



# Proverbs

by

Dr. Bruce Waltke

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## Syllabus

In a world bombarded by inane clichés, trivial catchwords, and godless sound bites, the expression of true wisdom is in short supply today. The church stands alone as the receptacle and repository of the inspired wisdom from ancient kings and their courtiers that carries a mandate for a holy life. As the course and bulk of biblical wisdom, the book of Proverbs remains the model curriculum for humanity, especially youth, to learn social skills in relation to God and others. As such, the book of Proverbs invites serious study to teach and do its wisdom in a world characterized by mediocrity, superficiality and blatant foolishness.

Wisdom literature from the Biblical period and earlier is found throughout the Levant, especially in Egypt. This literary context enables the modern interpreter to better appreciate this unique inheritance from the beginnings of recorded human history and to interpret its wisdom more accurately. Paradoxically, as the church grows older its memory grows sharper

In this course the lecturer will be seeking to accomplish the Bible's own purpose of: teaching, rebuking, correcting, training in righteousness, so that the student may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

In addition to these abroad purposes of all inspired Scripture the course's more specific objectives are:

- to overcome prejudices against the book, such as its promises seem detached from earth's realities;
- to instruct the student in fundamentals for understanding Proverbs, such as its structure, authors, addressees, and forms;
- to interpret the book according to the accredited grammatico-historical approach;
- to teach its distinctive theology and its application to life;
- to prepare the student for a life-time of growth in its wisdom;
- to locate its wisdom in the canon of Scripture;
- to apply the books wisdom to specific areas of life such as speech, money, marriage and parenting.

## Calendar

1. Syllabus and Hermeneutica Sacra
2. Proverbs 1:1: Who is Solomon?
3. Proverbs 1:2—7: What is Righteousness?
4. Proverbs 1:8—35 Parents / Wisdom versus Uncommitted
5. 5Proverbs 2: Safeguards against the Wicked
6. Proverbs 3:1—12: Does Proverbs Promise Too Much?

7. Proverbs 3:13—4:27 Encomiums to Wisdom
8. Proverbs 5--7: Warnings Against Adultery
9. Proverbs 8: Wisdom's Credibility
10. Proverbs 9: Two Invitations to Uncommitted
11. Proverbs 10:1--5 and Moneywise
12. Proverbs 10:6—14 and Wise Speech
13. Proverbs 26: A Mirror for Fools
14. Proverbs 30: The Sayings of Agur
15. Proverbs 31: A Noble King and a Noble Woman
16. Wise spouses
17. Wise parents
18. Proverbs 15:30—16:15
19. Wise politics
20. Wise politics

## Required Reading

### 1. English version of the Book of Proverbs

- All translations—not *New World Translation*\*-- are faithful and adequate, but none perfect. Faithful. Try to represent message of original text. But RSV/NRSV breaks the unity of the testaments. Adequate: All lead to Christ; none lead to heresy
- Samuel Haas, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 74/4, (Dec. 1955): 283: "it is to be regretted that religious bias was allowed to colour many passages." H.H. Rowley, "How Not To Translate the Bible, *The Expository Times*, 65 (1953):41. Its wooden literalism and harsh construction are "an insult to the Word of God." Rowley concluded, "From beginning to end this [first] volume is a shining example of how the Bible should not be translated."

2. Waltke, Bruce K. *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 1-15*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2004.

3. \_\_\_\_\_. *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 15-31* (NICOT; 2005)

# Lesson 1: Hermeneutica Sacra

## INTRODUCTION

I. Aim of lecture: to determine pre-understandings for an accredited hermeneutic

- Klein, Blomberg, Hubbard: “pre-understanding consists of the total framework of our being *and understanding* that we bring to the task of living: our language, social conditioning, even our emotional state at a given time.”
- G. M. Hopkins; “our inscape determines the way we see our landscape”
- W. Blake: “We do not see with the eye but through the eye”
- Sages: “Fear of the LORD [revelation from God > humble reception by mankind < reverence for Author] is beginning [foundation] of wisdom.”

II. Object of study has its own logic.

First “stand-under” an object in order to “understand” object

III. Logic of Bible: “All Scripture is Inspired by God” (2 Tim 3:16)

A. By God: Primary Author

B. Inspired: Human author

C. Scripture: text

## GOD: AUTHOR

1 Corinthians 2:11--14

For who knows a person's thoughts except that person's own spirit within? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.<sup>1</sup> The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. (1Co 2:11-14)

Job 28:12—28

<sup>12</sup> But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell?

<sup>13</sup> No mortal comprehends its worth; it cannot be found in the land of the living.

<sup>14</sup> The deep says, "It is not in me"; the sea says, "It is not with me."

<sup>15</sup> It cannot be bought with the finest gold, nor can its price be weighed out in silver.

<sup>16</sup> It cannot be bought with the gold of Ophir, with precious onyx or lapis lazuli.

<sup>17</sup> Neither gold nor crystal can compare with it, nor can it be had for jewels of gold.

<sup>18</sup> Coral and jasper are not worthy of mention; the price of wisdom is beyond rubies.

- <sup>19</sup> The topaz of Cush cannot compare with it; it cannot be bought with pure gold.
- <sup>20</sup> Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell?
- <sup>21</sup> It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing, concealed even from the birds in the sky.
- <sup>22</sup> Destruction and Death say, "Only a rumor of it has reached our ears."
- <sup>23</sup> God understands the way to it and he alone knows where it dwells,
- <sup>24</sup> for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens.
- <sup>25</sup> When he established the force of the wind and measured out the waters,
- <sup>26</sup> when he made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm,
- <sup>27</sup> then he looked at wisdom and appraised it; he confirmed it and tested it.
- <sup>28</sup> And he said to the human race,
- "The fear of the Lord--that is wisdom,  
and to shun evil is understanding."

### **HUMAN AUTHOR: INSPIRED**

Proverbs 2:1—9

- <sup>1</sup> My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you . . .
- <sup>6</sup> For the LORD gives wisdom;<sup>a</sup> from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Proverbs 30:1---5

The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh--an inspired utterance. This man's utterance to Ithiel:

"I am weary, God, but I can prevail.

### **TEXT: EXEGESIS**

- 13. canonical context
- 12. literary context
- 11. collection or book
- 10. sections/groups of songs
- 9. poems
- 8. stanzas
- 7. strophes
- 6. verses/lines
- 5. half-verses/versets/cola
- 4. *phrases*

3. words

2. syllables

1. sounds

A. Levels 1—5

Text criticism

Philological criticism: grammatico-historical (cf. 1 Sam 9:9; Ruth 4:7)

Figures of speech

B. Levels 6--10: Form criticism: genre and form; poetics

C. Levels 11—13 Biblical Theology

## **CONCLUSION: LECTIO DIVINA**

Lectio Divina has been likened to "Feasting on the Word." The four parts are first taking a bite (Lectio), then chewing on it (Meditatio). Next is the opportunity to savor the essence of it (Oratio). Finally, the Word is digested and made a part of the body (Contemplatio).

### **Lectio**

This first moment consists in reading the scriptural passage slowly, attentively several times.

### **Meditatio**

The Christian exegetes and ruminates on it, thinking in God's presence about the text. He or she benefits from the Holy Spirit's ministry of illumination, i.e. the work of the Holy Spirit that imparts spiritual understanding of the sacred text. It is not a special revelation from God, but the inward working of the Holy Spirit, which enables the Christian to grasp the revelation contained in the Scripture.

### **Oratio**

This is prayer: prayer understood both as dialogue with God, that is, as loving conversation with the One who has invited us into His embrace; and as consecration, prayer as the priestly offering to God of parts of all of ourselves. In this consecration-prayer we allow the word that we have taken in and on which we are pondering to touch and change our deepest selves. ...God invites us in *lectio divina* to hold up our most difficult and pain-filled experiences to Him, and to gently recite over them the healing word He has given us in our *lectio* and *meditatio*. In this *oratio*, this consecration-prayer, we allow our real selves to be touched and changed by the word of God.

### **Contemplatio**

This moment is characterized by a simple, loving focus on God. In other words, it is a beautiful, wordless contemplation of God, a joyful rest in His presence.

NB. Spiral reasoning

“There is an ongoing process of dialogue with the text in which the text itself progressively corrects and reshapes the interpreter’s own questions and assumptions.”  
(Thistelton, *Two Horizons*, p. 439)

## Lesson 2: Part I – Proverbs 1:1

“The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel (מְשֻׁלֵּי שְׁלֹמֹה בֶן־דָּוִד מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל: [mshly shlmlh ben david melek yisra’el])

### I. GENRE AND FORM

#### **A. Genre: Wisdom Literature**

1. Whybray: Distinctive vocabulary (1:2–6), but not helpful for theological reflection
2. Murphy: Non-historical, apart from Israel’s covenants, but see 1:1
3. Brueggemann and Crenshaw: Humanistic [emphasizing human dignity, not God’s glory; and human capability of knowing by sense and reason, not by revelation]. But see 3:5-7
4. Von Rad, Koch, Schmidt: Search for order, but “wisdom” is revealed (2:6)
5. McKane, Wuerthwein, Zimmerli: Eudemonistic [do good to get good], but too simplistic.
6. Kidner: Tone, but sage speaks with passion (cf. 1:20–33; 2:3)
7. BKW: Nature of Its Inspiration: observation of creation and society through lens of Israel’s Covenants. “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and *in various ways*.” (Hebrews 1:1)

#### **a. To Moses: in theophany**

#### **b. To prophet: in hazah (spirit vision/audition)**

Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. 2 "Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?" And the LORD heard this. 3 (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.) 4 At once the LORD said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, "Come out to the tent of meeting, all three of you." So the three of them went out. 5 Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When the two of them stepped forward, 6 he said, "Listen to my words: "When there are prophets of the LORD among you, I reveal myself to them in visions (מְרָאָה), I speak to them in dreams. 7 But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. 8 With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles (חֵידָת); he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my slave Moses?" (Numbers 12:1-8)

N.B. Moses’ has priority because of his better form of revelation (face to face versus visions/dreams) and clearer (“clearly,” “not in riddles”).



**c. To sage: in insightful observation.**

30 "I went past the field of the sluggard,  
     past the vineyard of someone who has no sense;  
 31 thorns had come up everywhere,  
     the ground was covered with weeds,  
     and the stone wall was in ruins.  
 32 I applied my heart to what I observed (*hazah*)  
     and learned a lesson from what I saw:  
 33 A little sleep, a little slumber,  
     a little folding of the hands to rest--  
 34 and poverty will come on you like a bandit  
     and scarcity like an armed man." (24:30-34)

N.B. Moses' has priority over sage in our interpretation

**d. Not natural theology: has world view of Israel's covenant theology. Uses Name of Israel's Covenant-Keeping God: YHWH ("I AM WHO I AM"): eternal, incomparable and self-disclosing in salvation-history.**

When he [Israel's king] takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel. (Deuteronomy 17:18-20)

**e. Inspired**

God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite--wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom. (1Ki 4:29-34)

"My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands (*misvoth*) within you...  
 then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding."  
(2:1-6)

N.B. Uses vocabulary of Moses' Book of the Law: *torah*, *miswot*, etc.

## B. Form: Proverb

Merriam-Webster: "a brief popular saying [such as "Too many cooks spoil the broth"] that gives advice about how people should live or that expresses a belief that is generally thought to be true.

Landes/McKane: based on etymology ("a comparison") "A literary model or analogy constructed for the purpose of conveying a model, an exemplar or paradigm."

BKW: "A poetic apothegm that has currency among those who fear I AM."

N.B. apothegm: a short, pithy, instructive saying

## II. AUTHOR(S)

### A. Seven Collections

#### 1. Proverbs of King Solomon (950 BC) 1:1-24:34

Collection I: Preamble and Prologue 1:1-9:18

Collection II: Proverbs of Solomon 10:1-22:16

Collection III: Thirty Sayings of Wise 22:17-24:22

Collection IV: More Sayings of Wise 24:23-34

#### 2. Proverbs of Solomon by Men of King Hezekiah (ca. 700 BC)

Collection V 25:1-29:27

#### 3. Sayings of Agur, probably a courtier:

Collection VI 30:1-33

#### 4. Sayings of King Lemuel's Mother:

Collection VII 31:1-31

#### 5. Anonymous Final Editor 1:1-31:31

Court setting of sages matches that Egyptian Instruction literature

### B. Problems of Solomon's Authorship

#### 1. Most academics reject Solomon's authorship without good reasons.

Similar to proverbs that span the Levant from Mesopotamia to Egypt from 2500 B.C. to 500 B.C. Cf. below *The Instruction of Amen-em-opet* (ca 1000 BC)

See Waltke, *Proverbs 1—15*, pp. 31—32; \_\_\_\_\_, “Review of Michael Fox, *Proverbs 10—31: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*” (The Anchor Yale Bible; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), *Review of Biblical Literature* (02/2010)

2. To many he is not credible because he died such a fool. How is this possible?

**f. a. Proverbs 19:27: Stop listening to instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.**

**g. b. Fails in mid-life crisis. Puts own palaces before house of God. Handout**

**A.** A prophet intervenes in the royal succession: 1:1-2:12

**B.** Solomon eliminates threats to his security: 2:13-46

**C.** Solomon and the Lord, loyalty and reward: 3:1-15

**D.** Untarnished glory of Solomon: wisdom and wealth: 3:16-4:34

#### **X Temple 5:1-9:9**

**a.** Preparations for building temple: Hiram 5:1-18

**b.** Solomon builds the Temple 6:1-37

**x.** Solomon builds palace complex 7:1-12

**b.’** Solomon furnishes the temple 7:13-51

**a.’** Solomon dedicates the temple, warned by God 8:1-9:9

**D’** Tarnished Glory of Solomon: wealth and wisdom: 9:10-10:29

**C’** Solomon and I AM: disloyalty and punishment 11:1-13

**B’** LORD raises up threats to Solomon's security: 11:14-25

**A’** A prophet determines the royal succession 11:26-43

“He had spent seven years building it. It took Solomon thirteen years, however, to complete the construction of his palace” (1Ki 6:38—7:1)

3. Conclusion

**h. a. Composed proverbs in early years of his reign**

“Solomon showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David” (1Ki 3:3)

**i. b. Composed shortly after God gave him his gift to compose proverbs.**

N.B. Spiritual success today is no guarantee of spiritual success tomorrow. 19:27.

**PART II: SOLOMON**

**I. SOLOMON'S PARENTS: A STORY OF A SON FROM AN EXCEPTIONALLY GIFTED FAMILY.**

**A. Grandfather Jesse.**

All Israel afraid of their mad king Saul, but not Jesse.

The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king." <sup>2</sup> But Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me." The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' <sup>3</sup> Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate." <sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?" <sup>5</sup> Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. (1Sa 16:1-5)

Jesse willingly co-operated in allowing his sons to be considered to replace Saul.

<sup>10</sup> Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these." <sup>11</sup> So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered. "He is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives." <sup>12</sup> So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; this is the one." <sup>13</sup> So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, (1Sa 16:10-13)

**B. Father, David, Israel's greatest and most famous king.**

Blind Bartimaeus paid Jesus the highest compliment he knew when he called him "Son of David." Mark 10:47

**1. Multi-gifted**

King's Saul's attendant describes David thus: "'I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the LORD is with him.'" 1 Samuel 16:18

j. a. He was the best lyre player in all of Israel

k. b. He became Israel's poet laureate

l. c. Brave and a warrior.

2. A grizzly shepherd boy

David, though too young to join the army, introduces himself to King Saul as a grizzly shepherd. To persuade Saul to let him fight Goliath, he says: "When a lion or bear carried one of his flock, he would go after and rescue the sheep from its mouth. When the lion or bear turned on him, he would grab it by its hair, strike it and kill it." 1 Samuel 17:34—36.

**3. Israel's greatest warrior: *expanded kingdom to that of Abrahamic covenant***

a. 2 Samuel 8:13

David became famous when he conquered Edom. Edom was mountainous like Switzerland and no one had ever defeated it. But David did; and so as David's biographer says: <sup>13</sup> And David became famous after he returned from striking down eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.: 2 Samuel 8:13

b. River of Egypt to Great River Euphrates. Ch. 8

**4. Godly father to Solomon**

<sup>2</sup> "I am about to go the way of all the earth," he said. "So be strong, act like a man, <sup>3</sup> and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and regulations, as written in the Law of Moses. Do this so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go. (1 Kings 2:2—3)

5. An equivalent of Alexander the Great and of Mozart

Conclusion: A son who grew up with men like his paternal grandfather and father might be worth listening to.

**B. Bathsheba**

1. Her father: Eliam son of Ahithophel. 2 Samuel 11:3; 23:34.

**m. Her grandfather, Ahithophel, a member of David's cabinet and the wisest counselor in Israel.**

"Now in those days the advice Ahithophel gave was like that of one who inquires of God. That was how both David and Absalom regarded all of Ahithophel's advice." (2 Sam 16:23) Her husband Eliam was one of David's thirty mighty men, these were the elite warriors of David's army; something like our navy's seals. .

## **2. Her husband was Uriah the Hittite, one of David's thirty mighty men. 2 Samuel 23:39**

He was in command of the army besieging Rabbah, the Ammonite capital. Though a Hittite, Uriah wholeheartedly devoted to the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

### **3. Attractive:**

She must have been exceedingly attractive that she was chosen to be the wife of this mighty warrior and godly man. David was willing to risk his kingdom to have sex with her.

## **4. Solomon's gene pool is Israel's best.**

## **II. BIRTH: A STORY OF AMAZING GRACE**

### **A. "A love child": Out of murder and adultery. 2 Samuel 11--12**

### **B. Parents forgiven, because David confessed and renounced his sin Prov. 28:13**

### **C. Loved by God at birth.**

<sup>24</sup> Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and made love to her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. The LORD loved him; <sup>25</sup> and because the LORD loved him, he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah. (2Sa 12:24-25)

### **D. Heir of the Davidic covenant and predestined to build the temple.**

<sup>12</sup> When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (2Sa 7:12-13)

### **III. UNLIKE HIS BROTHERS WHO WERE “WISE IN THEIR OWN EYES”**

#### **A. Three older brothers aspired to the throne but disqualified themselves by breaking Israel's covenants**

1. Amnon: 1 Samuel 13
2. Absalom: Murdered Amnon and killed in his revolution against his King David
3. Adonijah: usurped the throne while father was still living and without David's consent. Also did not have prophetic support.

#### **B. Solomon did not seek to advance himself. God elected him through his prophet Nathan and David put him on the throne in his stead.**

<sup>32</sup> King David said, "Call in Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada." When they came before the king, <sup>33</sup> he said to them: "Take your lord's servants with you and have Solomon my son mount my own mule and take him down to Gihon. <sup>34</sup> There have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, 'Long live King Solomon!' <sup>35</sup> Then you are to go up with him, and he is to come and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah." (1Ki 1:32-35)

### **IV. HIS EDUCATION.**

#### **A. Knew Egyptian Instruction literature, which resembles Proverbs**

1. Necessary to be king and to communicate with greatest empire.
2. Wife was Egyptian

Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter. (1Ki 3:1)

3. Egyptian officials learned to read and write through Instruction literature, which resembles Proverbs in substance and style. (See lecture 11: theology)

#### **B. He knew Israel's catechism**

"When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. <sup>19</sup> It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees <sup>20</sup> and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel." (Deut 17:18—20.)

## **V. HIS EXTRAORDINARY GIFT OF WISDOM: A STORY OF INSPIRATION**

### **A. Needed discernment to apply the Catechism**

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. "Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. (1Ki 3:5-12)

### **B. Inspired by God**

#### **1. Claim of his biographer 1 Kings 4:29—34**

God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite--wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom. (1Ki 4:29-34)

#### **2. His own claim:**

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you,

.....

<sup>5</sup> then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

<sup>6</sup> For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. (Pro 2:1-

6

### **3. Listening to Solomon is a matter of life and death.**

For the waywardness of the simple will kill them,  
and the complacency of fools will destroy them;



but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease,  
without fear of harm." (1:32-33)

**PART IV. CONCLUSION: JESUS CHRIST IS GREATER THAN SOLOMON (SEE LECTURE 11:  
THEOLOGY)**

## Lesson 3: BKW

### Preamble<sup>1</sup> to Book of Proverbs

<sup>2</sup> To know wisdom and instruction,  
to understand words of insight;

<sup>3</sup> to receive instruction in prudence,  
in righteousness, justice, and equity;

<sup>4</sup> to give prudence to the non-committed,  
knowledge and discretion to the youth--

<sup>5</sup> Let the wise listen and add to their learning,  
and let the discerning get guidance--

<sup>6</sup> to understand proverbs and parables,  
the sayings of the wise and their riddles.

<sup>7</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge  
wisdom and instruction fools despise.

### I. SUMMARY: 1:2

#### A. Moral acumen (1:2a)

1. "know" (*da`at*: personal knowledge: see lecture 2)
2. "wisdom": "masterful understanding," "skill," "expertise."

#### a. Of technology and/or art

**Exodus 28:3** Tell all the skilled men to whom I have given **wisdom** [אֶל-כָּל-הַכֹּמְיָן לֵב אֶנְשֵׁי מִלְּאֹתָיו רֹעֵם חֲכָמָה] in such matters that they are to make garments for Aaron, for his consecration, so he may serve me as priest.

**Exodus 31:2—6** <sup>2</sup> "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, <sup>3</sup> and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, **with wisdom**, with

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<sup>1</sup> The introductory part of a book, statute or deed, stating its purpose, aims, and justification.

understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills [רוח אלהים בחכמה ובתבונה] -- 4 to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, 5 to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts. 6 Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given ability to all the skilled workers to make everything I have commanded you:

#### b. of the arts of magic

**Exod. 7:11** Pharaoh then summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians [לחכמים ולמכשפים] also did the same things by their secret arts:

#### c. To govern: administrative, judicial; diplomatic skill

**Deuteronomy 1:12-16** But how can I [Moses] bear your [Israel's] problems and your burdens and your disputes all by myself? Choose some **wise**, understanding and respected men [אנשים חכמים ונבנים וידעים] from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you." You answered me, "What you propose to do is good." So I took the leading men of your tribes, wise and respected men, and appointed them to have authority over you-- as commanders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens and as tribal officials. And I charged your judges at that time: Hear the disputes between your brothers and judge fairly, whether the case is between brother Israelites or between one of them and an alien.

