammy Awards went way, far beyond Elvis swinging his hips on The Ed Sullivan Show in 1956. By the way, just as an aside here, few people know that Elvis' gyrating hips grew out of a habit that he formed because of stage fright. It was more innocent when he did it at the beginning than most people think. He was not trying to be controversial. He was just trying to keep from going out of his mind with all those people watching him on stage. But later it did become a schtick, so he was not entirely innocent.

But we are seeing this sort of thing all over. No matter what form of entertainment it is, it seems that matters always turn toward perversion. There are few standards anymore, and none that actually has any authority, it seems, to these people. So performers feel that they must get more edgy, and actually leap over every line that is drawn, to get noticed. As the apostle Paul says, and other people warn us in the Bible, that the evil of the end time is just going to get worse and worse.

Solomon's proverbs have something interesting to say on this matter—this trend toward perversity. I would like you to turn with me to Proverbs 10:23. I am going to read it out of the *New King James* so you can see how it is translated there. But there is actually a better translation I prefer, but I want to read it first here:

Proverbs 10:23 To do evil is like sport to a fool, but a man of understanding has wisdom.

Now let us hear this out of the *Revised English Bible*, which I believe is so much clearer:

Proverbs 10:23 (REB) Lewdness is entertainment for the stupid, wisdom a delight to men of understanding.

That is much clearer. Now, saying that they are "the stupid" may seem a bit harsh when you first hear it, but it is actually quite appropriate to what is actually written in the Hebrew. The biblical fool—it is the Hebrew word, in this case, *ksîl*, not *nabal* or that other word, but *ksîl* this time—which basically means the opposite of a wise person. That is, as we have come to learn, one who is skilled in living. So, a fool is very *unskilled* in living. The foolish person lacks good judgment, good sense. He does not think things through at all, but he acts rashly, stupidly, and most of all it seems, self-centeredly. The fool enjoys controversy, trusting in his own abilities and his own feelings about things rather than seeking advice from somebody else about what is the right way to go.

As Proverbs 26:5 says, fools are wise in their own eyes. They do not think of themselves as a fool, as stupid. They actually the exact opposite—they think they are wise. They think they know. But when it when it comes down to it, they have difficulty controlling their own emotions and actions, and especially they seem to have a hard time controlling their speech.

The image these descriptors build is of a person totally off the rails, unthinking, self-absorbed, unadvisable, unrestrained, and so deficient in understanding what is good for him and others that he speaks and acts stupidly, foolishly, irrationally. He is like the loose cannon that cannot be trusted.

Psalm 14, verse 1 tells us what his central problem is:

Psalm 14:1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good.

The foolish—I may start calling them "the stupid"—do not account for God, and it is truly a stupid thing to ignore the Almighty. How dumb is that? It reminds me of something J.R.R. Tolkien wrote in *The Hobbit*. (Most things remind me of something J.R.R. Tolkien wrote.) He says there in *The Hobbit*, "It does not do to leave a live dragon out of your calculations if you live near him." Yet God, Someone far more mighty than a dragon, is in none of their thoughts. They act like He is not there (Psalm 10:4). They do not listen to His Word. They do their own thing, thinking that they will never have to give an account for their actions. So they do whatever—whatever pleases them, whatever comes to mind. Anything goes.

Going back to Proverbs 10:23, the word "evil" is the Hebrew *zimmah*. It means, "Loose or infamous conduct; lewdness." The *Revised English Bible* got that word right. That is how they translate the term. Remember, they said it should be translated, "Lewdness is entertainment for the stupid." They got that part right, and I am really wondering why the *New King James* did not translate it as "lewdness" in the first place because that is exactly what the word *zimmah* means. I think they were trying to tone it down a little bit, but just translating it as "evil" does not give us the full understanding of what he is talking about there.

But, according to this verse, the fool thinks that his perverse behavior is funny. It is entertaining. It is sporting. It is something to have a good laugh over. They scoff at the critic who questions it, saying, "It doesn't mean anything; it's just entertainment," so they do not take it seriously. They are not considering the consequences of it. They do not see what it might result in, and what it does result in ultimately is degeneration, destruction, and ultimately death.

So what happened at the Grammys, I think is a sure sign of cultural decline and another proof that we are closing in on Christ's return. As God's people,

we need to fulfill the other half of the proverb. Remember, the other half of the proverb said, "A man of understanding has wisdom," or as the *Revised English Bible* put it, "Wisdom is a delight to men of understanding." While everyone else follows the fools, the stupid of this world, we need to be running flat out in the other direction, living with understanding in the sight of God.