**1 Kings 3:28:** When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw that he had **wisdom** from God to administer justice [כי־חִכְמַת] (1Ki 3:28)

**Isaiah 11:1-5** A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- the Spirit of **wisdom** and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD— [וְנָתַתִּי עָלָיו רוּחַ יְהוָה רוּחַ חָכְמָה וּבִינָה רוּחַ עֲצָה וּגְבוּרָה רוּחַ דַּעַת] 3 and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

**Jeremiah 50:35** A sword against the Babylonians!" declares the LORD-- "against those who live in Babylon and against her officials and **wise** men! [וְאֶל־שָׂרֵיהֶּ וְאֶל־חֲכָמֶיהָ]

]

**1 Kings 5:7 [Heb. 21]:** When Hiram heard Solomon's message, he was greatly pleased and said, "Praise be to the LORD today, for he has given David a **wise** son to rule over this great nation."

**d. To wage war**

**Isaiah 10:13** For he says: "'By the strength of my hand I have done this, and by my **wisdom**, because I have understanding. I removed the boundaries of nations, I plundered their treasures; like a mighty one I subdued their kings. (Isa 10:13 N10)

**e. of encyclopedic knowledge**

**1 Kings 4:33—34:** <sup>33</sup> He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. <sup>34</sup> From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his **wisdom**.

**2 Samuel 14:20** My lord has **wisdom** like that of an angel of God--he knows everything that happens in the land."

**f. Of ability to answer questions**

**1 Kings 10:2—3:** She came to Solomon and talked with him about all that she had on her mind. <sup>3</sup> Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too hard for the king to explain to her.

**g. Of overcoming limitations**

"Four things on earth are small, yet they are extremely **wise**:

Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer;  
hyraxes are creatures of little power, yet they make their home in the crags;  
locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks;  
a lizard can be caught with the hand, yet it is found in kings' palaces. (30:24—28)

**h. Of enjoying an abundant life, entailing social skill**

**13:14** The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,

turning a person from the snares of death.

**21--22** My son, if you accept my words

and store up my commands within you,

<sup>2</sup> turning your ear to wisdom

and applying your heart to understanding

.....

<sup>20</sup> Thus you will walk in the ways of the good

and keep to the paths of the righteous.

<sup>21</sup> For the upright will live in the land,

and the blameless will remain in it;

<sup>22</sup> but the wicked will be cut off from the land,

and the unfaithful will be torn from it. (Pro

3. Wisdom is based knowledge ("words of insight"; see below)

*a. Cf. science and technology*

*b. In the book of Proverbs wisdom is the religious and ethical quality and state of knowing what conforms with Reality, with Truth and Wisdom—a Word begotten from God-- and the morals to act accordingly, thereby enabling one to cope with enigma and adversity and enter into life. In this book one may be clinically alive and lack life.*

*c. Knowledge of cause-effect nexus:*

*d. Cannot know absolutely without comprehensive knowledge Without absolute/certain knowledge cannot live skilfully. This requires revelation. See Prov. 30:1-6.*

4. Instruction (*musar*)

"A chastening lesson" to correct a moral fault. *Musar* connotes an authority—parent, sage, God, insight--to whom the disciple must submit himself (i.e., have "humility," 15:33) to quell his innate waywardness (cf. 22:15 :); thus it entails shaping character. It is directly associated with *tokahat* ("reproof," i.e., "the need to set things right") and *torah* ("catechetical teaching," 1:8 With verbs of hearing or observing it is acquired through verbal rebuke. The insightful also acquire *musar* through keen observation of and cogent reflection upon the suffering of others

(19:25; 24:32; cf. Deut. 11:2; Ezek. 5:15). *Musar* learned in these ways prevents act of folly. To prevent the repetition of folly, *musar* is learned with "the rod," the symbol of corporal punishment, in which case it may be glossed by "discipline" (13:24; 22:15; 23:13, 14; 29:15). Shupak says: "The Hebrew noun *musar* and the verb *yasar* like [their Egyptian equivalents] have the double meaning of 'instruct-reprove' and 'chastise-beat'."<sup>2</sup> The responsibility to respond to instruction lies squarely on the child's shoulders; he must listen to it (1:8), accept it (1:3; 19:20; 23:23), love it (12:1), prize it more highly than money (4:7; 23:23) and not let go of it (4:13). Once accepted, discipline springs from the power of the internalized wisdom, not from sporadic "New Year's resolutions." It is a matter of inward spirit, not of a coerced will and servile compliance.

## B. Mental acumen (1:2B)

1. "Words" (see 2:1): oral (1:8) and written (3:21).
2. "insight" (*binah*): "the faculty of intellectual discernment through the senses and interpretation, the exercise of that faculty, or the product thereof, in words or acts."<sup>3</sup>

## II. MORAL ACUMEN UNPACKAGED: 1:3-5

### A. Addressee's perspective:

1. "Prudence" (*maskil*): to give attention to a threatening situation, to have insight into its solution, to act decisively and thereby effect success and life and prevent failure and death.
2. "Righteousness" (*sedeq*): to establish a right social order according to God's word; entails disadvantaging self to advantage others
3. "Justice" (*mishpat*) : to reestablish right social order by punishing oppressor and relieving oppressed
4. "fair" (*mesarim*: "upright"): liberty within law, freedom within form, lovemaking within marriage).

### B. Teacher's perspective and audience (vv. 4-5):

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<sup>2</sup> N. Shupak, "Egyptian Terms and Features in Biblical Heb.," *Tar* 54 (1984/85) 107.

<sup>3</sup> M. V. Fox, "Words for Wisdom," *ZAH* 6 (1993) 154.

1. “Simple” (*p<sup>e</sup>ti.*, “uncommitted”): open to everything and committed to nothing.

“Discretion” (*m<sup>e</sup>zimmah*, benevolent “craftiness” (i.e., “the talent for devising and using adroit and wily tactics in the attaining of one’s goals”).

2. Callow youth (*na`ar*)

3. “Wise”: teachable.”

“Guidance” (*tahbuloth*: “ropes” for steering a ship)

## **II. MENTAL ACUMEN UNPACKAGED: 1:6**

a. Proverbs (Solomon) and “parables” (*m<sup>e</sup>lisa*: same as proverb; it asks its audience to make an intuitive critical judgment of their own behavior in light of the aphorism).

b. Sayings of Wise (see author) and “riddle” (*hidot*, demand noetic and existential functions).

## **IV. CHIASTIC STRUCTURE OF PREAMBLE:**

The term *chiastic* derives from the mid 17th century term *chiasmus*, which refers to a *crosswise arrangement* of concepts or words that are repeated in reverse order. *Chiasmus* derives from the Greek word *khiasmos*, a word that is *khiazein*, marked with the letter khi/*chi*. *Chi* is made up of two lines crossing each other as in the shape of an X. The line that starts leftmost on top, comes down, and is rightmost on the bottom, and vice versa. If one thinks of the lines as concepts, one sees that concept A, which comes first, is also last, and concept B, which comes after A, comes before A. If one adds in more lines representing other concepts, one gets a chiastic structure with more concepts. The structure leads up to a climatic pivot and then backs off from it.

### **A. Repetitions in text**

*To know [da`at] wisdom and instruction,*

**to understand** words of insight;

to receive instruction in prudence:

righteousness, justice, equity;

to give prudence to the simple,

knowledge and discretion to youth;

**to understand** proverbs and parables,

the sayings of the wise and their riddles.

The fear of I AM is the beginning of *knowledge* [da `at],

*wisdom and instruction* fools despise.

## B. Chiastic structure

A. Comprehensive, intellectual values:	2a
<b>To know wisdom and instruction</b> לְדַעַת חֵכְמָה וּמוֹסָר	
<b>[da'at hokmah umusar]</b>	
B. Literary Expression of Wisdom	2b
<b>to understand words of insight,</b>	
C. Instrumental virtue: <b>prudence</b>	3a
<b>X. Moral, communal virtues:</b>	
<b>righteous, justice, equity</b>	3b
C.' Instrumental virtue: <b>prudence</b> , discretion, guidance	4-5
B.' Literary expressions of wisdom	6
<b>to understand proverbs and parables</b>	
A.' Comprehensive, intellectual virtues:	7
<b>knowledge; wisdom and instruction</b> דְּעַת חֵכְמָה וּמוֹסָר	
<b>[da'at hokmah umusar]</b>	



### **C. Pivot: Righteousness**

1. “to bring about what is right and harmonious for all within a community. It finds its basis in God’s word/rule of the world” (p. 97).

2. “Wisdom in shoe-leather: “Disadvantaging yourself to advantage others.”

3. Wicked: Not just breaking Ten Commandments.

**a. Murder: Failure to feed enemy**

**b. Adultery: Failure to honor noble wife**

**c. Steal: Failure to be generous**

**d. Gossip: Failure to cover over all transgressions.**

4 Applications: Illustrations of library; timeliness; driving; rest rooms

5. Jesus: gave up his life to give life; became poor to make rich.

6. Caveat: Ecclesiastes 7:16-18 <sup>6</sup> Do not be overrighteous, neither be overwise-- why destroy yourself? <sup>17</sup> Do not be overwicked, and do not be a fool-- why die before your time? <sup>18</sup> It is good to grasp the one and not let go of the other. The man who fears God will avoid all *extremes*.

### **D. Righteousness a correlative term of wisdom.**

1. Two words having the same referent but belonging to different semantic domains.

2. Without ethical co-referent, wisdom could be a vice:

Exodus 7:11-12 Pharaoh then summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians also did the same things by their secret arts: <sup>12</sup> Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs.

### E. Value of righteousness:

1. Protects from World: 13:6 <sup>6</sup> Righteousness guards the person of integrity, but wickedness overthrows the sinner.
2. Promotes Relationship with God: Proverbs 15:9 *I AM* detests the way of the wicked but he loves those who pursue righteousness.
3. Profits Self: Proverbs 21:21

## V. HERMENEUTICAL KEY: FEAR OF THE LORD (1:7)

### A. A collocation, a syntagma (a series of linguistic elements forming a distinctive syntactic unit)

### B. Revelation: Objective revelation:

#### 1. Cf. Psalm 19:7-9:

The **law of LORD** is perfect, reviving the soul.

The **statutes of the LORD** are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

The **precepts of the LORD** are right, giving joy to the heart.

The **commands of the LORD** are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

The **fear of the LORD** is pure, enduring forever.

The **ordinances of the LORD** are sure and altogether righteous.” (Psalm 19:7)

#### 2. cf. Proverbs 2:1—5

“If you accept my words ... then you will understand the fear of the LORD”

### C. Reception: humility to accept revelation:

Wisdom's instruction is to fear the LORD, and humility comes before honor (15:33).

The wages of humility--the fear of the LORD [sort]--are riches and honor and life. (22:4)

“Fear of the LORD” also entails a non-rational aspect, an emotional response of fear, love and trust. The unified psychological poles of fear and love come prominently to the fore in the surprisingly uniform way. Deuteronomy treats “love of the LORD” and “fear of the LORD” as synonyms (cp. 5:29 with 6:2, and 6:5 with Josh. 24:14; cf. 10:12, 20; 13:5). In Isaiah 29:13 Israel’s distorted “fear of me” is rejected precisely because it is made up only of rules taught by men. According to Proverbs 2:1-5 “the fear of the LORD” is found through heart-felt prayer and through diligent seeking for the sage’s words. In 15:33 “humility” and “fear of the LORD” are parallel terms, and in 22:4 “humility” is defined as “the fear of the LORD sort.”

#### D. Awe for the One who holds life and death in his hands.

And when the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant. (Exod. 14:31)

In the classic, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis, children enter through the wardrobe a fantasy world where the events and characters in Narnia represent biblical narrative. Christ is represented by Aslan, the great lion. When the beaver, the guide, briefs the children about Narnia he mentions the lion. The children ask, “Is he safe?” The beaver answer: “Of course not, but he’s good.” As people in general are motivated to obey their consciences out of fear of God, so saints’ respond to the moral imperative of Scripture apart from either legal or ecclesiastical sanctions. For them the fear of the LORD is just as real as their love for him (see 14:27; 21). Both psyches are rooted in their faith: they believe his promises and love him; they believe his threats and fear him. In sum, C. Bridges says: “[The fear of the Lord is] that affectionate reverence, by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father’s law.”

And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but **to fear the LORD** your God, **to walk** in all his ways, **to love him**, **to serve the LORD** your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD’s commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?” (Deut. 10:12-13)

Biblical Training. September, 2014. Lecture 4. BKW

Parents’ and Woman Wisdom’s Address to Youth.

#### I. LISTEN TO PARENTS/REJECT GANG (1:8-19)

<sup>8</sup> Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not let go of your mother’s teaching.

<sup>9</sup> They are an attractive garland for your head and a necklace for your throat.

- <sup>10</sup> My son, if sinful men tempt you, do not yield.
- <sup>11</sup> If they say, "Come with us; let's set ambush for blood,  
Let's lie in wait for the innocent with no reason at all.
- <sup>12</sup> let's swallow them alive, like Sheol, and whole, like those who go down to the Pit;
- <sup>13</sup> we will find all sorts of precious wealth and fill our houses with plunder;
- <sup>14</sup> cast lots with us; all of us will divide up the purse "--
- <sup>15</sup> my son, do not go on the way with them, do not set foot on their paths;
- <sup>16</sup> for their feet rush into evil, they are swift to shed blood.
- <sup>17</sup> How useless to spread a net in the sight of any flying creature!
- <sup>18</sup> But these men set an ambush for their own blood; they lie in wait for their own lives!
- <sup>19</sup> Such are the paths of all who are greedy for gain; it takes away the life of the one who gets it.

First of twelve lectures to son (1:8; 2:1; 3:1, 13; 4:1, 10, 20; 5:1; 6:1, 20; 7:1; 8:1)

"Youth: "son" and "simple" on threshold of adulthood. Must choose identity among competing voices. There is no third way.

## A. Introduction: Listen to parents (1:8—9)

### 1. Command: v. 8

Listen, my son, to your father's instruction (*musar*) (1:2, 7)  
and do not forsake your mother's teaching (*torah*).

"Listen": probably a literary fiction.

"Son":

biological and spiritual

Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding.

I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching.

For I too was a son to my father, still tender, and cherished by my mother. (4:1—3)

"Father" and "mother": Stereotypical phrase in prose split apart in poetry. Occurs at seams

"A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son brings grief to his mother" (10:1).

*Torah*: catechistic teaching (Manual of religious instruction used to instruct the young, win converts, and testify to the faith.)

## 2. Motivation: v. 9

They are an attractive garland for your head  
and a necklace for your throat.

“Garland”: In Egypt a twisted wreath, a symbol signifying victory and vindication over enemies, of power and life, of prestige and high social status.

“Necklace”: In Egypt symbol signifying guidance and protection. High judges and viziers carried Ma‘at as symbolic expression that they lived in an exemplary way in service of Ma‘at [right order]. Egyptians in general wore the Ma‘at pendants into death, possibly as a symbol of the hope that in the judgment of the dead their service to Ma‘at would give promise of life.

## B. Lesson: Resist the gang’s invitation: 1:10—19

### 1. Summary statement: 1:10

My son, if sinful men entice you,  
*do not give in to them.*

“If”: developed in vv. 11-14; “Do not give in”: developed in vv. 15-19

“Sin”: falls short of God’s standard of behavior, and since one’s relationship to God and community are inseparable; it also entails a violation of a person.

“Entice”: “sinners love company”

### 2. Seduction Unpackaged: 1:11-14 [4 verses]

“Say”: competition of parent’s voice with wicked peer group. The stakes are high: life or death. It is a battle of moral persuasion, not of naked force.

“Innocent”: dispatched to premature death (cf. Abel)

“blood”: violent death

“ambush”: coldly calculated to give no chance of escape

“Sheol”: in league with death.

“plunder”: immediate wealth outside of law instead of deferred wealth with development of character within law.

Allurement: excitement (vv. 11-12), easy money (v. 13), comradeships of the gang (v. 14)

### 3. Parents' Warning Unpackaged: 1:15-18 [4 verses]

#### n. a. **Command: vv. 16-17**

“Way”: Nuclear metaphor for one’s life: character, context, conduct, consequence

“Blood”: ambiguous (cf. v. 11, 18; Cf. Isa. 59:7 [+“innocent blood”])

#### o. b. **Motivation: vv. 17-18**

“See”: even birds see a deed-consequence nexus

### 4. Conclusion: Lesson (v. 19, matching v. 10)

“Such”: analogous (not “therefore,” logical)

“Paths”: See. v. 15a; plural for many applications

“All”: normal universalizing conclusion

“Ill-gotten gain”: Heb. “rip off”

## **II. WOMAN WISDOM’S REBUKE OF SIMPLE (1:20—33)**

### **A. Her sermon at the city gate (1:20—27)**

#### 1. Setting of sermon (20—21)

20 Wisdom cries aloud in the street,

in the public square she raises her voice;

21 on the highest wall she calls out,

at the entrance of the gate to the city she makes her speech:

“Wisdom”: a literary fiction

“gate”: before encountering temptations within city

#### 2. Rebuke of simple (22—23)

22 "How long, you simpletons, will you love your simple ways?

And mockers delight themselves with mocking,

And fools hate knowledge?

23 Repent [Turn] at my rebuke!

Then I will pour out my thoughts to you,

I will make known to you my sayings.

“How long”: implies an extended period of time. Already on the road to death.

“simpletons: “Open to everything; committed to nothing.”

“Love”; strongly attracted to

“mockers. . .fools”: lumps “simple” with them, but addressed to them

“Repent”: amazing grace

### 3. Her denunciation (24-27)

#### **p. a. Accusation: They rejected her counsel (24-25)**

24 But since you refuse to listen when I call,  
and no one pays attention when I stretch out my hand;  
25 since you flout all my advice  
and do not accept my rebuke,

“advice”: determined counsel

#### **q. b. Sentence: She rejects them at judgment (26–27)**

26 I in turn will laugh when disaster strikes you;  
I will mock when calamity overtakes you—  
27 when calamity overtakes you like a storm,  
when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind,  
when distress and anguish overwhelm you. (Pro 1:20-27)

“laugh”: of victory over evil (Pss. 2:4; 52:6; 59:8)

<sup>4</sup> The One enthroned in heaven laughs;  
the Lord scoffs at them. (2:4)

<sup>5</sup> Surely God will bring you [Doeg the Edomite] down to everlasting ruin:

He will snatch you up and pluck you from your tent;  
he will uproot you from the land of the living.

<sup>6</sup> The righteous will see and fear;  
they will laugh at you, saying, (52:6)

<sup>8</sup> But you laugh at them, LORD; you scoff at all those nations. (59:8)

## B. Her reflections on her sermon (1:28—33)

### 1. The certainty and finality of their judgment 28-31

#### r. a. Certainty of judgment (28—29)

28 "Then they will call to me but I will not answer;  
they will look diligently for me but will not find me,  
29 since they hated knowledge  
and did not choose to fear the LORD.

“not answer”: invests choices of this life with great dignity

#### s. b. Finality of judgment

30 Since they would not accept my advice  
and spurned my every rebuke,  
31 they will eat from the fruit of their ways  
and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.

### 2. Destinies of Fools and Wise (32—33)

32 For the waywardness [turning away] of the simple will kill them,  
and the complacency of fools will destroy them;  
33 but whoever listens to me will live in safety  
and be at ease, without fear of harm.“ (Pro 1:28-33)

## C. Concentric Structure of Woman Wisdom’s Address

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| A. Exasperated Wisdom rebukes <i>peti</i> to repent | 22-23 |
| B. <i>Peti</i> condemned for rejecting her rebuke   | 24-25 |



C. Wisdom rejects them at judgment	26-27
C.' Wisdom rejects them at judgment	28-29
B.' <i>Peti</i> condemned for rejecting her rebuke	30-31
A.' Death of fools & <i>peti</i> versus security of wise	32-33

### **III. IDENTITY OF WOMAN WISDOM**

#### **A. Her [*hokmah* a famine noun] Persona**

1. A prophetess: scolding tone, repent, condemnation
2. A sage: wisdom, wise, fools, mockers
3. A goddess: possesses life, laughs at judgment

“The sage represents Wisdom as a unique woman who wears the mantle of a prophet, carries the scrolls of wise man, and wears a goddess-like diadem. The prophetic, sapient, and divine components of her characterization so interpenetrate one another that she emerges a unique personality whose only peer is Jesus Christ. Here identification as an incarnate heavenly being who in humiliation accept the rejection of the masses to offer the eternal life functions within the canon as a foreshadowing of him who is greater than Solomon. ... Though more closely related to God than human beings, she rubs shoulders with the masses in the rough-and-tumble of the city gate, and, in an amazing display of grace, invites the unresponsive youths to repent at her rebuke fore eternal death overtakes them.” (p. 85)

#### **B. Her identity**

1. Created order (created order of deed and consequences that Israel learned from experience)? No text and not true to experience.
2. God's attribute? Contra. 8:22-25
3. Jesus Christ: traditional Christian doctrine

Wisdom is represented as existing before the creation but as begotten in primordial time. She is represented an agent the LORD used in creation but not as the Creator

<sup>22</sup> "The LORD brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old;

<sup>23</sup> I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be.

<sup>24</sup> When there were no watery depths [תְּהוֹמוֹת], I was given birth,

when there were no springs overflowing with water;

<sup>25</sup> before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth,

<sup>26</sup> before he made the world or its fields or any of the dust of the earth.  
<sup>27</sup> I was there when he set the heavens in place,  
 when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,  
<sup>28</sup> when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,  
<sup>29</sup> when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command,  
 and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.  
<sup>30</sup> Then I was constantly at his side.  
 I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence,  
<sup>31</sup> rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind. (8:22—31)

4. Solomon's Wisdom/his proverbs:

- t. a. See 1:1-2. No reason to think personification of abstract wisdom differs from Solomon's definition in book's Preamble ["The proverbs of Solomon to know wisdom]:.
- u. b. Same addressees as in preamble 1:4
- v. c. Equates her rebuke with "fear of the LORD," same as preamble.
- w. d. Wisdom's lectures to simple in the gate (1:20—33 and chapter 8) compliment parents' lectures to the son in the home. Wisdom lectures invests her [i.e., Solomon's teachings] with the heavenly authority (see 2:5--6).
- x. e. Parent's teachings are Solomon's proverbs; we should assume the same for identification of Woman Wisdom
- y. f. Woman's and parent's lectures share the same themes.cf. 6:23ff & 7:5; 4:20-22 & 8:32-36; cf. 4:5

For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light,  
 and correction and instruction are the way to life,  
<sup>24</sup> keeping you from your neighbor's wife,  
 \from the smooth talk of a wayward woman. (6:23—24)

<sup>3</sup> Bind them [father's teachings]on your fingers;  
 write them on the tablet of your heart.

<sup>4</sup> Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"  
 and to insight, "You are my relative."

<sup>5</sup> They will keep you from the adulterous woman,

from the wayward woman with her seductive words. (7:3—5)

Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my [father's] words  
or turn away from them. (4:5)

<sup>32</sup> "Now then, my children, listen to me [Woman Wisdom];  
blessed are those who keep my ways.

<sup>33</sup> Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not disregard it.

<sup>34</sup> Blessed are those who listen to me,...

<sup>35</sup> For those who find me find life and receive favor from the LORD.

<sup>36</sup> But those who fail to find me harm themselves; all who hate me love death."

**z. g. Prologue offers no other plausible candidate**

## Lecture 5. BKW

### Safeguards against the Wicked: Exposition of Proverbs 2

#### I. TRANSLATION

- <sup>1</sup> My son, if you accept my words  
and store up my commands within you--
- <sup>2</sup> by making your ear attentive to wisdom  
You will apply your heart to understanding--
- <sup>3</sup> indeed, if you call out for insight  
and cry aloud for understanding,
- <sup>4</sup> and if you look for it as for silver  
and search for it as for hidden treasure,
- <sup>5</sup> then you will understand the fear of the LORD  
and find the knowledge of God.
- <sup>6</sup> For the LORD gives wisdom;  
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.
- <sup>7</sup> He holds success in store for the upright,  
he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,
- <sup>8</sup> for he guards the course of the just  
and protects the way of his faithful ones.
- <sup>9</sup> Then you will understand what is right and just and fair--every good path.
- <sup>10</sup> For wisdom will enter your heart,  
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.
- <sup>11</sup> Discretion will protect you,  
and understanding will guard you.
- <sup>12</sup> Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men,  
from men whose words are perverse,
- <sup>13</sup> who have left the straight paths  
to walk in dark ways,
- <sup>14</sup> who delight in doing wrong

- and rejoice in the perverseness of evil,  
<sup>15</sup> whose paths are crooked  
and who are devious in their ways.  
<sup>16</sup> Wisdom will save you also from the adulterous woman,  
from the wayward woman with her seductive words,  
<sup>17</sup> who has left the partner of her youth  
and ignored the covenant she made before God.  
<sup>18</sup> Surely her house leads down to death  
and her paths to the spirits of the dead.  
<sup>19</sup> None who go to her return  
or attain the paths of life.  
<sup>20</sup> Thus you will walk in the ways of the good  
and keep to the paths of the righteous.  
<sup>21</sup> For the upright will live in the land,  
and the blameless will remain in it;  
<sup>22</sup> but the wicked will be cut off from the land,  
and the unfaithful will be torn from it.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **I. MOTIVATIONS FOR ACCEPTING PARENTS' TEACHING**

**A. Know God: 2:5b (cf. 1:2)**

**B. Attain Key to Book of Proverbs: 2:5a (cf. 1:7)**

**C. Achieve Purpose of Book of Proverbs: 2:9 (cf. 2:3)**

### **II. OUTLINE OF POEM IN PRAISE OF WISDOM**

**A. The Production of the godly character/root: vv. 1-11 [11 verses]**

1. Conditions: "if" vv. 1-4 [4 verses]

2. Consequences: "then"

**a. theological education: vv. 5-8 [4verses]**

**b. ethical education: vv. 9-11 [3 verses]**

## **B. The Purpose of production of godly character/fruit[11 verses]**

1. Safeguard against wicked man: vv. 12-15 [4 verses]
2. Safeguard against wicked woman: vv. 16-19 [4 verses]
3. Summary: life, not death: vv. 20-22 [3 verses]

### **BODY: EXEGESIS**

#### **I. THE PRODUCTION OF THE GODLY CHARACTER/ROOT: VV. 1-11 [11 VERSES]**

##### **A Conditions: “if” vv. 1-4**

**[4 verses]**

1. Accept: v. 1a

“The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.” 1 Cor. 2:14

Polyani (“The Scientific Outlook: Its Sickness and Cure,” *Science* (March 1957); ----, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (University of Chicago, 1962): Must commit to hypothesis in order to know. Knowledge flows from personal commitment to a set of particulars, as tools or clues, to shape a skillful achievement, not from detached observation of them.

Cf. riding a bike

2. Store up (treasure): v. 1b

- a. memorize. Kindergarten children: ten commandments; ; “One who repeats his lessons a hundred times is not like one who repeats it a hundred and one times.”
  - b. with religious affection: Wise men and rabbi friend
3. Pay attention: v. 2
- a. Word of God. “The Emperor Constantine stood hours to hear the word; replying, when asked to sit, ‘that he thought it wicked to give negligent ears, when the truth handled as spoken of God’ (Eusebius. De Vita Constant. Liv, iv)” cited by Bridges, p. 14, n. 1)
  - b. Leads to change of being. Iris Murdoch, following Simone Weil: “Moral change comes from an attention to the world whose natural result is a decrease in egoism through an increased sense of the reality of someone or something.” “Change of being, metanoia, is not brought about by straining and ‘will0power,’ but a long deep process of unselfing.” (Metaphysics as Guide to Morals (Penguin, 1993) 52—54
4. Cry out: v. 3
- a. Matches 1:21
  - b. Prayer is absolutely focused attention and unmixed desire. Jas 1:5; 3:13—18
  - c. Work on NIV
5. Seek: v. 4
- a. To search for something lost or missed. Study
  - b. Emotional nuance
  - c. Valued as highly as a precious metal.

“I can speak it by experience—says a wise man—that there is little good to be gotten by reading the Bible cursorily and carelessly. But do it daily and diligently, with attention and affection, and you shall find such efficacy, as is to



be found in no other book that can be name” (Erasmus, *Preface to Luke*, cited by Bridges, p. 15 n.

- d. Cf. Pearl of great price. One pearl could pay for a Roman legion; Cf. Anthony and Cleopatra. \$5 m. pearl drink

## B. Consequences: “then” (5—11)

1. theological education: vv. 5-8 [4verses]

### aa. a. Summary: v. 5

- 1.) Understand: allegiance precedes understanding, not the other way around
2. ) Fear God: Word, submit, fear
- 3.) Know God: personal knowledge

“Plato and Aristotle employed [theology] in the sense of ‘science of divine things.’ Quite differently, the Hebraic expression *da’at ‘Elohim*, “knowledge of God,” points to a reality which at once includes and transcends intellectual disquisition. It designates the involvement of man’s total personality I the presence of Yahweh through the prophetic word, t4he cultic celebration, and the psychological mode of communion in faith” (S. Terrien, *The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology* (Harper & Ro, 1978), p. 40

### b. Substantiation: v. 6

- 1.) Chain of command: God > Solomon > Parent > Disciple
- 2.) Words come from heart of God.
- 3.) Claims inspiration and authority along with Moses and prophets

**c. Safeguard: vv. 7—8**

- 1.) Success > sound judgment. Make the right decision with regard to wicked
- 2.) Shield. He himself—inseparable from Solomon’s teaching-- is the shield.
- 3.) Guard, protect: God’s word through the parents is greater than the words of sinful men and women.
- 3.) Upright > blameless (integrity).

**2. ethical education: vv. 9-11**

[3 verses]

Introduction

“Then” < vv. 1—8

Alternating structure: ABC A’B’C’

bb.

cc. a. summary: ethical. See 1:3: v. 9

dd. b. wisdom will enter your heart. V. 10

ee.

1. ) Match v. 6 and so know God.

2.) A regenerate heart

ff. c. discretion will protect. V. 7

gg.

a. Illustration of rotten eggs

b. Nuanced by 4:18f.

## **B. The Purpose of production of godly character/fruit[11 verses]**

1. Safeguard against wicked man: vv. 12-15 [4 verses]

hh. a. summary of purpose: deliverance from way of wicked and their perverse speech (see 1:10—19): v. 12

ii. b. description of wicked and their way: vv. 13--14

jj.

1.) apostates: who abandon straight paths for dark one: v. 13

“dark”: cut off from moral light and so safety, freedom and success

2.) religious affections: evil v.14

**kk. c. description of path: perverse v. 15**

2. Safeguard against wicked woman: vv. 16-19 [4 verses]

**ll. a. summary of purpose and speech: v. 16**

**mm. b. description wicked woman: vv. 17**

“companion of her youth”: metonymy for husband

“covenant of God”: marriage obligation imposed on her by God.

**nn. c. description of her path: vv. 18–19**

1.) leads to death: v. 18

“realm of the dead”: mass community of corpses estranged from life

2.) no second chance: v. 19

“will not return” from realm of the dead

**oo.**

3. Summary: life, not death: vv. 20-22 [3 verses]

**pp. a. Summary: stay in good path: v. 20**

**qq.**

“Thus”: As a consequence of what has been said

**rr. b. Good path: life: v. 21**

**ss. c. Bad path: death: v. 22**

“cut off from land”: cut off from source of life

“treacherous”: unfaithfulness to an existing, established relationship.

## Lecture 6. BKW

Does Proverbs Promise Too Much? Exposition of Proverbs 3:1—12

### TRANSLATION

- <sup>1</sup> My son, do not forget my teaching,  
and let your heart guard my commands,  
<sup>2</sup> for they will add length of days and years of life  
and bring you *shalom* [peace and prosperity].
- <sup>3</sup> Let *hesed* and faithfulness never leave you;  
bind them around your neck,  
[write them on the tablet of your heart; cf. 7:3].
- <sup>4</sup> Then you will win favor and a good name  
in the sight of God and man.
- <sup>5</sup> Trust in the LORD with all your heart  
and lean not on your own understanding;  
<sup>6</sup> in all your ways know him,  
and he will make your paths *yashar* [straight and smooth].
- <sup>7</sup> Do not be wise in your own eyes;  
fear the LORD and shun evil.
- <sup>8</sup> Let there be healing to your body [lit., “navel”]  
and nourishment [refreshment] to your bones.
- <sup>9</sup> Honor the LORD with your wealth,  
with the first fruits of all your crops;  
<sup>10</sup> then your granaries will be filled to overflowing,  
and your vats will brim over with new wine.
- <sup>11</sup> Do not despise, my son, the LORD's discipline,

and do not resent his rebuke,  
<sup>12</sup> because the LORD disciplines those he loves,  
as a father the son he delights in.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Admonition/Conditions:

Human Obligations

Argumentation/promises:

Divine Obligations

### *Introduction*

1. Keep my commands

3. Keep unfailing love

Life and peace

Favor w/ God & people

### *Body*

5. Trust LORD

7. Fear LORD

9. Honor LORD

Straight path

Healing

Prosperity

### *Conclusion*

11. Don't reject discipline

Proof of Father's love

## **BODY: DOES PROVERBS PROMISE TOO MUCH?**

## **DOES IT TEACH A HEALTH, WEALTH, AND PROSPERITY GOSPEL?**

## **I. UNACCEPTABLE SOLUTIONS**

### **A. All sin and so do not merit health, wealth and prosperity (Job 4:7)**

1. Some validity that we suffer because of sin:

**tt. a. Cf. covenant curses and blessings. Leviticus 26:3—17; Deuteronomy 28**

**uu. b. Cf. Proverbs 3:11-12**

2. Job disallows all suffering is due to original sin

**vv. a. Argument of Eliphaz that all suffering due to original sin: Job 4:7--21**

<sup>7</sup> "Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed?

<sup>8</sup> As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it.

<sup>9</sup> At the breath of God they perish; at the blast of his anger they are no more.

<sup>10</sup> The lions may roar and growl, yet the teeth of the great lions are broken.

<sup>11</sup> The lion perishes for lack of prey, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

<sup>12</sup> "A word was secretly brought to me, my ears caught a whisper of it.

<sup>13</sup> Amid disquieting dreams in the night, when deep sleep falls on people,

<sup>14</sup> fear and trembling seized me and made all my bones shake.

<sup>15</sup> A spirit glided past my face, and the hair on my body stood on end.

<sup>16</sup> It stopped, but I could not tell what it was. A form stood before my eyes, and I heard a hushed voice:

<sup>17</sup> 'Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can even a strong man be more pure than his Maker?

<sup>18</sup> If God places no trust in his servants, if he charges his angels with error,

<sup>19</sup> how much more those who live in houses of clay, whose foundations are in the dust, who are crushed more readily than a moth!

<sup>20</sup> Between dawn and dusk they are broken to pieces; unnoticed, they perish forever.

<sup>21</sup> Are not the cords of their tent pulled up, so that they die without wisdom?'

### **ww. b. Book of Job refutes argument of Eliphaz**

#### **1.) Inspired narrator's evaluation of Job**

"This man was blameless and upright;

he feared God and shunned evil." (Job 1:1; cf. Prov. 3:7 )



## 2.) Lord's evaluation of Job

"Then the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered my slave Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.'" (Job 1:8 )

## 3.) Lord's evaluation of Job's friends

After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my slave Job has. (Job 42:7)

## B. Sage confused and/or a dullard:

"There is a strong suspicion here that Israel's sages have confused what ought to be the case with what actually is the case" (Aitken)

Sage characterized by keen observation and cogent reflection (cf, 24:30—34; BKW)

## C. "False doctrine" of old wisdom (Proverbs); contradicted by young wisdom (Job, Ecclesiastes [Qoheleth])

### 1. Argument:

Qoheleth accuses the sages of becoming "entangled in a single false doctrine" (G. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, p. 233)

"Qoheleth's primary mode of presentation . . . is in order to contract traditional wisdom" (J. G. Williams, *Those Who Ponder Proverbs*, p. 53)

### 2. Contradicts sound doctrine: God made to contradict himself

2 Timothy 3:15: All Scripture is God-breathed

Proverbs 2:6: For the LORD gives wisdom;  
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding."

Proverbs 30:5 "Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him."

## **D. Proverbs of health, wealth, prosperity are probabilities, not promises**

### **1. Argument**

"The proverbs contained in this book are not to be interpreted as prophecies or their statements about effects and results as promises. For instance, 10:27 says that the years of the wicked are cut short, while the righteous live long and prosperous live... While such statements are generally true, there are enough exceptions to indicate that sometimes the righteous suffer and wicked prosper.....

### **2. Refutation**

#### **xx. a. Bad theology**

2 Tim. 2:13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

#### **yy. b. Bad math**

Acts 14:19—22 Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead.

<sup>20</sup> But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe. <sup>21</sup> They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch,

<sup>22</sup> strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

1 Corinthians 15:19: If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

#### **zz. c. Bad psychology**

Cannot "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;"

## II. TOWARD A RESOLUTION

### A. Partially validated by experience:

“The sober, not the drunkard (cf. 23:29-35), the cool tempered, not the hothead (15:18); 19:19; 22:24; 29:22), the diligent, not the sluggard usually experience health, wealth and prosperity” (BKW, p. 108)

### B. Epigrammatic Nature of Proverbs

“It is of the nature of an epigram that a truth is expressed with the greatest concentration on the subject-matter and with a disregard of any presuppositions, attendant circumstances, etc...” (Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, p. 32)

“There are many proverbs that assert or imply that the wicked prosper ... while the innocent suffer” (Raymond van Leeuwen, “Wealth and Proverbs,” *Hebrew Studies* 33 (1992): 29. Compare and contrast

**Treasures gained by wickedness** have no lasting value,  
but righteousness delivers from death.

The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry,  
but **he thwarts the craving of the wicked. (10:2—3)**

N.B. The proverbs assume the wicked have a treasure before their cravings are thwarted.

Contrast: “Honor the LORD with your wealth . . . then your barns will be filled to overflowing” (3:9-10) with “Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife.” (17:1)

N.B. 17:1 assumes good people may have a dry crust, not feasting

Conclusion: The book has to be read holistically.

## C. “Future Hope” Transcends Clinical Death

1. In the way of righteousness there is life;  
along that path is immortality. 12:28

a. Textual problem: MT and ancient versions differ

MT בְּאֶרְחֵי צְדָקָה חַיִּים וְדֶרֶךְ נְתִיבָה אֶל־מָוֶת  
(*'al-maweth*)

LXX ἐν ὁδοῖς δικαιοσύνης ζωὴ ὁδοὶ δὲ μνησικάκων εἰς θάνατον

In the ways of righteousness is life;

but the ways of those that remember injuries *lead* to death. אֶל־מָוֶת

(*'el maweth*)

External evidence: MT preferred to LXX

Internal evidence: MT difficult to explain away, unlike LXX. Cp.

<sup>28</sup> In the path of righteousness is life, but the way of error leads to death. (RSV, 1952)

<sup>28</sup> In the path of righteousness there is life, in walking its path there is no death. (NRSV, 1989)

“No death” < אֶל־מָוֶת (lo’ maweth)

b. Lexical problem: meaning of unique אֶל־מָוֶת :

In Ugaritic (ca. 1400 BC) and post-biblical Hebrew *'al maweth* is the ordinary word for “immortality.”

### 2. 14:32

When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down,  
but even in death the righteous seek refuge in God.

The wicked, who perishes through his evil, does not trust in the LORD even when dying; but the righteous, who trusts in the LORD when dying, is not thrown down by any evil, including

clinical death. “When he will die, he is confident that he will come to the Garden of Eden” (Rashi). The righteous see a refuge that lies beyond the limits of death (Meinhold)

### 3. 15:24

The path of life leads upward for the prudent to keep them from going down to the realm of the dead.

“Path of life”: refers to the state or condition that effects everlasting fellowship with the living God.

“Leads upward”: the antithesis of Grave

“Realm of dead”: *Sheol* (“Grave”), Salvation from the grave is more than being spared an untimely death, for otherwise the path of life is swelled up by death, an unthinkable thought in Proverbs.

## D. Genre effect: a primer on morality that looks at the end

“Do not lie in wait like an outlaw

against a righteous man's house,

do not raid his dwelling place;

**for though a righteous man falls seven times**, he rises again,

but the wicked are brought down by calamity.” (24:15-16)

N.B. “seven times”: completely fallen.

N.B. Job and Qoheleth look at the interim, before the final calamity of the wicked.

1. First lecture of parents assumes innocent killed prematurely. Cf. Cain and Abel (Genesis 4)

2. Texts: 12:28; 14:32; 23:17f.

Do not let your heart envy sinners,

but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD.

There is surely a future hope for you,

and your hope will not be cut off.

אַל־יִקְנָא לְבָבְךָ בְּחַטָּאִים כִּי אִם־בִּירְאֵת־יְהוָה כָּל־הַיּוֹם כִּי אִם־יֵשׁ אַחֲרֶיךָ וְתִקְוָתְךָ לֹא תִכָּרֵת  
(Pro 23:17--18)

Do not fret because of evildoers or be envious of the wicked,  
for the evildoer has no future hope, and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed out.  
(24:19—20)

### III. CONCLUSION

I. Proverbs are promises of future blessings that outlast death. In that light it teaches a health, wealth and prosperity gospel.

II. Trust in the LORD

**A. Entirely: “with all your heart”**

**B. Exhaustively: “in all your ways”**

**C. Exclusively: “do not lean on your own understanding”**

## Lesson Four: Value of Wisdom & Its Application to Neighbors

### PART I. TRANSLATION

- <sup>13</sup> Blessed is 'adam [the human being] who finds wisdom,  
                    'adam [the human being] who gains understanding,  
<sup>14</sup> for the profit she gives/the gain of her is better than the profit/the gain of silver  
                    and her revenue is better than gold.  
<sup>15</sup> She is more precious than corals;  
                    All desirable things cannot compare with her.  
<sup>16</sup> Long life is in her right hand;  
                    in her left hand are riches and honor.  
<sup>17</sup> Her ways are pleasant ways,  
                    and all her byways are *shalom* [peace and prosperity].  
<sup>18</sup> She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her;  
                    those who hold her fast will be blessed.
- <sup>19</sup> By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations,  
                    by understanding he set the heavens in place;  
<sup>20</sup> by his knowledge the watery depths were split open,  
                    and the clouds drip dew.
- <sup>21</sup> My son, do not let them [wisdom and understanding] out of your sight,  
                    guard sound judgment and discretion;  
<sup>22</sup> so that they will be life for you,  
                    an ornament to grace your neck.  
<sup>23</sup> Then you will go on your way in safety,  
                    and your foot will not stumble.  
<sup>24</sup> When you lie down, you will not be afraid;  
                    when you fall asleep, your sleep will be sweet.  
<sup>25</sup> Have no fear of sudden disaster

- or of the ruin that will overtake the wicked,  
<sup>26</sup> for the LORD will be at your side  
and will keep your foot from being snared.
- <sup>27</sup> Do not withhold [doing] good from those to whom it is due,  
when you have the power to do [good].
- <sup>28</sup> Do not say to your neighbor, "Come back tomorrow and I'll give it to you"—  
when you already have it with you.
- <sup>29</sup> Do not plot harm against your neighbor,  
while he lives trustfully near you.
- <sup>30</sup> Do not accuse anyone for no reason—  
when they have done you no harm.
- <sup>31</sup> Do not envy a violent person,  
or choose any of his ways.
- <sup>32</sup> For the LORD detests the devious  
but takes the upright into his confidence.
- <sup>33</sup> The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked,  
but he blesses the abode of the righteous.
- <sup>34</sup> He mocks mockers  
but shows favor to the humble and oppressed.
- <sup>35</sup> The wise inherit honor,  
but fools get only shame.



## **PART II. INTRODUCTION: STRUCTURE OF PARENTS' LECTURE**

### **I. EXORDIUM: VALUE OF WISDOM**

**3:13--26)**

#### **A Value of Wisdom to Adam**

**3:13--18**

A. Intro. *Adam* who finds wisdom blessed 13

B. Wisdom's Superiority to Jewels 14f.

B.' Wisdom's Superiority Specified 16f.

A.' Conclusion: All who grasp wisdom blessed 18

N.B. Inclusio: first and last words "blessed" ('*ashre*)

N.B. Escalation: "finds" > "gains" (v. 13) > "take hold" > "hold fast" (v. 18); "do not let out of sight" > "guard" (v. 21).

#### **B. Value of Wisdom to the LORD as Creator**

**3:19--20**

1. Wisdom the instrument to create the cosmos 19

N.B. Merismus: "earth"/"heaven" (v. 19a, b): collocation for cosmos

Created cosmos by setting limits

N.B. Wisdom is the instrument, not the agent

2. Wisdom the instrument to sustain life on earth 20

N.B. Merismus: "split open depth" (creation of fresh water)/"drop dew" (sustain creation) (20:a, b)

Sustains life on earth by water

#### **C. Value of Wisdom to Son**

**3:21--26**

N.B. Inclusio: "guard" by son/ "keep" by LORD (vv. 21, 26)

N.B. key terms: body parts

1. Admonition: preserve the teaching 21—22

2. Motivation: security 23—24

3. Basis: the LORD upholds the teaching 25—26

N.B. Escalation: "foot not stumble" (v. 23); "Keep foot from being ensnared" (v. 26)

## II. LESSON: COVENANT OBLIGATIONS TO NEIGHBOR

3:27-33

### A. Commands: obligations to neighbors 27-30, 4 verses

1. Needy neighbors 27—28

2. Innocent neighbor 29—30

N.B. Quatrains linked by:

Anaphora: initial “do not” (vv. 27, 28, 29, 30)

Escalation: Sins of omission (vv. 27—28), commission (vv. 29—30)

Catchwords:

“your neighbor” (vv. 28A, 29A). But plural to singular

Epiphora/epistrophe: “with you”

Syntax: command (A verset), qualifying situation (B verset)

N. B. Vv. 29—30 linked by inclusios “evil” (29A, 30B)

### B. Command: Center line: do not envy violent neighbor 31

1. Do not envy

2. Do not choose

N.B. Janus: “do not” (2 times)

Katabasis: “good neighbor” > “innocent neighbor” > “violent neighbor”

Anabasis: Withholding help (vv. 27f) > plotting evil (29f) > choosing ways of violent (31)

### C. Motive: LORD punishes wicked; blesses righteous 32—35, 4 lines

1. Defined by ethical terms 32f.

2. Defined by sapiential terms 34f.

Catchwords for godless and unethical: violent, devious, wicked, mocker, fool

Key word: “LORD (vv. 32, 33, 34). He is not merely a spectator

Structure: A versets: description of persons relation to others; B versets: LORD’s response to their social actions

## PART III. EXEGESIS

### I. EXORDIUM: VALUE OF WISDOM

**3:13--26**

#### **A Value of Wisdom to Adam**

**13--18**

1. Intro. *Adam* who finds wisdom blessed 13

*Ashre*: how rewarding. Refers to future reward based on present relationship with LORD. May refer to persecuted (Job 5:17; Prov. 3:11—12; Matt. 5:3—12)

“finds”: aggressive search; not a chance happening

“obtains”: Horatio Alger

2. Wisdom’s Superiority to Jewels 14—15

“trade”: in acquiring and in employing it to gain riches

“better than silver”: money can give food, but not fellowship; a house, not a home; jewelry, not love. “Rings and jewels are not gifts but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself. Thou must bleed for me.” (Emerson, 1844 “Gifts : essay reprinted in *The Logic of Gift* by Alan D. Shrift (NY: Routledge, 1996), p. 26/

“gold”: not belittled. See lecture on “Moneywise”

People don’t recognize it. See Job 28.

“all”: closure technique

3. Wisdom’s Superiority Specified 16--17

*Ma’at* holds *ankh* sign in left hand and wasp sign (immovability of the pillars of the havens and of dominion in right

“honor”: weight > social weight; gravitas to climb ladder of success.

“all”: summary statement/conclusion

Solomon a paradigm. Asked for wisdom and gained other benefits

4. Conclusion: All who grasp wisdom blessed 18

“lay hold of”: in ANE iconography creatures take hold of it with hands or hoofs.

Tree of life: healing that leads to everlasting life.

Wisdom is key to return to Paradise. Christ supersedes Wisdom.

#### **B. Value of Wisdom to the LORD as Creator**

**3:19--20**

1. Wisdom the instrument to create the cosmos 19

“Wisdom” and “understanding” metonymies of effects for father’s words (1:3; 2:2)

“Wisdom” will establish and preserve son’s life.

“Wisdom” in this book refers to purposive and intelligent nature: sobriety, sound judgment, discretion, careful planning, hard work, patience, generosity, etc.

2. Wisdom the instrument to sustain life on earth 20

“depths”: primeval depths.

“split open”: imagery of creation battle myths; by splitting the primeval depths essential forces of life were released.

“water”: gentle rain; frozen ice floats.

## C. Value of Wisdom to Son

3:21---26

N.B. Inclusio: “guard” by son/ “keep” by LORD (vv. 21, 26)

1. Admonition: preserve the teaching 21—22

“eyes” oral for dissemination; written for preservation.

2. Motivation: security 23—24

Amenemhet (1960 BC) warns son: “Even when thou sleepest, guard thy heart thyself, because no man has adherents on the day of distress.”

3. Basis: the LORD upholds the teaching (vv. 25—26)

## II. LESSON: COVENANT OBLIGATIONS TO NEIGHBOR

3:27-33

### A. Commands: obligations to neighbors

27-30, 4 verses

1. Needy/good neighbors 27--28

“good”: material good: a metonymy for any material benefit

“Do not withhold”: assumes neighbor is in need

“from those to whom it is due”: gloss for “possessor it”. “It” refers to moral good or “from those who have a claim on your good.” Cf. Deuteronomy 22:1—3; Exod. 23:40 “If you can help this man, you are obliged to do so *even if he is your enemy*” (Fox). The sluggard and the leech do not have such a claim.

Cf. 1 Tim 6:17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. <sup>18</sup> Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

“when you have the power”: Do not put security for needy;

Proverbs 6:1—4. Do not become surety

2 Cor. 8:12: <sup>12</sup> For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have. <sup>13</sup> Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality.

Gal. 6:10: Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

“neighbor”: person with whom one is brought into contact and with whom one must live on account of life’s circumstances.” Jesus defined it as one with whom we are brought into contact in need of help.

“when you already have it with you”. *quis dat, qui cito dat*: “He gives twice who gives quickly” (Publilius Syrus [50 BC]).

## 2. Innocent neighbors 29--30

“trustingly”: an indispensable condition of community. Assumes he is innocent, for if he were not, he would not be trusting but expecting retaliation.

## B. Command: Center line: do not envy violent neighbor 31

“violent”: Heb. *hamas*. In cold blood infringes on rights of others. Out of greed and hate used physical violence, brutality, and false accusations in court

## C. Motive: LORD punishes wicked; blesses righteous vv. 32—35, 4 lines

### 1. Defined by ethical terms 32--33

“devious”: inflict harm by deception, humiliation, and/or defrauding

“counsel”: provides guidance and protection

“detest” escalates to curse and “counsel” escalates to blessing.

“curse”: sterility and death; blessing: potential to reproduce and be victorious

“abode”: a razing place for animals or a settlement. With reference to the former it connotes provision and with reference to the latter, protection, security and rest.

### 2. Defined by sapiential terms 34--35

“mockers”: extreme anti-social behavior

“poor and oppressed” equated with “upright” and “righteous”

“mocks”: *lex talionis*. As mockers tear others down with their mouths; the LORD tears them down with a curse. As they cover others with reproach, the LORD covers them with shame.

“humble and oppressed”: the exploited who are diminished in capacity, power and worth.”

Cited in James 4:6 to warn Christians; in 1 Peter 5:5 to urge them to be humble before one another. Mary illustrates it (Luke 1:46—55)

“inherit”: an inalienable and permanent share in a possession that falls to an individual through the awarding of it in the transmission of an inheritance or through expropriation from the preceding owner.

“honor”: social success

"get": acquire, earn; not inherit

“shame”: social failure

## Lecture 8: Folly of Adultery. Chapter 5, 6:20—33; chapter 7

### PART I: TRANSLATION

<sup>1</sup> My son, pay attention to my wisdom,  
    turn your ear to my words of insight,  
<sup>2</sup> that you may maintain discretion  
    and your lips may guard knowledge.  
<sup>3</sup> For the lips of the unchaste wife drip honey,  
    and her palate is smoother than oil;  
<sup>4</sup> but in the end she is bitter as wormwood,  
    sharp as a double-edged sword.  
<sup>5</sup> Her feet are going down to death;  
    her steps lead straight to the grave.  
<sup>6</sup> She gives no thought to the way of life;  
    her paths meander aimlessly, but she does not know it.

<sup>7</sup> Now then, sons, listen to me;  
    do not turn aside from what I say.  
<sup>8</sup> Keep to a path far from her,  
    do not go near the door of her house,  
<sup>9</sup> lest you give your splendor to others  
    and your dignity to one who is cruel,  
<sup>10</sup> lest strangers feast on your strength  
    and your toil enriches the house of another.

<sup>11</sup> And at the end of your life you will groan,  
    when your flesh and body are spent.  
<sup>12</sup> You will say, "How I hated instruction!  
    How my heart spurned correction!  
<sup>13</sup> And I would not obey my teachers  
    or turn my ear to my instructors.

<sup>14</sup> I was soon in serious trouble

in the congregation and assembly."

<sup>15</sup> Drink water from your own cistern,  
running water from your own well.

<sup>16</sup> Should your springs overflow in the streets?  
your streams of water in the public squares?

<sup>17</sup> Let them be yours alone,  
never to be shared with strangers.

<sup>18</sup> May your fountain be blessed,  
and get pleasure from the wife of your youth.

<sup>19</sup> A lovemaking doe, a graceful mountain goat  
-- may her breasts drench you at all times,  
may you ever be intoxicated with her caresses.

<sup>20</sup> Why, my son, be intoxicated with an unchaste wife?  
Why embrace the bosom of an unfaithful woman?

<sup>21</sup> For a man's ways are in full view of the LORD,  
and he examines all his paths.

<sup>22</sup> His evil deeds will ensnare them;  
with the cords of his sins he will be held fast.

<sup>23</sup> For lack of instruction he will die,  
led astray by his own great folly.



**PART II: INTRODUCTION****I. INTRODUCTION** **1--6****A Address, Aim, Admonition** **1--2****B. Motivation** **4--6****II. LESSON** **7--20****A. Folly of Adultery** **7--14**

1. Social/economic loss to foreigners      7—10 [4 verses]
2. Social/economic loss in community      11—14 [4 verses]

**B. Wisdom of Marriage** **15-20**

1. Admonition for privacy of marriage      15—17 [3 verses]
2. Father's prayer for son      18—20 [3 verses]

**III. CONCLUSION. THE LORD UPHOLDS MORAL ORDER** **21—23****PART III: EXEGESIS****I Introduction** **5:1—6****A. Address, Admonition, Aim** **1—2**

“Son”: Josiah/Amnon marry at ages 14, 16; Egypt: girls married at 12; boys at 15; *Abot* (5:21) advises sons to marry at 18. Age when biological drives and social responsibility conflict.

“My”: unique. See 4:3. Inclusio with v. 20

“words of understanding” Train’s steam engine needs tracks

**B. Motivation** **3--6**

“For”: Hierarchical / vertical authority and generational/horizontal authority collide when boy becomes man. Choose wife or God (cf. Adam).

“lip,” “palate”: metonymies for speech. Speech and sexuality inseparable (cf. “intercourse”)

“smoother than oil”; metaphor for deceitful flattery; mystery, enticement, delight

Dripping lips... smooth palate: a double entendre?

“in the end bitter as wormwood: “Honey is sweet, but the bee stings”; this lady has a sting in her tail.

“paths meander aimlessly”: no home, no place (cf. Cain),

“does not know it”: tragic figure.

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## **EXCURSUS 1: UNCHASTE WIFE’S SEDUCTIVE TACTICS:**

**7:1--27**

### **I. INTRODUCTION: LISTEN**

**1—5**

### **II. LESSON:**

**6--23**

**2**

#### **A. Encounter      6—13**

“at twilight, as the day was fading, s the dark of night set in.”

“This said, he [Tarquin] set his foot upon the light,  
For light and lust are deadly enemies;  
Shame folded up in blind concealing night,  
When most unseen, then most doth tyrannize.” (Shakespeare, *Tarquin’s rape of Lucerne*)

#### **B. Smooth Speech      14—20**

"Today I fulfilled my vows,  
and I have food from my fellowship offering at home."

“fellowship offering”: meat left over from votive sacrifice had to be eaten before the next day.” Vixen part of Canaanite cult

“I looked for you”: Satan’s appeal: lust of eye, lust of flesh, pride

“I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.” Very expensive.

“Myrrh”: balsam tree of South Arabia, Africa

“Aloes”: eaglewood tree of SE Asia/North India

“Cinnamon”: Cinnamon tree of Shri Lanka

“My husband is not at home”: Vixen implies she cannot be trusted Satan’s/liberal’s lie: you will not die.

“full moon”: sacrifice at new moon.

C. Fall 21—23

“All at once”: thinks with glands, not brain

“Ox”: king of domesticated animals

“Stag”: Handsome

“Liver”: Seat of life in Akkadian literature

“Bird”: Speed

### III. Conclusion

24—27

## II. LESSON

7--20

### A. Folly of Adultery

7--14

1. Social/economic loss to foreigners 7—10 [4 verses]

“sons”: chronological descent. See 4:1--3

“Keep to a path far from her”: lesson in a nutshell

“Others”, “cruel”, “strangers”, “foreigner”. Canaanite husband lurking in background (see 6:20—35)

## EXCURSUS 2: HIGH PRICE OF ADULTERY. PROVERBS

6:20—35

### I. Introduction

20—24

#### A. Lesson

25—35a

1. Admonition 25

“Lust”: *hamad* (“covet”): “ But each of you is tempted when you are dragged away by your own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. “ (James 1:14—15)

“eyes”: “A wife’s harlotry shows in her lustful eyes,

and she is known by her eyelids (Sir. 26:9)

## 2. Argument 1: Penalties 26—33

**aaa. a. Severe 26**

**bbb. b. Inevitable 27—29**

**ccc. c. Unending 30—33**

## 3. Argument 2: Cannot Compensate Cuckold 34--35 -----

## II. Lesson:

**5:7—20**

### A. Folly of Adultery

**7—14**

1. Social/economic loss to foreigners 7—10

2. Physical/social loss in own community 11—14

“Flesh/body spent”: due to hard slave labor

“serious trouble”: public denunciation, confiscation of property left; flogging

“assembly of God's people”. on trial

“Made public, adultery brings personal shame, humiliation to loved ones, and loss of respect in larger community” (D. Hubbard).

Tragic public figures: Tiger Woods, John Edwards; Eliot Spitzer; Jimmy Swaggert

Personal experiences: Business man and daughter; business man and wife; Bible teacher

### B. Wisdom of Marriage:

**5:15—20**

1. Prudence of Privacy versus Folly of Promiscuity: 15—17

“water”: sexual satisfaction. Anodyne to sex drive

“cistern”: cistern (pear shaped) > well: both privately owned

“springs in streets” / “water in public” / “yours alone”: public property versus private property

11 Your lips drop sweetness as the honeycomb, my bride;

milk and honey are under your tongue.

12 You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride;

you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain.

15 You are a garden fountain,

a well of flowing water streaming down from Lebanon.

16 Awake, north wind, and come, south wind!

Blow on my garden, that its fragrance may spread abroad.

Let my beloved come into his garden and taste its choice fruits. (Sol 4:11-16)

## 2. Father's prayer 18--19

"Blessed": sexual gratification

"Rejoice": Dionysian joy

"Youth": Reference to marriage contracted at early age; not to a young wife per se

"Always": quantitatively

"Intoxicated": qualitatively

### **III. CONCLUSION: LORD PROTECTS MARRIAGE**

**5:20—23**

## **A. Omniscient LORD is aware of a every person's way 20--21**

20 Why, my son, be intoxicated with another man's wife?

Why embrace the bosom of a wayward woman?

21 For a person's ways are in full view of the LORD,  
and he examines all their paths.

"Why": rhetorical question that condemns adultery.

"A person": individualizes and generalizes

"ways": including sexual behavior

"full view...all": LORD's omniscience includes all human behavior in every detail

## **B. Original sin produces death**

**22--23**

22 The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them;  
the cords of their sins hold them fast.

23 For lack of discipline they will die,  
led astray by their own great folly.

"Evil" / "wicked": ethical terms;

"discipline" [*musar*] / "folly" co-relative wisdom terms

“discipline”: *musar*. A metonymy of ethical cause for moral affect  
“lack”/ “their own great folly”: assumes original sin.

## Lesson 9. Wisdom's Paternity. Proverbs 8

### TRANSLATION

<sup>1</sup> Does not Wisdom call out?

Does not Understanding raise her voice?

<sup>2</sup> At the highest point along the way,

At the crossroads, she takes her stand;

<sup>3</sup> beside the gates, at the entries of the city,

at the entrance of the openings, she cries aloud:

<sup>4</sup> "To you, O people, I call out;

Indeed, I cry aloud [to you], humanity..

<sup>5</sup> You simpletons, understand shrewdness,

And you fools, set your hearts on it.

<sup>6</sup> Listen, because I speak what is right,

I open my lips to speak what is upright.

<sup>7</sup> Surely, my palate utters truth

for my lips detest wickedness.

<sup>8</sup> All the words of my mouth are spoken in righteousness;

none of them is deceitful or perverse.

<sup>9</sup> To the discerning all of them are right;

they are upright to those who have found knowledge.

<sup>10</sup> Choose my instruction instead of silver,

knowledge rather than choice gold,

[ <sup>11</sup> for wisdom is more precious than rubies,

and nothing you desire can compare with her.]

<sup>12</sup> "I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence;

I possess knowledge and discretion.

<sup>13</sup> To fear the LORD is to hate evil--

pride and arrogance and evil behavior

and a perverse mouth I hate.

- <sup>14</sup> Counsel and resourcefulness belong to me;  
I am insight; heroic strength is mine.
- <sup>15</sup> By me kings reign  
and rulers issue decrees that are just.
- <sup>16</sup> By me rulers govern,  
and nobles--all who rule on earth.
- <sup>17</sup> As for me, those who love me I love,  
and those who seek me diligently will find me.
- <sup>18</sup> With me are riches and honor,  
enduring wealth and prosperity.
- <sup>19</sup> My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold;  
what I yield surpasses choice silver.
- <sup>20</sup> I walk about in the path of righteousness,  
in the midst of the byways of justice,
- <sup>21</sup> bequeathing property to those who love me  
and making their treasuries full.
- <sup>22</sup> "The LORD brought me forth as the first of his ways,,  
The earliest of his deeds from of old;
- <sup>23</sup> In the most remote time I was formed,  
at the very beginning, from the earliest times of the earth..
- <sup>24</sup> When there were no depths, I was given birth,  
when there were no springs abounding with water;
- <sup>25</sup> Before the mountains were settled in place,  
before the hills, I was given birth,
- <sup>26</sup> Before he made the earth and the open fields  
And the world's first clods of dirt.
- <sup>27</sup> I was there when he set the heavens in place,  
when he inscribed a circle on the face of the deep,
- <sup>28</sup> when he established the clouds above  
and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,<sup>b</sup>



- <sup>29</sup> when he set for the sea its limits  
     --and the waters cannot go beyond his command—  
     when he marked out the foundations of the earth.
- <sup>30</sup> And I was beside him constantly  
     a delighting before him day after day,  
     celebrating before him at all time,
- <sup>31</sup> celebrating his inhabited earth,  
     And my delight was humanity.
- <sup>32</sup> "So now, sons, listen to me;  
     --and blessed are those who keep my ways.
- <sup>33</sup> Listen to instruction and become wise;  
     And do not disregard it.
- <sup>34</sup> Blessed is the person who listens to me,  
     Keeping vigil at my doors day by day,  
     observing the doorposts of my doorways;
- <sup>35</sup> For the one who finds me find life  
     and so obtains favor from the LORD.
- <sup>36</sup> But the one who misses me harms himself;  
     all who hate me love death."

## INTRODUCTION

### A. OUTLINE

I. Introduction	1—10	10vv
A. Setting and Addressees of Wisdom's Speech	1—5	5vv
B. Wisdom's Exhortation to Listen with Motivation	6—10	5vv
II. Body: Lesson	12—31	

A. Wisdom's Communicable Attributes in Historical Time	12—21	10vv
1. Wisdom's Role in Civil Order	12—165vv	
2. Wisdom's Gifts of Material Glory for Her Lovers	17—215vv	
B. Wisdom's Birth and Celebration in Primordial Time	22—31	10vv
1. Wisdom's Genesis Before Creation	22—265vv	
2. Wisdom's Delight in the Created Order	27—315vv	
III. Conclusion: Final Invitation and Warning	32—36	5vv

## B. LITERARY CONTEXT

A diptych with chapter 7: Woman Wisdom versus Unchaste Wife;

Unchaste moves covertly at dusk and speaks falsely: Woman Wisdom speaks openly in broad daylight

Unchaste wife is sweet in beginning but bitter in end: Woman Wisdom begins with chastising instruction and ends with life.

## EXEGESIS

I. Introduction	1—10
A. Setting and Addressees of Wisdom's Speech	1—5
1. Setting	1--3

“Does not”: emphatic. Does not wait for an audience

“Wisdom”: Woman Wisdom. See her first address to simpletons (1:20—21)

“Raise her voice: fervency. Audible

“Highest point”: Visible. Loser’s Stone

“Cross roads”: Scenic depiction: Where decisions are made: Wisdom or Folly

“Gates”: Place of decisions before entering the city

2. Typical introduction: Address and motive 4--5

“People”: *bene ’adam*: common people, not just elite. Enlarges audience from her first address to simpletons

“Understand”: In her first address she is rejected; not in second. First addresses emphasizes no second chance.

B. Wisdom’s Exhortation to Listen with Motivation 6—10

1. First motivation: speech is flawless 6—9

“listen”: from by imperatives: Listen > choose Assumes the power of words.

“None deceitful”: has no personal agenda

“All of them”: verbal plenary

“To the discerning”: See lecture on hermeneutics. Because spiritual eyes are healthy, they can see light and are full of light (Matt 6:22).

2. Second motive: wisdom is better than money 10

“Choose”: whatever you take, takes you.

“Gold and silver”: “In order that the comparison should have point, the great value of those other commodities has to be assumed” (McKane). Wisdom better but not to be despised: she gives it (18—19) to those who love her (20—21).

When wealth is the reward of wisdom, it edifies (vv. 17—21); when made the aim of one’s life, it corrupts (1 Tim. 6: 9—10).

## II. BODY: LESSON 12—31

A. Wisdom’s Communicable Attributes in Historical Time 12—21

1. Wisdom's Role in Civil Order 12—16

a. Her communicable attributes 12—14

“Dwell together; “possess”; “belong to me”: Wisdom and synonyms inseparable.

“Pride” > evil behavior

“Pride and arrogance” **וְהָאִיָּהּ וְהָאִיָּהּ** : refuse to submit to authority /

“Perverse mouth”: overturn LORD's moral order

“I am insight” = I am have total/absolute insight

“Heroic strength”: valor and capability. Strategy for success and strength to carry it out in face of opposition.

Jesus Christ was total virtue

b. Whereby king's rule 15—16

Assumes administration by wise persons, not by an impersonal code of laws.

Recall: addressed to man in the street; not to elite few

2. Wisdom's Gifts of Material Glory for Her Lovers 17—21

“Those who love me”: frames paragraph

“Love”: demands regeneration

“with me”: inseparably linked, Obedience unthinkable without blessing

“treasures” sought corrupts; wealth rewarded edifies

B. Wisdom's Birth and Celebration in Primordial Time 22—31

LXX inserts a bridge between historical and primordial time: “If I declare to you the things that happen daily, I [also] will remember to recount what haws happened in primordial time.”

Concentric structure of stana

- A. Wisdom's origins (vv. 22—23)
  - B. Negative state of the creation (vv. 24—26)
  - B.' Positive presentation of the creation (v. 27—29)
- A.' Wisdom's celebration of humanity's origins (vv. 30—31)

vv. 24—26: movement from waters below to earth above

vv. 27—29: movement from heavens above to foundations of earth

## 1. Wisdom's Genesis Before Creation

22—26

Threefold importance of Wisdom's existence before creation

1. Patent of nobility (document appointing a person an aristocrat. In Egyptian texts one's patent of nobility is based on a pre-existence in comparison to creation. Pre-existence of Wisdom bestows on her the highest rank, dignity, and authority
  2. Comprehensive knowledge assures her absolute knowledge. See lecture on hermeneutics
  3. Can handle things in accordance with the way in which they were made. You have to be *godly* to be wise; and this is not because godliness pays, but because the only wisdom by which you can handle everyday things is to act in conformity with their nature—that is to say, in conformity with the way in which they were divinely made and ordered. For example Woman Wisdom delights in decrees that gave cosmos enduring structure (v. 29). Now she enables rulers to issue decrees that give society enduring structure (v. 15).
- “brought me forth”: קָנָנִי, *qanani*; root *qnh*. Key text in Arian controversy (Patristic fathers assumed Woman Wisdom is LJC). Proposed meanings:

1. “Possessed” (KJV, ASV, ESV)
  - a. Meaning in the other occurrences in Proverbs
  - b. Normal use in rest of OT
  - c. Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion > Vulgate
  - d. Harmonizes with “discover” in Job 28:27

2. “Create”: ἐκτίσέν με (LXX, RSV, NRSV, NET)

- a. Better fits use of *qanah* in Deut 32:6; Psalm 139:13; Gen 4:1; 14:19, 22)
- b. Targum and Syriac. But they depend on LXX
- c. Derivate *qinyan* (Ps. 104:24) means “creatures”

3. “Beget,” “brought forth” (NIV, NAB)

- a. Probable meaning of *qanah* in Gen 4:1; 14:19, 22; Dt. 32:6; Ps 139:13;
- b. Occurs 9 times in Ugaritic with the meanings:
  - 1) 1x “obtain”
  - 2) 2x “create”
  - 3) 2x uncertain
  - 4) 5x “beget”

c. Best suits context:

When there were no depths I was brought forth,  
when there were no springs abounding with water.

<sup>25</sup> Before the mountains had been shaped,  
before the hills, I was brought forth (Pro 8:24-25 ESV)

“I was brought forth”: הוֹלֵלְתִּי. Root *hul* “writhe in childbirth”

d. Significance: Solomon’s teachings derive from God’s very  
being/nature/character. Rest of creation independent from his being

“No depths:” Only text of God’s pre-existence before Abyss of Genesis 1:2.

2. Wisdom’s delight in the Created order

27—31

a. Wisdom present at the creation

27—29

“I was there”: inclusio with “I was beside him”

“sea”: symbolizes chaos that is hostile to life. Not called “good”

“set ... its limits: Sea has its place within limits. See Job. Proverbs emphasizes restraint; Job emphasizes its freedom

b. Wisdom celebrated creation of humanity

“Constantly”: Debated term important for interpreting Woman Wisdom).  
Proposed meanings of אָמוֹן (*'amon*)

a. “Craftsman” (ASV, ESV, NET, NIV, NRSV, HALOT): Thus Woman Wisdom is the Agent, not the LORD’s instrument, who created cosmos

1) Texts alleged that *'amon* means craftsman:

a) Jeremiah 52:15: argument is circular (based on 8:30)

b) 2 Kgs 25:11 *hehamon* (“multitude”)

c) 2 Kgs 24:14, 16: “*kol-heharash*)

2) Text asserts the LORD is the is creator (8:22—29)

3) Male image for female character unlikely.

b. “Little child”; nursling (some rabbis, Kayatz, Menhold)

1.) emend text to *amun* “looked after,” “nurtured”

2.) grammar is difficult

c. “Constantly”:

1.) unique but possible meaning

2.) root so understood by Symmachus, Theodotion, Targum

3.) parallel: beside him ..... faithfully / constantly

Delighting ..... daily

Celebrating ..... at all times

Delighting: only right response. “There is not one blade of grass and there is no color in this world that is not intended to make us rejoice” (Calvin).

### III. CONCLUSION

“listen”: Key word

“keep”: inclusio

“life ... death: matches father in 7:24--27



## Lecture 10. Two Invitations: Proverbs 9

### TRANSLATION

- <sup>1</sup> Wisdom has built her house;  
she has set up its seven pillars.
- <sup>2</sup> She has slaughtered her animals and mixed her wine;  
And she has set her table.
- <sup>3</sup> She has sent out her servant girls; she calls out  
from the highest point of the city,
- <sup>4</sup> "Let all who are simple turn aside here!"  
To those who have no sense she says,
- <sup>5</sup> "Come, dine on my food  
and drink the wine I have mixed.
- <sup>6</sup> Leave your ways, you simpletons, and you will live;  
And proceed on the way of insight."
- <sup>7</sup> Whoever corrects a mocker gets insults;  
whoever rebukes a wicked person gets hurt.
- <sup>8</sup> Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you;  
rebuke a wise person and he will love you.
- <sup>9</sup> Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still;  
teach the righteous and he will add to his learning.
- <sup>10</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,  
and knowledge of the Holy One is insight.
- <sup>11</sup> For through wisdom your days will be many,  
and years will be added to your life.
- <sup>12</sup> If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you;  
if you are mock, you alone will incur guilt.
- <sup>13</sup> Folly is an unruly woman;  
she is simple and knows nothing.

- <sup>14</sup> She sits at the door of her house,  
on a throne at the highest point of the city,  
<sup>15</sup> calling out to those who pass by,  
who go straight on their way,  
<sup>16</sup> "Let all who are simple turn aside here!"  
To those who have no sense she says,  
<sup>17</sup> "Stolen water is sweet;  
food eaten in secret is delicious!"  
<sup>18</sup> But little does he know that the dead are there,  
that her guests are deep in the realm of the dead.

## **PART I. INTRODUCTION:**

### **I. OUTLINE**

I. Wisdom's Banquet	1—6
A. Preparation for the Meal	1—3
B. Invitation to the Meal	4—6
II. Poet's Supplement to Invitations	7—12
A. Result to Sage for correcting mocker	7—9
B. Janus: Beginning and Gain of Wisdom	10
C. Result to self for being wise or mocker	11—12
III. Folly's Banquet	13—18
A. Pretentious Hostess	13—15
B. Invitation to Meal	16—18

### **II. ALTERNATING STRUCTURE OF INVITATIONS**

A. Preparation for meal	1—3	13—15
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Designation	1a	13a
Activity	1aα—3	13aβ—15
Call out	3a	15
Location	3b	14b
B. Invitation	4—5	16—17
To Simpleton	4	16
Offer of symbolic food	5	17
C. Conclusion: Life/death	6	18

### **III. SYMMETRIES OF STANZAS AND STROPHES**

I. Wisdom's Banquet:	6vv	1—6
A. Preparation for the Meal	3vv	1—3
B. Invitation to the Meal	3vv	4—6
II. Poet's Supplement to Invitations 6vv		7—12
A. Result to Sage for correcting mocker		7—9
B. Janus: Beginning and Gain of Wisdom		10
C. Result to self for being wise or mocker		11—12
III. Folly's Banquet	6vv	13—18
A. Pretentious Hostess	3vv	13—15
B. Invitation to Meal	3vv	16--18

### **IV. JANUS BETWEEN PROLOGUE AND COLLECTION II**

- I. Life and Death Conflict of Wisdom (chapter 8) and Unchaste Wife (chapters 5, 6, 7)  
United Chiastically in One Lecture
- II. Antithesis prepares for antithetical proverbs that characterize 10:1—15:29
- III. First proverb matches antithesis of Preamble

Wise son brings joy to his father,  
but foolish son grief to his mother.

IV. Sons waiting for Wisdom to open door (8:34). Wisdom opens it wide to include simpletons

III. Wisdom invites audience to feast on proverbs that follow (—31

House: Prologue (finished)

Meal: Proverbs (about to begin)

# Lesson 11: Theology of Proverbs

## OUTLINE

The theology of proverbs will be reflected upon by comparisons with other texts:

- I. Comparison of Proverbs with other Old Testament Texts
- II. Comparison of Proverbs with Egyptian Texts
- III. Comparison of Proverbs with New Testament Texts

## PART I. THEOLOGY OF PROVERBS AND BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

### Introduction

- 1. Not Connected by Salvation History: No appeal to God's covenants with Israel through Abraham, Moses, and David.
- 2. Connected by

**ddd. a. Common Names of God, especially Covenant Keeping God: I AM WHO I AM.**

N.B. A name implies a person who can be called upon, to speak, to hear and to answer. Without this understanding of God, the faith of the Bible is abandoned.

eee. b. Common standard of morality: “Fear of the LORD”: special revelation from God demanding a humble response (Deuteronomy 6:2, 13, 27; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 31:30).

fff. N.B. Inclusions in Book of Proverbs

ggg. c. Common Torah: See 1:1 “... king of Israel” (see lecture on superscript.

hhh. d. Common inspiration of their writings (Deuteronomy 5:31; Proverbs 2:6)

iii. e. Common aim to establish LORD’s will on earth as in Heaven. Both refer to their revelations as torah (catechetical teaching) and misvoth (“commandments)

jjj. f. Common understanding of God’s essence and attributes

## A. He is an aseity: cf. names of God

1. *Elohim*; Transcendent (In Heaven, not earth; absolute power, strength) 6x

“God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?” (Num. 23:19). To promise and fulfill entails “omnicompetence.”

N.B. Plural suffix is an honorific (*IBHS*, 7.4.3b, p. 122); closely related to *intensive* plural (*pluralis majestatis*): “the referent is a singular individual, which is, however, so thoroughly characterized by the qualities of the noun that a plural is used.”

2. *YHWH* (+ vowels of <sup>a</sup>*donay* = “Jehovah.” (Abbreviation in 3<sup>rd</sup> person of sentence name originally given in first person: “I am who I am”). 87x.

<sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” <sup>15</sup> God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has sent me to you.’” “This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation. (Exod. 3:14—15)

“As surely as I [the LORD] live forever” (Deut. 32:40),

Key to Proverbs: The fear of the LORD

**kkk. a. I AM (Eternal/Everlasting Reality. The Logos)**

**III. b. Who I AM (Defines himself in Human Drama)**

N.B. Hilary of Poitiers (315-367) narrates that as he was searching how he should live his life: "I chanced upon those books which according to Jewish tradition were written by Moses and the Prophets. In them I found the testimony of God the Creator about Himself expressed in the following manner: 'I AM WHO I AM', and again, "Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: He who is, hath sent me to you. "I was filled with admiration at such a clear definition of God, which spoke of the incomprehensible nature in language most suitable to our human understanding. It is known that there is nothing more characteristic of God than to be, because that itself which is does not belong to those things which will one day end or to those which had a beginning... The words of Him who said: '*I AM WHO I AM*' seem indeed, to have fully satisfied the definition of infinity".

N.B. 2 –*ay* a substantival affirmative denoting emphasis by re-enforcing the root: "Lord par excellence; Lord of all" (*IBHS*, P. 7.43e, f, p. 124)

N.B. Entails immanence: God presence with his people. Reveals his name at burning bush in midst of sheep with dung hanging off their tails.

**3. Statistics on God as Creator motif in Proverbs (10 times)**

**a. Two poems in Prologue (3:19-20; 8:22-31)**

**b. Solomon I (14:31; 16:11; 17:5; 20:12; 22:2)**

**c. Solomon II (29:13)**

**d. Agur (30:2-4)**

**4. Distribution of God as Creator motif in Proverbs**

**a. Two poems pertain to creation of world**

**b. Seven proverbs pertain to creation of mankind**

**5. Function of motif of God as Creator: to give social skill; not praise**

**B. Omniscient**

For the LORD your God moves about in your camp to protect you and to deliver your enemies to you. (Deut 23:14)

- <sup>1</sup> You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.  
<sup>2</sup> You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.  
<sup>3</sup> You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.  
<sup>4</sup> Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.  
<sup>5</sup> You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.  
<sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. (Psalm 139:1—6)

For a person's ways are in full view of the LORD,  
and he examines all their paths. (Pro 5:21)

"For": you reap what you sow (Gal. 6:7)

"Person": inclusive of all humankind, not just adulterer

"Full view": Divine presence

"Examines all": A constant scrutiny

"ways"/"paths": of all a person's ways (character, context, conduct, consequences)

Death and Destruction lie open before the LORD—  
How much more do human hearts! (15:11)

"Death and Destruction": Heb. *Sheol* and *Abaddon*. *Abaddon* emphasizes the Grave is a place of destruction.

"How much more": A *fortiori* argument. If the dead in the remote depths of the earth, a place shrouded in mystery and of destruction and no apparent value to God and mankind, how much more the hearts of the living who participate in salvation history and so are of vital interest to God and people, even though they are inaccessible to human view.

"In full view": stronger and more distinct than "before."

If you say, "But we knew nothing about this,"



does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?

And does not he who guards your life know it?

Will he not repay everyone according to what they have done? (Pro 24:12)

“If”: a hypothetical lie

“you say”: as a defendant in a court of law

“we”: escapes personal culpability in community indifference.

“this”: the innocent, unjustly perishing

“does not”: demands an emphatic affirmative answer

“and”: adds his omnipotence to his omniscience

“guards your life”: If the son turns a blind eye to innocent victims, the LORD will turn a blind eye to the son, when the son is in crisis

“repay”: the active LORD is unlike the passive coward.

### C. Supreme sovereign

And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars--all the heavenly array--do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshiping things the LORD your God has apportioned to all the nations under heaven. (Deut 4:19)

To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. (Deut. 10:14)

<sup>1</sup> To humans belong the plans of the heart,  
but from the LORD comes the proper answer of the tongue.

<sup>2</sup> All a person's ways seem pure to them,  
but motives are weighed by the LORD.

<sup>3</sup> Commit to the LORD whatever you do,  
and he will establish your plans.

- <sup>4</sup> The LORD works out everything to its proper end—  
even the wicked for a day of disaster.
- <sup>5</sup> The LORD detests all the proud of heart.  
Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.
- <sup>6</sup> Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for;  
through the fear of the LORD evil is avoided.
- <sup>7</sup> When the LORD takes pleasure in a person's way,  
he causes their enemies to make peace with them.
- <sup>8</sup> Better a little with righteousness  
than much gain with injustice.
- <sup>9</sup> In their hearts humans plan their course,  
but the LORD establishes their steps. (16:1—9)

Apart from verse 8, every verse mentions “the LORD.” The chiastically arranged “human...heart” and “heart ... human” and the repetition of “plan” (16:1, 9), along with “establish” (16:3b, 9b) form an inclusio and sounds the unit’s theme: the LORD’s sovereign rule encompasses human responsibility. The outer frame is reinforced by an inner frame of “person’s way” (vv. 2, 7). Verses 1—3 pertain to the LORD’s sovereign rule through human participation, and vv. 5—7 to his sovereign justice in response of human morality. Verse 4 is a janus. Its A verset, asserting the LORD brings everything to its appropriate destiny, looks back to vv. 1—3, and its B verset, asserting that he matches the wicked with calamity, looks ahead to vv. 5—7).

The lot is cast into the lap,  
but its every decision is from the LORD. (Pro 16:33)

“lot”: small stone used to real God’s selection of someone or something out of several possibilities. In this situation God wanted to keep people in the dark and to make decisions impartially. Not used by the Spirit-indwelt Church after Pentecost

“lap”: Heb. *heq*: the secret holding area in the fold of the garment above the belt where hands were placed and lot remained covered and uninfluenced by human manipulation.

“its”: i.e., the lot’s

“every”: no exceptions

In the LORD's hand the king's heart is a stream of water  
that he channels toward all who please him. (Pro 21:1)

The LORD is the Farmer, the king's heart is the flexible channel for irrigating water, and his well-water garden is the pious and ethical who are in need

“king's heart”: The LORD's inscrutable sovereignty extends to kings, the most powerful of human beings, and to the heart, their most free member. His heart determines a nation's direction and consequent well-being.

“channels”: takes extreme effort to control chaotic water

“stream of water”: always a blessing that produces and sustains life.

“who please him”: A good king depends upon a godly people.

## E. Inscrutable

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law. (Deut. 29:29)

My heart is not proud, LORD, my eyes are not haughty;

I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.

But I have calmed and quieted myself,

I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content.

Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore. (Psalm 131)

1. It is the glory of God to conceal a matter;  
**to search out a matter is the glory of kings. (25:2)**

“glory of God”:

<sup>7</sup> "Can you fathom the mysteries of God?

Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?

<sup>8</sup> They are higher than the heavens above--what can you do?

They are deeper than the depths below--what can you know?

<sup>9</sup> Their measure is longer than the earth  
and wider than the sea.

“conceal”: “The secret things belong to the LORD our God: (Dt. 29:29),

Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell?

It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing, concealed even from the birds in the sky.  
(Job 28:20—21).

<sup>12</sup> Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?

<sup>13</sup> Who can fathom the Spirit of the LORD, or instruct the LORD as his counselor?

<sup>14</sup> Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge, or showed him the path of understanding? (Isa. 40:12—14)

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. (Ecc. 3:11)

Truly you are a God who has been hiding himself, the God and Savior of Israel. (Isa 45:15)

“matter”: referring to God by his name of transcendence suggests “matter” refers to the mysteries of creation and of salvation history (see quotes above).

God obtains his social dignity by hiding his wisdom in his acts of creation and salvation history, and kings get theirs by searching out the affairs of state.

2. A person's steps are directed by the LORD.

How then can anyone understand their own way? (20:24)

“a person”: Heb. “strong man”

“steps”: individual actions

“directed”: lit. “steps from the LORD.” A sovereignty governs our individual actions to fit his metanarrative.

“How then”: If even a strong and powerful man cannot determine his individual steps, no earth-bound, limited human being can comprehend the direction and destiny of his whole life within that plan.

## F. Transcendent and Immanent: retribution

It is mine to avenge; I will repay. In due time their foot will slip; their day of disaster is near and their doom rushes upon them. (Deut. 32:35)

<sup>40</sup> I lift my hand to heaven and solemnly swear: As surely as I live forever, <sup>41</sup> when I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand grasps it in judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and repay those who hate me. <sup>42</sup> I will make my arrows drunk with blood, while my sword devours flesh: the blood of the slain and the captives, the heads of the enemy leaders." <sup>43</sup> Rejoice, you nations, with his people, for he will avenge the blood of his servants; he will take vengeance on his enemies and make atonement for his land and people. (Deut. 32:40—43)

1. For your ways are in full view of the LORD,  
and he examines all your paths.

The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them;  
the cords of their sins hold them fast. (5:21—22)

2. Pain for wicked; pleasure for righteous (10:22—25)

22 Blessing of the LORD brings wealth, adds no painful toil with it.

23 Fools find joy [*sehoq*] in wickedness, but understanding delight in wisdom.

24 Dread of wicked will overtake them; desire of righteous granted.

25 When the storm has swept by ... but the righteous stand firm forever. (10:22—25)

3. Security for righteous, not for wicked (10:27—30)

27 Fear of the LORD adds length , to life, but years of the wicked cut short.

28 Prospect of the righteous is joy but hope of wicked come to nothing.

29 Way of LORD is a refuge for blameless, but it is ruin of evildoer.

30 Righteous will never be uprooted, but wicked will not remain in the land.

N.B. Alternating structure

A. Yahweh saying + “add” (*ysp*): 22

B. Joy of wicked: v. 23

C. Dread of wicked: v. 24

D. Righteous secure forever (*'olam*): v. 25

A.' Yahweh saying + “add” (*ysp*): v. 27

B.' Joy of righteous: v. 28

C.' Dread of wicked: v. 29

D. Righteous secure forever (*'olam*)

### **G. Withholds and gives life-sustaining rain (Dt. 11:13-17; 3:21; 30:4)**

Then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and olive oil. So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today--to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul--<sup>14</sup> then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and olive oil. <sup>15</sup> I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied. <sup>16</sup> Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. <sup>17</sup> Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, and he will shut up the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the LORD is giving you. (Deut. 11:13—17\_

1. By his knowledge the watery depths were divided,  
and the clouds let drop the dew. (3:21)

2. Who has gone up to heaven and come down?  
Whose hands have gathered up the wind?  
Who has wrapped up the waters in a cloak?  
Who has established all the ends of the earth? (30:4)

### **H. Delights in Justice and hates iniquity**

For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. (Deut. 10:17)

The LORD detests dishonest scales,

but accurate weights find favor with him. (11:1)

Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent—  
the LORD detests them both. (17:15)

## **I. Defender of the weak and punisher of oppressor**

<sup>17</sup> For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.

<sup>18</sup> He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. (Deut. 10:17—18)

The LORD tears down the house of the proud,  
but he sets the widow's boundary stones in place. (15:25)

Whoever mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker;  
whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished. (17:5)

Do not move an ancient boundary stone  
or encroach on the fields of the fatherless,  
for their Defender is strong;  
he will take up their case against you. (23:10-11)

## **J. Disciplines His Children Dt. 8:5; Prov. 3:11-12**

Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you. (Deut 8:5)

<sup>11</sup> My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline,  
and do not resent his rebuke,

<sup>12</sup> because the LORD disciplines those he loves,  
as a father the son he delights in. (Prov. 3:11—12\_

## **K. Hears and Answers Prayer**

But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him  
if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deut 4:29)

The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked,  
but the prayer of the upright pleases him. (15:8)

<sup>29</sup> The LORD is far from the wicked,  
but he hears the prayer of the righteous. (15:29)

## L. Merciful

For the LORD your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your ancestors, which he confirmed to them by oath. (Deut. 4:31)

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper,  
but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (28:13)

## M. Aesthetic-ethical sensibilities

<sup>12</sup> Designate a place outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself. <sup>13</sup> As part of your equipment have something to dig with, and when you relieve yourself, dig a hole and cover up your excrement. <sup>14</sup> For the LORD your God moves about in your camp to protect you and to deliver your enemies to you. Your camp must be holy, so that he will not see among you anything indecent and turn away from you. (Deut 23:12—14)

If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house,

<sup>2</sup> and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, <sup>3</sup> and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, <sup>4</sup> then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD. Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. (Deut 24:1—4)

<sup>16</sup> There are six things the LORD hates,  
seven that are detestable to him:



- <sup>17</sup> haughty eyes,  
a lying tongue,  
hands that shed innocent blood,  
<sup>18</sup> a heart that devises wicked schemes,  
feet that are quick to rush into evil,  
<sup>19</sup> a false witness who pours out lies  
and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.

## **PART II. PROVERBS AND PAN-ORIENTAL WISDOM**

### **A. Sample of similarities**

#### **1. Amenemope [ca 1100 BC], ch. 1., Proverbs 22:17—18**

Give your ears, hear what is said,  
Give your heart to understand them.  
To put them in your heart is worthwhile (opening lines of 30 sayings of Amenemope)

Pay attention and turn your ear to the sayings of the wise;  
apply your heart to what I teach,  
<sup>18</sup> for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart  
and have all of them ready on your lips. (opening lines of 30 Sayings of the Wise)

#### **2. Amenemope, ch. 2**

For we shall not act like him [the wicked man]—  
Lift him up, give him your hand;  
Leave him (in) the arms of the god;  
Fill his belly with your bread  
So that he may be sated and may be ashamed (Amenemope, ch. 2, v, lines 2—6)

Do not say, "I'll do to him as he has done to me; I'll pay him back for what he did." (24:29)

<sup>21</sup> If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.  
<sup>22</sup> In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you.

Do not say, "I'll do to them as they have done to me; I'll pay them back for what they did."  
(25:21—22)

N.B. In the Egyptian narrative of Cha-em-wese, the thief Cha-em-wese returned a book of magic stolen out of a grave by carrying a basin of fiery coals on his head to signify his attitudes of shame, remorse, repentance, and correction (*Proverbs 15—31*, p. 331)

### 3. Amenemope, ch. 4; Prov. 23:10

Do not be greedy after a cubit of land  
Nor encroach upon the boundaries of a widow (Amen. ch. 4)

Do not move an ancient boundary stone or encroach on the fields of the fatherless (23:10),

### 4. Amenemope, ch. 7; Prov 23:4—5

They [riches] have made themselves wings like geese  
And are flown away to the heavens (Amen. Ch. 7)

Do not wear yourself out to get rich; do not trust your own cleverness.  
Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle. (23:4—5)

### 5. Amenemope, ch. 30

See you these thirty chapters (Amen. Ch. 30)

<sup>20</sup> Have I not written thirty sayings for you, sayings of counsel and knowledge, (Pro 22:20)

N.B. "Thirty": a reference to a revered tradition of Egyptian wisdom to give to his book the authority and weight of tradition" (*Proverbs 1—15*, p. 223)

### B. Dissimilarity

Theological significance of Proverbs lies in its affirmation that the LORD brought "wisdom" into existence, revealed it to humanity, and, as Guarantor, upholds its revealed moral order.

“Pagan wisdom, though it too may be religious, has no anchor in the covenant-God” (D. A. Hubbard)

“Is it not remarkable that none of the gods are mentioned by name in any of the ‘teachings’? When the Egyptians appeal to ‘God,’ they impart to the divine interest in man’s behavior a distinctly impersonal character” (H. Frankfort)

## C. Explanation of Similarity

1. Book of Proverbs attests some collections adopted and adapted from “sayings of the wise”

Pay attention and turn your ear to the sayings of the wise; apply your heart to what I teach (22:17),

These also are sayings of the wise (24:23)

Cf, Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. (1 Kings 4:30)

2. Part and parcel of incarnational theology

**mmm. a. Analogy with Lord Jesus Christ: Fully God incarnate in true humanity**

**nnn. b. Most literary genres of the Old Testament are in the forms (language, motifs, etc.) of Ancient Near Eastern literatures.**

3. Common grace (“fear of God”) versus special grace (“fear of the LORD)

**ooo. a. Fear of God:**

- 1.) Common grace:

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things (Romans 2:1)

We have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. (2 Cor. 4:4)

## 2.) A moral standard known and accepted by mankind in general

Now Abraham moved on from there into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar, <sup>2</sup> and there Abraham said of his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." Then Abimelek king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her. <sup>3</sup> But God came to Abimelek in a dream one night and said to him, "You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman." <sup>4</sup> Now Abimelek had not gone near her, so he said, "Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation? <sup>5</sup> Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister,' and didn't she also say, 'He is my brother'? I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands." <sup>6</sup> Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you touch her. (Genesis 20:1—6)

<sup>8</sup> Early the next morning Abimelek summoned all his officials, and when he told them all that had happened, they were very much afraid. <sup>9</sup> Then Abimelek called Abraham in and said, "What have you done to us? How have I wronged you that you have brought such great guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that should never be done." <sup>10</sup> And Abimelek asked Abraham, "What was your reason for doing this?" <sup>11</sup> Abraham replied, "I said to myself, 'There is surely no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.'" (Genesis 20:8—11)

Contrast the Joseph's pharaoh with Moses' pharaoh. Joseph could speak to Pharaoh of "God" with common understanding; Moses could not.

### ppp. b.. "Fear of the LORD"

#### qqq. 1.) special revelation. See 1:7

#### rrr. 2.) Fear of the LORD assumes fear of God but more specific and a higher standard

- a) Identifies God as the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
- b) Conscience can be distorted; revelation cannot.
- c) Loves the LORD more than self
- d) Disadvantages self to advantage others.

## Part III. Theology of Proverbs and Lord Jesus Christ.

## **A. Lord Jesus Christ assumes Proverbs as part of Scripture**

## **B. Lord Jesus Christ incarnates the wisdom of Proverbs**

## **C. Similarities of Lord Jesus Christ to Woman Wisdom**

1. Both existed before all things
2. Both descended from heaven, dwelt with men, and rejected

## **D. Superiority of Lord Jesus Christ to Woman Wisdom**

1. Wisdom begotten of God; Christ is God
2. God gave birth to wisdom; Christ is eternal
3. Wisdom witnessed the creation; Christ is the Creator
4. Wisdom laughs at time of judgment; Christ is Judge

## **E. Wisdom of Lord Jesus Christ superior to Solomon's**

"The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here." (Matthew 12:42)

1. Wait for God for justice; Christ himself will execute justice

Will he [the LORD] not repay everyone according to what they have done? (24:12)

Then he [Son of Man] will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' (Matt. 25:41)

2. Solomon focused on blessings now and minimized present suffering; Christ focused on sufferings now and glory to follow.

Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, (Prov. 3:10)

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Matt 5:10—12)

3. Solomon teaches disciples to please parents; Christ teaches to love God more than parents.

A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son brings grief to his mother. (10:1)

"Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.(Matt 10:37)

4. Solomon taught to be kind to the poor; Christ identifies himself with the poor.

It is a sin to despise one's neighbor, but blessed is the one who is kind to the needy.(14:21)

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' (Matt 25:40)

5. Solomon offers eternal life opaquely; Christ brings immortality into the full light of day

For those who find me find life and receive favor from the LORD.

But those who fail to find me harm themselves; all who hate me love death." (3:35—36)

<sup>46</sup> "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." (Matt 25:46)

<sup>9</sup> He has saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, <sup>10</sup> but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Tim 1:9—10)

6. Solomon's wisdom is a rushing stream;; but Christ offers streams of water from within (18:4; John 7:38).

The words of the mouth are deep waters, but the fountain of wisdom is a rushing stream. (18:4)

"The mixed metaphor of fountain and torrent valley combines the notions of a constant and inexhaustible supply of living water with its ready accessibility and abundance" (p. 72)

Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." (John 7:38)

7. Solomon offers a banquet of food and drink, but Christ himself is the Christian's food and drink.

Wisdom has built her house; she has set up its seven pillars.

<sup>2</sup> She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table.

<sup>3</sup> She has sent out her servants, and she calls from the highest point of the city,

<sup>4</sup> "Let all who are simple come to my house!" To those who have no sense she says,

<sup>5</sup> "Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. (9:1—3)

Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. (John 6:53).

8. No human ascended into heaven to comprehend the whole, but Christ both descended from heaven and ascended into it.

Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Whose hands have gathered up the wind?  
Who has wrapped up the waters in a cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth?  
What is his name, and what is the name of his son? Surely you know! (30:4)

For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

"Sir," they said, "always give us this bread." Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. (John 6:34—35)

<sup>8</sup> This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people."

<sup>9</sup> (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? (Eph. 4:8—9)

9. Solomon calls upon his disciples to write his teachings on the heart, but Christ sends his Spirit to write God's word on the heart.

Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. (3:3)

You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. (2 Cor. 3:3)

10. Solomon calls for obedience, but Christ's Spirit empowers his elect to obey (Prov. 1:20-21; Rom. 8:1-8).

<sup>20</sup> Out in the open wisdom calls aloud, she raises her voice in the public square;

<sup>21</sup> on top of the wall she cries out, at the city gate she makes her speech:

<sup>22</sup> "How long will you who are simple love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?

<sup>23</sup> Repent at my rebuke! Then I will pour out my thoughts to you, I will make known to you my teachings.

(Pro 1:20-23)

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Rom. 8:1—4)

11. Solomon describes the ideal king (16:10-15), but Christ is the Messiah (Matt. 27:37).

<sup>10</sup> The lips of a king speak as an oracle, and his mouth does not betray justice.

<sup>12</sup> Kings detest wrongdoing, for a throne is established through righteousness.

<sup>13</sup> Kings take pleasure in honest lips; they value the one who speaks what is right.

(16:10—13)

<sup>62</sup> Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" <sup>63</sup> But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." <sup>64</sup> "You have said so," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: From



now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Matt 26:62—64)

Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "You have said so," Jesus replied. ...

Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. (Matt. 27:11, 37)

12. Solomon pointed to atonement by showing reliable love to others, but Christ showed such reliable love to his own that he died for their atonement (Mk. 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:14).

Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD evil is avoided. (16:6)

"The epigrammatic proverb points only to the human virtues that complement the sacrificial system to make atonement (cf. Lev. 1:4;4:4; 16:21). Unless a person is characterized by unfailing love, the sacrificial system is of no avail, (1 Sam 15:22) (p. 13)

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:21)

13. Solomon himself failed to obey his wisdom, but Christ is the perfect example of his (25:26; 1 Kgs. 11:9-10; Luke 2:52; Heb. 4:15).

The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. (1Ki 11:9)

Like a muddied spring or a polluted well are the righteous who give way to the wicked. (25:26)

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet he did not sin. (Heb. 4:15)

14. Solomon lost his kingdom but Christ builds his (1 Kgs. 11:10; Matt. 16:18).

So the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. (1Ki 11:11)

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. (Matt 16:18)

15. Solomon called upon his disciples to feed their enemies, but Christ died for his enemies (25:21; Rom 5:8).

If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. (25:21)

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom 5:8).

## Lessonss 12—13. Moneywise

Outline of Lecture:

I. Exegetical Approach

II. Topical Approach

### PART I: EXEGETICAL APPROACH TO BEING MONEYWISE

Introduction: texts: 6:1—19; 10:1—5; Psalm 45

#### I. PROVERBS 6:1—19: APPENDIX TO LECTURE 8 (FOLLY OF ADULTERY: SELF-INFLECTED FINANCIAL LOSS): THREE INFERIOR TYPES OF MEN 6:1-19

##### A. Folly of becoming surety for a stranger: potential slavery 6:1-5

My son, if you have become surety for your neighbor,  
if you have struck your palm for a stranger,  
<sup>2</sup> you have been ensnared by the words of your lips;  
You have been captured by the words of your mouth.  
<sup>3</sup> So do this, my son, to free yourself,  
since you have fallen into your neighbor's hands:  
Go--to the point of exhaustion-- and badger your neighbors!  
<sup>4</sup> Allow no sleep to your eyes,  
no slumber to your pupils.  
<sup>5</sup> Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, I  
like a bird from the hand of the fowler.

##### 1. Introduction: foolish situation/trap 6:1-2

“Son”: of the three inferior types only the surety is addressed as a “son”

“If”: Form is similar to 1:10—19. “Son” is addressed both for foolish situation and for imperative solution.

Bible prescribes liberality to the poor; proscribes charging interest from poor; warns against becoming surety: 11:15; 7:18; 20:16 [27:13]; 22:6.

Sirach gives the practice of becoming surety dignity, while warning of its dangers: “Do not forget all the kindness of your surety, for he has given his life for you.” (Sirach 29:14).

Paul accepted Onesimus’s past liabilities, but not his future ones (Philemon 18—19).

Modern commerce is based on interests on loans, an unknown practice in the Ancient Near East.

“surety”: “pledged oneself as a guarantee for another’s debts.” A creditor may take guarantees from a debtor (Exod. 22:26; cf. Genesis 38:17—18). The pledge was often a garment, a symbolic substitute for the person himself.

“neighbor” defined as “stranger.” Outside the guarantor’s way of lie and interest

“struck palm”: gesture for sealing an agreement

“ensnared”: a snare conceals its deadly danger in order to take its victim by surprise and destroy him before he can deliver himself.

“mouth”: agent of self-afflicted folly.

## 2. Body: 7 imperatives provide solution: 6:3-4

“do”: 1st imperative: listen to parent

“to free yourself”; Lit. “and free yourself”: 2<sup>nd</sup> imperative

“fallen into neighbor’s hand: surety made promises for a future he does not control. “One who does not feel grateful [to the surety] will abandon his rescuer.” (Sirach)

“go”: 3<sup>rd</sup> imperative: immediate action

“weary yourself” to point of exhaustion: 4<sup>th</sup> imperative. Linkage to sluggard (6:6--11) to point of exhaustion

“badger”: Lit. “rush upon him boisterously. Cf. Luke 11:8; 18:1-5). 5<sup>th</sup> imperative

“neighbors”: get others involved

“allow”: 6<sup>th</sup> imperative

“no sleep”: immediate action.

### 3. Conclusion: free yourself 6:5

“free yourself”: 7<sup>th</sup> imperative, an inclusio with 2nd.

“gazelle,” “bird” once aware they are trapped give all their attention to escape

## B. Folly of sluggard: scarcity 6:6-11

### 1. Model of ant: 6:6-9

a. Introduction: The wise ant will teach the sluggard good work habits. 6:6

b. Ant’s work habits 6:7--9

#### 1.) “No commander”: Out of one’s nature: heart:

Proverbs 4:23 Above every watch, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it

Book of Proverbs: “How to Become Book,” not “How to Do Book”

#### 2.) “Stores”: Patiently.

a.) 12:11-12 He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.

“To work the land”: fertilize, cultivate and till

“Fantasies”: “get-rich schemes” or “waiting for one’s ship to come in”; anything but hard work.

Repeated in 28:19

b.) 13:11

Dishonest money dwindles away,  
but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow.

“Dishonest money” (lit. “money gotten by a puff of air”): = “easy money” (e.g., lottery, injustice)

“Gathers”: connotes “gradually”

3.) “gathers”: hard work

a.) 14:23 “All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.”

b.) 6:9 “a little sleeps, a little slumbers, a little folding of the arms to lie down”

“folding of the arm”: refusal to work

“He does not commit himself to a refusal, but deceives himself by the smallness of his surrenders. So, by inches and minutes, his opportunity slips away” (Kidner, *Proverbs*, 42).

4.) “in summer”: strategically (cf. 10:4; “)

6:6

“Makes hay while the sun shines”

6:9

2. Motive: avoid poverty 6:9-11

C. Folly of anarchist: disaster and detested by God

6:12-19

1. Disaster and destruction

a. Introduction: topic—anarchist, revolutionary

6:12a

b. Body: characteristics: unhealthy body parts

16:12b-14

1.) Speech: mouth--deforms the truth

6:12b

2.) Gestures: eyes, feet, fingers—sinister

6:13

3.) Nature (evil-doers): heart---plots evil 6:14

c. Conclusion: consequence—sudden disaster 6:15

2. Detested by God 6:16-19

a. Numerical title line 6:16

b. Seven characteristics 6:17-19

eyes: haughty

tongue: lies

hands: murder

heart: plots evil

feet: rush to evil

false witness: lies

stirs up dissension

## II. PROVERBS 10:1—5

- + 1 A wise son brings joy to his father,
- but foolish son is total grief to his mother.
- 2 Treasures gained by wickedness are of no eternal value,
- + but righteousness delivers from death.
- + 3 The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry
- but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.
- 4 Lazy hands make a a poor man,
- + but diligent hands bring wealth.
- + 5 He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son,
- but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.

N.B. Inclusio: “son”

N.B. Stitching pattern of virtue > life (+) versus vice > death (-)

N.B. Semantic structure

A. Introduction: contrasting effects of wise and foolish son on parents 1

B. Ethics and Theology regarding being moneywise. Wicked go from “treasures” to “hunger”; “righteous” go from being delivered from death to never hunger 2--3

לֹא־יִוָּעִילוּ אוֹצְרוֹת רָשָׁע וְצִדְקָה תַּצִּיל מָמוֹנָתָ:  
לֹא־יִרְעִיב יְהוָה נֶפֶשׁ צַדִּיק וְהוֹת רְשָׁעִים יְהוָה:

1. Ethics 2

- a. Wickedness gives treasures [for the moment], but does not profit [i.e., deliver from death];
- b. Righteousness [lacks treasures for moment] but delivers from death

2. Theology: LORD upholds moral order. 3

Feeds the righteous; starves the wicked [ultimately]

B. Practical Theology re. being moneywise [“wealth”]: temporal values 4--5

<sup>4</sup>רָאשׁ עֲשֵׂה כַּרְמָיָה וְיֵד קְרוֹצִים תַּעֲשִׂיר  
<sup>5</sup>אֲגַר בְּקִיץ בֶּן מִשְׁכִּיל גִּרְדָּם בְּקֶצֶר בֶּן מְבִישׁ

1. vice (lazy palm) > “makes” poverty; virtue (diligent hand) > makes rich 4

2. virtue: timely diligence (summer, harvest) shows prudence; vice [sleeps in harvest]  
5Aa/5Ba

C. Conclusion: wise son shows prudence: foolish son brings disgrace [on self and parents]  
5Ab/5Bb

Conclusion: Serving others according to God’s standards yields eternal life; serving self may yield immediate gain but will yield eternal death. because the LORD stands behind this moral order. A son’s industry and forethought give temporal wealth and give parents joy and to him and to them social standing. Sloth produces poverty and shame.



### III. PSALM 49

#### A. Introduction:

49:1-4

##### 1. Audience: everyone 1-2

N.B. same message produces different reader responses. Low consoled; high sobered;  
rich rich, poor comforted

##### 2. Author: wise 3-4

a. substance: wisdom 3

b. style: proverb (*mshl*) 4

#### B. Body:

5-20

##### 1. Clinical death of all is certain and final 5-12

a. No need to *fear* those *who trust* in their wealth 5--6

“wicked”: “trust” (find security) and “boast” (find significance)

b. Certain death: none has enough money to *redeem* another from death 7--8

“no one”: Lit. “brother”

“ransom”: Assume God requires death

c. Final death: all perish forever leaving their wealth to others 9—11

“wise” and “foolish”: Merism for all. “Wise” die a clinical death

“tombs forever.” Clinical death is final

“named lands”: rich and famous

d. Refrain: <sup>13</sup> וְאָדָם בִּיקָר בַּל־יָלִין נִמְשָׁל בַּבְּהֵמוֹת נִדְמֹו 12

*'adam biqar bal-yalin nimshal kabbehemoth nidmu*

*Yalin: does not endure.*

*Nimshal: = mshl*

“like beast”: *all flesh dies*

2. Doom of rich is eternal, not of righteous 13-20

a. Fate of those *who trust* in themselves is eternal doom 13—14

b. Death shepherds the rich; God *will redeem* my life 15—16

c. Do not *fear* rich; their death is eternal 17—19

d. Refrain: אָדָם בִּיקָר וְלֹא יָבִין נִמְשָׁל כַּבֶּהֱמוֹת נִדְמוּ 20

*'adam biqar lo'-yabin nimshal kabbehemoth nidmu*

*Bal and lo'*: are synonymous negatives

*Yabin*: “does not understand.” Those with understanding God redeems from Sheol

“like beasts”: does not have understanding and so doom is eternal

PART II. TOPICAL APPROACH

Outline:

I. Danger of Wealth

II. Limitations of Wealth

III. Value of Wealth

IV. How to Have Enduring Wealth

V. Conclusion

## I. DANGER OF WEALTH

### A. Seduces to Sin and Death of Others and of Self: 1:8-19

1. Summary: v. 10
2. Seduction: vv. 11-14
3. Sentence: death: vv. 15-18
4. Conclusion: moral: v. 19

### B. Makes Itself God: 18:10-11; 28:11; 30:7-9.

Introduction: “whatever a man loves, that is his god” (Luther); “We all invent idols in infinite number” (Calvin); “a god is who or what one depends upon for life, security and significance.” See 49:6 (BKW)

“Let not the wise boast of their wisdom  
or the strong boast of their strength  
or the rich boast of their riches,  
but let the one who boasts boast about this:  
that they have the understanding to know me,  
that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness,  
justice and righteousness on earth,  
for in these I delight,” declares the LORD (Jer. 9:23—24)

#### 1. Proverbs 28:11

A rich person is wise in his own eyes,\*  
but a poor person, who has discernment sees through him.

“Rich person”(עָשִׂיר): two aspects: temporal (has abundant wealth) and spiritual (is autonomous, independent of God’s teaching. Cf. “does what is right in his own eyes.”) A rich person has an inflated opinion of himself and so trusts in himself to negotiate life skillfully without depending upon the LORD who defines himself through inspired sages.

Distinguish from “wealth” (עֲשָׂר): Prize wealth but don’t trust it

Often juxtaposed with “poor”: poor is a bad state in the present; rich is a bad state in future

“Always viewed with hostility” (Whybray)

Deceived: wealth is security (18:11)

Wise in own eyes (28:11)

Lords it over poor (22:7)

Answers poor harshly (18:23)

Ways are perverse (28:6)

Paradoxically, both the ambitious rich person and the apathetic sluggard are “wise in their own eyes” and have less hope of salvation through wisdom than a fool:

: רֹאִיתָ אִישׁ חָכָם בְּעֵינָיו תִּקְוָה לִכְסִיל מִמֶּנּוּ :

“Do you see a person who is wise in his own eyes?

There is more hope for a fool than for him.” (26:12)

: חָכָם עָצֹל בְּעֵינָיו מְשַׁבֵּעַ מְשִׁירֵי טָעָם :

“The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes

than seven men who can answer sensibly.” (26:16).

“Discernment”: of deeds and destiny

## 2. Proverbs 18:10—11: true and false securities

The name of *I AM* is a fortified [עִזָּ] tower;

the righteous run\* to it and are safe on high [גִּבּוֹרִים].

The wealth of the rich is their fortified [עִזָּ] city;

they imagine it a wall too high to scale [גִּבּוֹרִים].

“Run”\*: Quick, decisive, diligent

## 3. Proverbs 30:8—9

Give me neither poverty nor riches,

but give me only my daily bread.

Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you  
and say, 'Who is *I AM*?'  
Or I may become poor and steal,  
and so dishonor the name of my God.

Not: "Teach me to use my riches aright."

God can entrust riches to those who have riches as a result of their wisdom/righteousness (i.e. to serve others), not of their selfish desires.

"Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery....You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me."

But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. Like the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God." (Deuteronomy 8:11--20)

"But godliness with contentment is great gain.

For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.\*

But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. (1 Timothy 6:6—11)

\*\*\*"The king and the pawn end up in the same box" (Old Italian proverb)

## II. LIMITATIONS OF WEALTH

### A. Cannot Save From Death (cf. Psalm 49)

10:2 Treasures of wickedness have no lasting value,  
but righteousness delivers from death.

11:4 Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath,  
but righteousness delivers from death.

11:6 A fortune made by a lying tongue  
is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare.

### B. Wisdom is better wealth

#### 1. Proverbs 3:13—18

<sup>13</sup> Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding,  
<sup>14</sup> for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold.  
<sup>15</sup> She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her.  
<sup>16</sup> Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor.  
<sup>17</sup> Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace.  
<sup>18</sup> She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her; those who hold her fast will be blessed.

#### 2. Job 28:12-19

<sup>12</sup> But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell?  
<sup>13</sup> No mortal comprehends its worth; it cannot be found in the land of the living.  
<sup>14</sup> The deep says, "It is not in me"; the sea says, "It is not with me."  
<sup>15</sup> It cannot be bought with the finest gold, nor can its price be weighed out in silver.  
<sup>16</sup> It cannot be bought with the gold of Ophir, with precious onyx or lapis lazuli.  
<sup>17</sup> Neither gold nor crystal can compare with it, nor can it be had for jewels of gold.  
<sup>18</sup> Coral and jasper are not worthy of mention; the price of wisdom is beyond rubies.  
<sup>19</sup> The topaz of Cush cannot compare with it; it cannot be bought with pure gold.

### III. VALUE OF WEALTH

#### A. Temporal values

##### 1. Security against misfortune: 10:15

The wealth of the rich is their fortified city, but poverty is the ruin of the poor.

N.B. Economic Depression, Medical, Legal

##### 2. Security against slavery: 22:7

The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender.

Charging interest from the poor was forbidden in *Torah* (Exod 22:25 [24]; Lev 25:37f.; Dt. 23:19 [20], preached against by the prophets (Ezek 18:8, 13, 17; 22:12) and censured by the sage:

Whoever increases wealth by taking interest or profit from the poor  
amasses it for one who will be kind to the poor. (28:8)

##### 3. To enjoy a more abundant life: 12:9

Better to be a nobody and yet have a servant than pretend to be somebody and have no food.

N.B. Verset A implies a nobody may have a slave

“The possession of slaves—or, at least, of one slave—was in ancient Israel by means a sign of superior wealth or power. Israelite slaves were not necessarily purchased in a purely commercial transaction, thought this might be so. A slave was frequently a defaulting debtor or a poor person who had no alternative but to enslave himself. According to Prov. 12:9 as commonly interpreted, the possession of just one slave and no more may been a sign of a modest way of life” (R. Whybray, *Wealth and Poverty in the Book of Proverbs*, p. 81).

N.B. Parallel may imply a slave is needed for food

## B. Spiritual values

### 1. Loss of relationship with God: bad conscience. 30:7-9

Give me neither poverty nor riches,  
but give me only my quota of food.  
Otherwise, I may have too much  
and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?'  
Or I may become poor and steal,  
and so dishonor the name of my God.

### 2. Loss of relationship with people.

#### a. 14:20—21

<sup>20</sup>The poor are shunned even by their neighbors,  
but the rich have many friends.  
<sup>21</sup>He who despises his neighbor sins,  
but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.

#### b. 18:23

A poor man pleads for mercy,  
but a rich man answers harshly. 18:23

#### c. 12:24

Diligent hands will rule,  
but laziness ends in slave labor. 12:24

### 3. Empowers Righteousness.

#### a. 11:24-25

<sup>24</sup>One man gives freely, yet gains even more;  
another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.  
<sup>25</sup>A generous man will prosper;  
he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.



b. Ephesians 4:28

He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

4. More likely to respond to rebuke than a poor person: 13:8

A person's riches may ransom his life,  
but the poor do not respond to rebukes.

“Rebuke” (נִפְּרָה) denotes an angry protest of moral censure involving loss, either real or threaten.

The imprecise parallels, “ransom for his life” and “do not respond to rebukes” implies the ransom for his life is in connection with a moral rebuke for his crime. The person who can ransom his life for his crime (Exod. 21:30; Num 35:31, 32) feels the pinch of financial loss and so may be motivated by the pinch to respond to the moral censure of his crime. But the poor person, who has nothing to give to redeem his life, cannot be pinched and so does not respond to the moral censure. Without hope of redeeming his life, he turns a deaf ear to the threat of financial loss and its accompanying moral censure.

#### IV. HOW TO HAVE ENDURING WEALTH

##### A. Fear of the LORD (foundational): 1:7; 22:4

The fear of *I AM* is the beginning of knowledge,  
but fools despise wisdom and instruction/discipline. (1:7)

Humility is the fear of the LORD; its wages are riches and honor and life. (22:4)

##### B. Honor God: Prov. 3:9-10

<sup>9</sup> Honor the LORD with your wealth,  
with the first-fruits of all your crops;  
<sup>10</sup> then your barns will be filled to overflowing,  
and your vats will brim over with new wine.

### C. Do Righteousness:

#### 1. 11:23--27

- <sup>23</sup> The desire of the righteous ends only in good,  
but the hope of the wicked only in wrath.
- <sup>24</sup> One person gives freely (רַחֵם), yet gains even more;  
another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.
- <sup>25</sup> A generous person will prosper;  
whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.
- <sup>26</sup> People curse the one who hoards grain,  
but they pray God's blessing on the one who is willing to sell.
- <sup>27</sup> Whoever seeks good finds favor,  
but evil comes to one who searches for it.

#### 2. 21:6

A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare.

#### 3. Caveats about being righteous with regard to being money-wise

- a. Do not become surety for a stranger; you may lose freedom. 6:1-5
- b. Do not feed the leech; they will multiply

30:15 The leech has two daughters. 'Give! Give!' they cry. "

- c. Do not feed a fool; a sluggard is worse than a fool:

1.) 30:21—23: an upside down world

- <sup>21</sup> "Under three things the earth trembles,  
under four it cannot bear up:
- <sup>22</sup> a servant who becomes king,  
a godless fool who gets plenty to eat,
- <sup>23</sup> a contemptible woman who gets married,  
and a servant who displaces her mistress.

2.) 2 Thessalonians 3:10

For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

4. Obligated to help only the truly needy:

a. 3:27a

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due

אַל־תִּמְנַע־טוֹב מִכַּעֲלֵי בְהִיּוֹת לְאֵל (יָדִיד) [יָדִיד] לְעִשׂוֹת

"Do not withhold [temporal] good who its [moral good] owner. "Its" must be "moral good" because "owner" needs temporal good.

Ambiguity: May mean "morally good person owns temporal good."

b. Deuteronomy 24:20

<sup>20</sup> When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow.

<sup>21</sup> When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow.

"Leave what remains for": Lit. "it belongs to"

c. 1 Timothy 5:3—6

Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grand-parents, for this is pleasing to God. The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. (1 Tim 5:3—6)

5. Do not give more than you can afford. 3:27b; Eccl. 7:17--18

a. 3:27b

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act.

b. Eccl. 7:17—18

<sup>16</sup> Do not be overrighteous, neither be overwise-- why destroy yourself?

<sup>17</sup> Do not be overwicked, and do not be a fool-- why die before your time?

<sup>18</sup> It is good to grasp the one and not let go of the other. Whoever fears God will avoid all extremes. (Eccl. 7:17—18)

E. Be Diligent: (cf. [exemplar ant \[6:6—11\]](#))

1. 6:6—11(see above)

2. 10:4--5 (see above)

3. 12:11, 24

He who works his land will have abundant food,  
but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.

“To work the land”: fertilize, cultivate and till

“Fantasies”: “get-rich schemes” or “waiting for one’s ship to come in”; anything  
but hard work.

Repeated in 28:19

Diligent hands will rule,  
but laziness ends in slave labor.

4. 14:23

All hard work brings a profit,  
but mere talk leads only to poverty.

5. 24:30-34

<sup>30</sup> I went past the field of a sluggard, past the vineyard of someone who has no sense;

<sup>31</sup> thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins.

<sup>32</sup> I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw:

<sup>33</sup> A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—

<sup>34</sup> and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man.

F. Be Content:

1. 21:17

He who loves pleasure will become poor;

whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich. (21:27)

2. 23:19-20

<sup>19</sup> Listen, my son, and be wise,

and keep your heart on the right path.

<sup>20</sup> Do not join those who drink too much wine

or gorge themselves on meat.

3. 1 Timothy 6:6

But godliness with contentment is great gain.

G. Be Patient: 13:11; 21:5

1. 13:11

Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow.

“Dishonest money” (lit. “money gotten by a puff of air”): = “easy money” (e.g., lottery, injustice)

“Gathers”: connotes “gradually”

“Little by little”: Lit. “by hand”; i.e., by the hand full; not by the windfall

“dwindles away”: “The reference is probably to reckless expenditure in luxuries, dissipation, speculations and illegal venture . . .; and, on the other hand, legitimate industry will be accompanied by caution and thrift.” Toy

2. 21:5

The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.

“Haste” in parallel with “plans of diligent,” implies neither foresight nor hard work. “In monetary matters, haste connotes greed (28:20; cf. 11:24), and haste in speech connotes a lack of reflection (29:20).” Van Leeuwen

#### H. Take Care of Sources of Income:

1. 24:27

Finish your outdoor work and get your fields ready;  
after that, build your house.

2. 27:24

Be sure you know the condition of your flocks,  
give careful attention to your herds;  
For riches do not endure forever,  
and a crown is not secure for all generations.  
When the hay is removed and new growth appears  
and the grass from the hills is gathered in,  
The lambs will provide you with clothing,  
and the goats with the price of a field.  
You will have plenty of goats' milk to feed you and your family  
and to nourish your servant girls.

#### I. Do not oppress poor or give “gifts” to the rich

One who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth  
and one who gives gifts to the rich—  
both come to poverty.

“Gifts were made to the rich not out of love, but to secure favors” (Toy).

The oppressor and self-aggrandizer unexpectedly suffer the loss of what is essential to life (Lk 14:12—14).

Cf. exorbitant bonuses to CEO’s and low wages to the worker

#### I. Marry a Competent Wife: 31:10-31

A noble and competent wife who can find?

She is worth far more than rubies.

Contrast Othniel, first warlord, who was enriched Aksah versus Samson, last warlord, who was enslaved by Delilah.

### V. CONCLUSION:

#### A. Matter of the Heart. 4:24-27

#### B. God’s grace. 28:13

He who conceals his sins does not prosper,  
but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

#### C. Prayer: 16:3

Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.

## Lesson 14. Wise Speech/Communication

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. LEGEND OF KING AND SCARCITY (VALUE) OF WISE SPEECH:

Gold there is, and rubies in abundance,  
but lips that speak knowledge are a rare vessel.

“Thought-through speech that conforms to God-established morality presupposes the long, hard work of education that is finally more precious than all possible materials.”  
(Meinhold, *Sprueche*, p. 338)

#### B. OUTLINE: POWER, LIMITATIONS, CHARACTERISTICS, SOURCE

### I. POWER OF WORDS

#### A. Power to reward and damage oneself and others: 10:6-14

<sup>6</sup> Blessings crown the head of the righteous,  
but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked.  
[upi resha'im yekasseh hamas]

<sup>7</sup> The name of the righteous will be used in blessing,  
but the name of the wicked will rot.

<sup>8</sup> The wise in heart accept commands,  
but a chattering fool [*we'ewil sephatayim*, “lippy fool”] comes to ruin.

<sup>9</sup> Whoever walks in integrity walks securely,  
but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.



<sup>10</sup> He who winks maliciously causes grief,  
and a chattering fool [we'ewil sephatayim, "lippy fool"] comes to ruin.

<sup>11</sup> The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,  
but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.  
[upi resha'im yekasseh hamas]

<sup>12</sup> Hatred stirs up dissension,  
but love covers [yekasseh] over all wrongs.

<sup>13</sup> Wisdom is found on the lips of the discerning,  
but a rod is for the back of him who lacks judgment.

<sup>14</sup> Wise men store up knowledge,  
but the mouth of a fool invites terror / ruin.

Key word: semantic domain of communication: mouth (vv. 6, 11, 14); "lips" (v. 8, 10b, 13); winking eye (v. 10a; implied (vv. 7, 12)

Structure:

First half (6-9, four antithetical) emphasizes effects on self;

Second half (11-14, four antithetical), effects on others

Signaled by striking pun of in 6b and 11b in initial b versets and by thematic shift of focus on effects from self to others.

Center line (v. 10): linked by striking repetition of 8b and 10b, by only -/- parallelism, by putting effect on others in A verset

Punctuated by "rearing" sayings in vv. 9, 13.

6--7 (couplet): linked by "blessing" (initial in 6a, final in 7a) "righteous" and "wicked." Blessing escalated from present to future. By antithesis it can be said that blessings do not crown head of wicked and violence does not overwhelm mouth of righteous (i.e., invite a beating).

8-9 (couplet) linked by educability of wise in 8a and consequent blessing in 9a, and by tragic fate of wicked in 8b and 9b. “Found out” (Heb. “will be known,” a metonymy “to suffer harm.” The wicked tried to cover their tracks by perversity, but they will be known [discovered] and so they will be hunted down.

11-12. Linked by pun on yekasseh. In that light verse 12 probably probes the spirit behind v. 11.

13-14. Linked by *hkm* (“wise,” “wisdom”) as well as by metonymies for communication (“lips, mouth”).

## B. Power of life and death

1. See Lectures on seductions of wicked men and of wicked woman

2. 10:21

20 The tongue of the righteous is choice silver,  
but the heart of the wicked is of little value.

21 The lips of the righteous nourish [יִרְעוּ] many,  
but fools die for lack of sense [heart].

Catchwords: A versets (tongue/lips); B versets (heart)

“Tongue” and “heart” imprecisely juxtaposed. The tongue produces the words;  
the words reveal the heart.

“Shepherd” and “die” imprecisely juxtaposed. Though the fool is surrounded by the life-preserving words of the righteous that nourish many, they starve to death because they lack the good sense to feed on them. The fool can neither receive nor give life.

3. 11:30

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,  
and those who win souls are wise.

“Fruit”: words and deeds

“Tree of life”: constant healing by feeding on it

“Who win souls”: Lit. “who take away life.” Intentional irony: “The saying not only affirms the connection of the wise with life, but obliges the mind in its movement to understand the meaning to deny the connection of the wise with death.” (Irwin).

#### 4. 13:14

The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,  
turning a person aside from the snares of death.

Only one fountain, but many traps

“Fountain of life”: abundant life with God

The teaching of the wise by its straightforward style and by its moral excellence attracts people to drink from its life-giving truth.

Assumes person is on a road mined with lethal traps

#### 5. 18:21

20 From the fruit of their mouth a person’s stomach is filled;  
with the harvest of their lips they are satisfied.

21 Death and life are in the hand of the tongue,  
and as for those who love it, each one will eat its fruit.

Verse 20 provides context: the fruit refers to one’s own speech

Oxymoron: “you eat the fruit of your lips.” “You eat what you are.” Cf English proverb. “eat your words”

A word is worth 1,000 pictures

## C. Power to destroy and to heal (12:18)

### 1. To destroy:

**sss. a. 6:27--29**

27 A scoundrel plots evil,  
and on their lips it is like a scorching fire.  
28 A perverse person stirs up conflict,  
and a gossip separates close friends.  
29 A violent person entices their neighbor  
and leads them down a path that is not good.

27 אִישׁ בִּלְיָעַל כִּרְהָה רָעָה וְעַל־שִׁפְתָיו כָּאֵשׁ צָרָבָת:  
28 אִישׁ מְהַפְּכוֹת יִשְׁלַח מִדּוֹן וְיִנְרָץ מִפְּרִיד אֱלֹוֹי:  
29 אִישׁ חָמָס יַפְתֶּה רָעָהוּ וְהוֹלִיכֵוּ בְּדֶרֶךְ לֹא־טוֹב:

**ttt. b. 12:18**

The words of the reckless pierce like swords,  
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

“reckless”: to speak without thought and at random

“Put your mind in gear before you put your tongue in motion.”

### 2. To heal

**uuu. a. 12:25**

Anxiety weighs down [יִשְׁחָנָה] the heart,  
but a kind word cheers it up [יִשְׁמְחָנָה]. (12:25)

**vvv. b. 15:30**

Light in a messenger's eyes brings joy to the heart,  
and good news gives health to the bones. (15:30)

www. c. 16:24

xxx.

Gracious [נֶעֱצָב] words are a honeycomb,  
sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

## II. LIMITATION OF WORDS

### A. Must be accompanied by deeds: 14:23

All hard work brings a profit,  
but mere talk leads only to poverty

בְּכָל־עֵצָב יִהְיֶה מוֹתָר  
אֲדֹר־לְמַחְסוֹר: וְדִבְרֵי־שִׁפְתַּיִם

Profit: hard toil is rewarded with material and circumstantial gains that exceed the expenditure (cf. 10:4—5)

But I said, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing at all. Yet what is due me is in the LORD's hand, and my reward is with my God." (Isa 49:4)

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them (Hebrews 6:10 )

Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

### B. Cannot revise God's history: 24:10--12

If you falter in a time of trouble,  
how small is your strength!  
Rescue those being led away to death;  
hold back those staggering toward slaughter.

If you say, "But we knew nothing about this,"  
does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?  
Does not he who guards your life know it?  
Will he not repay everyone according to what they have done?

(24:10—12)

“Falter”: grow slack; show yourself lax. Entails cowardice, fear, indolence, carelessness, lack of resolute strength

“Small”: meagre.

Reveal true strength in time of crisis.

Motive: God repays gritty determination, mental toughness, and moral courage

“hold back those staggering toward slaughter” Must overpower criminals who overpower their victims.

“If you say”: Adds lies to injustice

## C. Cannot compel a response

### 1. 17:10

A rebuke impresses a discerning person  
more than a hundred lashes a fool. (17:10)

### 2. 29:19

A slave cannot be corrected by mere words;  
though they understand, they will not respond. (29:19)

The foolish slave needs a caning to free him from the slavery of his rebellious heart.

“If the rod is far from his master, the slave will not obey him” (Papyrus Insinger 14:11)

### III. CHARACTERISTICS OF WISE SPEECH: GENTLE B-R-E-A-T-H

#### A. Gentle: 15:1-4

- <sup>1</sup> A gentle answer turns away wrath,  
but a harsh word stirs up anger.
- <sup>2</sup> The tongue of the wise adorns [*tetib*, root *twb*, “makes good”] knowledge,  
but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.
- <sup>3</sup> The eyes of the LORD are everywhere,  
Watching vigilantly evil people and good [*twb*] people.
- <sup>4</sup> The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life,  
but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.

#### Notes

15:1-4 pertain to communication. Key words of this semantic domain are “answer”/“word” (v. 1) “tongue”/“mouth” (v. 2), “tongue” (v. 4). The unit is framed by *rak* (“gentle”) tongue and *marpeh* “soothing” and/or “healing” tongue. *Marpeh* may be root *rp*’ “to heal” [suits immediate context of v. 4], or it may be *rp*’ “to calm” [suits larger context]. Ancient versions and commentators are equally divided, suggesting a pun is intentional (“soothing” means both).

v. 3. Gives unit a theological dimension. In this context the LORD’s activity to uphold good (healing tongue) and punish evil (perverse tongue). Verse 4 ends the unit with the gentle/soothing tongue healing the fractured spirit.

15:1-2. Linked by common topic of good speech versus bad speech and by common syntax. Together they teach that the gentle tongue does not compromise truth/knowledge but “adorns.”

15:2-3 linked by root *ywb/twb* [by-forms].

15:4 Proverb draws unit on the value of gentle speech to a close by noting its power to heal eternally the hurtful, fracturing tongue that distorts and overthrows truth.

“Gentle” (outward) relies on “patience” (inward)

“Ruler”: highest member

“Bone”: hardest member

Cf. Judges 8:1—6

Now the Ephraimites asked Gideon, "Why have you treated us like this? Why didn't you call us when you went to fight Midian?" And they challenged him vigorously. But he answered them, "What have I accomplished compared to you? Aren't the gleanings of Ephraim's grapes better than the full grape harvest of Abiezer? God gave Oreb and Zeeb, the Midianite leaders, into your hands. What was I able to do compared to you?" At this, their resentment against him subsided. Gideon and his three hundred men, exhausted yet keeping up the pursuit, came to the Jordan and crossed it. He said to the men of Sukkoth, "Give my troops some bread; they are worn out, and I am still pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian." But the officials of Sukkoth said, "Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your troops?" Then Gideon replied, "Just for that, when the Lord has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will tear your flesh with desert thorns and briers."

When deep within our swelling hearts  
 The thoughts of pride and anger rise,  
 When angry words are on our lips  
 And tears of passion in our eyes,  
 Then we must stay the angry blow,  
 And we must check the hasty word.  
 Give gentle answers back again  
 And fight the battle of our Lord.

## B. Boast not

### 1. 27:1

Do not boast about tomorrow,  
 for you do not know what a day may bring.

"Tomorrow": the nearest future (a fortiori)

A wise person does not speak nor plan as if they themselves had full disposal of their destiny and power over the future.



Cf. “Don’t count your chickens before they’re hatched.”

## 2. 27:2

Let someone else praise you, and not your own mouth;  
an outsider, and not your own lips.

“Someone else” (*zar* “stranger”); “outsider” (*nokri* “foreigner”)

Self-praise: exalts self and so destroys relationships

Society does not take boaster seriously. It has its own way of testing one before according them acclaim and entrusting them with power

Danger of to promote yourself beyond competence; fear demotion

Paul had to make an exception: (2 Cor. 10:12, 18; 11:1-33)

2 Corinthians 11:1--33. Paul felt he had to make an exception

:

<sup>16</sup> I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then tolerate me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting.

<sup>17</sup> In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool.

<sup>18</sup> Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast.

<sup>19</sup> You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise!

<sup>20</sup> In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or puts on airs or slaps you in the face.

<sup>21</sup> To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that! Whatever anyone else dares to boast about--I am speaking as a fool--I also dare to boast about.

## C. Restrained: 17:14, 27, 28

1. 12:23

Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam;  
so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.

The processes of reconciliation must be brought to bear immediately on a quarrel lest like small seepage from a dam that turns into a cataclysm, it gets out of hand and does irreparable damage.

2. 17:14

The prudent keep their knowledge to themselves,  
but a fool's heart blurts out folly.

Average American: 700 inputs, 12,000 sentences; 100,000 words, but read less than three books per year (Robert Boyd and Edmond Adio, *Ego Speech: Why No One is Listening to You*)

3. 17:27

A person who has knowledge uses words with restraint,  
and those who have understanding are even-tempered.

Restrained: knows the power and limitation of words

In contrast to the hot-tempered who cannot control their speech, the discerning keeps their cool and speaks neither impulsively nor compulsively (14:29; 15:18; 16:32; 29:20)

4. 17:28

Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent,  
and discerning if they hold their tongues.

“It is better to keep your mouth shut and be thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt” (Abraham Lincoln)

Oliver's Law of Public Speaking - A closed mouth gathers no feet.

“When your money is in copper you may throw it about, but when it is in gold you have to be cautious” (Cherly D. Matthews)

## D. Eaves drops not: 11:12-13

### 1. 10:12

Hatred stirs up dissension,  
but love covers over all wrongs.

### 2. 11:12

The one who has no sense derides their neighbors,  
but the one who has understanding holds their tongues.

“Derides”: (shows contempt for) implies speaker is proud, having the upper hand.

A senseless person out of insufferable pride both disparages and seeks to subjugate their neighbor, and an understanding person heals a broken relationship by retaining an appropriate silence, even when wronged.

### 3. 11:13

Gossips betray a confidence,  
but the trustworthy keep a secret.

What has been planned and spoken in secret council must not be proclaimed abroad, for that knowledge advantages the rebel and disadvantages the accountable circle of friends. Even at court a secret must not be divulged to win a case (25:9)

## E. Apt:

### 1. 15:2

The tongue of the wise adorns knowledge,  
but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.

The wise consider the style and the timing as well as the substance of what they say  
(10:32; 15:23, 28; 23:16)

### 2. 25:11

A word aptly spoken  
is like apples of gold in settings of silver

Context (juridical):

Like apples of gold in settings of silver  
is a ruling rightly given.

Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold  
is the rebuke of a wise judge to a listening ear.

## F. Thoughtful

### 1. 15:28

The heart of the righteous weighs its answers,  
but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.

“weighs”: *hgh* “ponders”: implies self-control and considerate

“wicked”: not concerned with well-being of others

2. 13:3

<sup>3</sup> Those who guard their lips preserve their lives,  
but those who speak rashly will come to ruin.

3.18:3

To answer before listening—  
that is folly and shame (18:3).

4. 16:1

To humans belong the plans of the heart,  
but from the LORD comes the proper answer of the tongue

Plans”: arranging of thoughts

## G. Honest

1. Delightful to LORD (12:22)

The LORD detests lying lips,  
but he delights in people who are trustworthy.

2. Delightful to King (16:13)

Kings take pleasure in honest lips;  
they value persons who speak what is right.

3. Delightful to All (28:23)

Whoever rebukes a person will in the end gain favor  
rather than one who has a flattering tongue.

### III. SOURCES OF GOOD SPEECH

#### A. Heart/disposition

##### 1. 4:23

20 My son, pay attention to what I say;  
turn your ear to my words.

21 Do not let them depart from your eyes  
keep them within your heart;

22 for they are life to those who find them  
and health to one's whole body.

23 Above every watch, guard your heart,  
for everything you do flows from it.

24 Keep a crooked mouth away from you;  
and devious lips put far away from you.

25 Let your eyes look straight ahead;  
fix your gaze directly before you.

26 Watch the track for your foot  
and be steadfast in all your ways.

27 Do not turn to the right or the left;  
keep your foot from evil.

Disciple rewritten as a series of body parts:

Receptors and acted upon

Ear (20)

Eye (21)

Heart and body (22a)

Janus

Heart (21b, 23a)

Actors

Mouth and lips (24)

Eyes and pupils (25)

Foot (26, 27)

2. 12:17

An honest witness tells the truth,  
but a false witness tells lies.

3. 14:29

Whoever is patient has great understanding,  
but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.

4. 16:23

The hearts of the wise make their mouths prudent,  
and their lips promote instruction.

### B. Sound Doctrine: 22:17--18

Pay attention and turn your ear to the sayings of the wise;  
apply your heart to what I teach,  
for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart  
and have all of them ready on your lips.

## C .Wise Companions

### 1. 13:20

Walk with the wise and become wise,  
for a companion of fools suffers harm.

It is not left to us to determine whether there shall be any influence; only, what that influence shall be.

### 2. 15:31

<sup>31</sup> Whoever heeds life-giving correction will be at home among the wise.

Lit. “the ear that listens to life-giving correction  
dwells among the wise.”

“dwells” (*lu/y/n*, “remains at night”). In that way he starts the day immediately with them.

## D. Prayer and Faith:

### 1. 15:8

The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked,  
but the prayer of the upright pleases him.

### 2. 15:29

The LORD is far from the wicked,  
but he hears the prayer of the righteous.

### 3. 16:3

Commit to the LORD whatever you do,  
and he will establish your plans.





## Lesson 15. The Valiant Wife

### Outline of lecture

- I. Translation
- II. Introduction
- III. Exegesis
- IV. Conclusion

### PART I. TRANSLATION

31:1 the sayings of King Lemuel—an inspired utterance his mother taught him.

.....

10 A valiant wife who can find?

Her price is much more than corals.

11 The heart of her husband trusts in her

he does not lack “spoil.”

12 She does him good, not harm,

all the days of her life.

13 She selects diligently wool and flax

and works with her glad palms

14 She becomes like trading vessels;

she brings her food from afar.

15 She arises while it is still night;

and provides “prey” for her household

and the quota of food for her servant girls.

16 She considers a field and buys it;

from the fruit of her palms she plants a vineyard.

17 She girds her loins with strength

she strengthens her arms for the tasks.

18 She perceives that her trading is good;

and her lamp does not go out at night.

19 Her hands she holds out to the doubling spindle;

her palm grasps the spindle.

20 Her palm she spreads out to the poor

- and she holds out her hands to the needy.
- 21 She is not afraid on account of the snow,  
for all of her household is clothed in scarlet.
- 22 Coverlets she makes for herself;  
her clothing is fine linen and purple.
- 23 Her husband is respected at the city gate,  
where he sits with the elders of the land.
- 24 Garments she makes and sells [them],  
sashes she supplies to the merchants.
- 25 Strength and majesty is her clothing  
and so she laughs at the coming days.
- 26 Her mouth she opens with wisdom,  
and loving teaching is on her tongue.
- 27 one who watches over what is going on;  
the food of idleness she does not eat.
- 28 Her sons arise and call her blessed;  
her husband also, and praises her:
- 29 “Many daughters do valiantly,  
but you surpass them all.”
- 30 Charm is deceitful, and beauty is fleeting;  
as for a woman who fears the Lord, she should be praised
- 31 Extol her for the fruit of her hands,  
and let her works praise her in the gates.

## PART II. INTRODUCTION

### I. DEMARCATION:

#### A. Acrostic Poem

#### B. Chiastic Inclusio:

1. “wife/woman” (אִשָּׁה vv. 10, 30);
2. “*hayil*” (חַיִּיל vv. 10, 29);
3. “her husband” (בָּעָלָהּ 11, 28)

#### C. Structures

Acrostic poems normally display other structures as well.

1. Alternating Structure: 13—18
2. Chiastic Structure 21-28
3. Janus 19--20

#### D. Logical progression

1. she blesses husband > he pronounces her blessed
2. her sources of income (13-19) > beneficence to others (20—27)

### II. FORM: HEROIC POEM (“RECOUNTS HERO’S EXPLOITS”)

- A. Military vocabulary: “valiant” (v. 10), “plunder” (v. 11), “prey” (v. 15)
- B. Contrasts to ANE praise of woman’s erotica (cf. 31:30)
- C. Contrasts to Greek praise of ideal wife: silent and homebody
- D. Contrasts to praise of Hellenic wisdom: impartial rationality
- E. Heroism on battle field transposed to a woman’s vita active in home and community.  
“The valorous wife is a heroic figure used by God to do good for His people, just as the ancient judges and kings did good for God’s people by their martial exploits.

### III. HISTORICAL, NOT ALLEGORICAL, REGISTER:

Woman Wisdom in Prologue belongs to figurative register  
Valiant wife belongs to historical register.

Ruth gives concrete expression to that ideal: “And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All the people of my town know that you are a woman of noble character [כִּי אִשָּׁת חַיִּל אַתָּה] (Ruth 3:11)

Rest of book mostly presents character and activity of ideal husband.

- A. Woman Wisdom not represented as having a husband or biological children, unlike Valiant Wife
- B. Woman Wisdom a composite figure (prophet, sage, mediatrix). Valiant wife a home-maker.

#### IV. OUTLINE

##### I. Introduction: her value 10-12

- A. General worth inferred from scarcity 10
- B. Worth to her husband 11-12

##### II. Body: her entrepreneurial and social activities 13-27

- A. Her income from her entrepreneurial industry 13-18
- B. Seam/janus 19
- C. Her social distribution of income 20-27

##### III. Conclusion: her praise 28-31

- A. By her family 28-29
- B. By all 30-31

N.B. Counting janus verse 19 with 13-18 and grammatically unified verses 27 with verse 26, poem consists of two seven verse strophes in the body and seven verses in its introduction and conclusion

## Part III. Exegesis

**A. Introduction: A Noble and Competent Wife Works for the Home** **10-12**

1. Her general worth inferred from her scarcity 10

אַשְׁת־חַיִל מִי יִמָּצֵא וְרֹחַק מִפְּנוּיִּים מִכְּרָה:

“Valiant” (חַיִל): competent strength and noble character

LXX ἀνδρεῖος (“manly,” “courageous”);

Jerome: *mulier fortis*. Cf. Rebekah and Ruth

KJV: “Virtuous” (from *vir*, “man”) (see v. 17)

“price”: i.e., bride price

2. Her worth to her husband 11-12

11 בָּטַח בָּהֶּה לֵב בַּעֲלָהּ וְשָׁלָל לֹא יִחָסֵר:

12 גְּמֻלָּתָהּ טוֹב וְלֹא-יִרָע כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיהָ:

“husband”: lord

“trusts”: otherwise only of God, except 20:36

“spoil”: plunder of war

“all days”: she is true, not false; constant, not temperamental; reliable, not fickle; discerning.

**B. Body: Exploits: her Activities** **13-27**

1. Her Sources of Revenue 13-18

13 דֶּרֶשָׁה צֹמֶר וּפִשְׁתִּים וְתַעַשׂ בַּחֲפֶז פִּיָּה:

14 הָיְתָה כְּאֶנְיוֹת סוֹחֵר מְמַרְחֵק תִּבְיָא לְחֶמֶה:

15 וְתִקְמוּ בַעֲד לַיְלָה וְתִתְּנוּ טָרֵף לְבֵיתָהּ וְחֵק לְנַעֲרָתֶיהָ:

16 זִמְמָה שְׂדֵה וְתִקְתְּהוּ מִפְּרִי כִפְיָה נֹטַע פָּרִם:

17 חֲגֹרָה בַּעֲזוֹ מִתְּנִיָּה אֶתְאַמֵּץ זֶרַעוֹתֶיהָ:

18 טַעֲמָה כִּי-טוֹב סִחָהּ לֹא-יִכָּבֵה בַלִּיל נֶרָה:

19 יָדֶיהָ שֹׁלְחָה בַּכִּישׁוֹר וְכִפְיָה תִּמְכּוּ פָּלֶד:

a. Palms (*kappeyha*) work the raw textiles 13

b. Trades (*shr*) to enrich the table 14

c. Arises at night (*layla*) to seek “prey” 15

a.’ Invests in a vineyard from the earning of her palms (*kappeyha*) 16

b.’ Gains strength from her trading (*shr*) 17

e.’ Lamp does not go out at night (*layla*) 18

a./a’: income her entrepreneurial palms produce

- b./b': trading to enrich table and source of strength
- c./c': figuratively begins and ends day in dark

**yyy. a. Her basic cottage industry 13–15**

- 13 She selects diligently wool and flax  
and works with her glad palms
- 14 She becomes like trading vessels;  
she brings her food from afar.
- 15 She arises [like a lioness] while it is still night;  
and provides “prey” for her household  
and the quota of food for her servant girls.

“wool and flax”: sheep (animal) and flax (plant). Wool takes dyes, not linen.

“Food from afar”: her bounteous table replicates in miniature that of fabled king Solomon (1 K. 4:21-23).

“arises while it is still night”: belongs to figure of “prey,” not to be taken literally. A lioness hunts food at night, not an aristocratic woman! The point is that she puts the well-being of her household before her own.

**zzz. b. Her entrepreneurial revenue from vineyard**

- 16 She considers a field and buys it;  
from the fruit of her palms she plants a vineyard.
- 17 She girds her loins with strength;  
she strengthens her arms for the tasks.
- 18 She perceives that her trading is good;  
and her lamp does not go out at night.

Carefully “considers” > boldly “buys” > industriously “plants”

“Vineyard”: most precious. Plants choice vines, builds a watchtower, craft a wine vat.

“Girds her loins”: to ready oneself for a heroic and/or difficult action. She is involved in the manual, menial labor with slaves. The aristocratic woman of the Bible not above menial labor.

“She perceives”: has physical and psychic strength

“her lamp does not go out at night”: “In a well ordered house the lamp burned all night . . . As a sign of life; its extinction marked calamity (Jer. 25:20; Job 18:6)” (Toy). Arabic proverb “he sleeps in the dark,” means “there is not a penny in the house.”

## 2. Seam/Janus

19

יָדֶיהָ שִׁלְחָהּ בְּכִישׁוֹר וְכַפֵּיהָ תִּמְכּוּ פָּלֶד: 19

בָּפֶה פִּרְשָׁה לְעַגִּי אֶיָּדֶיהָ שִׁלְחָהּ לְאַבְיוֹן: 20

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| a. Her hands she extends ( <i>yadeyha shillehah</i> ) to the<br>doubling spindle | 19A |
| b. Her palms ( <i>kappeha</i> ) grasp the spindle                                | 19B |
| b.' Her palm ( <i>kappah</i> ) spreads out to the poor                           | 20A |
| a.' Her hands she extends ( <i>yadeyha shillehah</i> ) to the needy              | 20B |

*Yodh* line (A/B): pertains to source of income (13-18)

*Kaph* line (A' /B'); pertains to social benefits (21-27)

“The hands that produce open wide to provide”



3. Her Production/Social Activities	20-27
a. Spreads palms to the poor	20
b. No fear of snow	21a
c. Household clothed ( <i>labush</i> ) in scarlet	21b
d. <i>Makes</i> (‘ <i>asetā</i> ) coverlets and clothing for herself	22
X. Husband respected at city gate	23
d.’ <i>Makes</i> (‘ <i>asetā</i> ) garments and sashes for merchants	24
c.’ Wife clothed ( <i>lebushah</i> ) with strength and dignity	25a
b.’ Laughs at the future	25b
a.’ Opens mouth with wisdom, looking after household	26-27

a/a’

- 20      בָּפֶה פִּרְשָׁה לְעֵנִי וַיְדִיחַ שְׁלֹחָהּ לְאַבְיוֹן:  
 26      פִּיהָ פִּתְחָה בְּחִכְמָה וְתוֹרַת־חָסֵד עַל־לְשׁוֹנָה:  
 27      צוֹפִיָּה הַלִּיכּוֹת בֵּיתָהּ וְלֶחֶם עֲצָלוֹת לֹא תֹאכֵל:

a/a’: Feature body parts in connection with acrostic (cf. v. 19). The wise deeds of her hands give credibility to the wise teachings of her mouth

v. 20: pride of place given to her benefits to poor

“poor and needy”: powerless, broken, and destitute

v. 27 צוֹפִיָּה: (pun on “sophia”?): “keep a lookout over”. Promptly to right irregularities. Probably turned over much of rearing of children to slaves but retained responsibility to their teaching

“bread of idleness”: does not indulge in the habits, excuses, or miseries of the sluggard

b/b’

- 21a      לֹא־תִירָא לְבֵיתָהּ מִשָּׁלֵג כִּי כָל־בֵּיתָהּ לְבֹשׁ שָׁנִים:  
 25b      עֲזוּ וְהִגֵּר לְבוּשָׁה וְתִשְׁחַק לְיוֹם אַחֲרָיו:

b. No fear of snow 21a

b.' Laughs at the future 25b

Does not fear [לא־תִירָא] = “laughs at” (ל' שחק [BDB 965]).

c/c'

21b כָּל־בֵּיתָהּ לְבָשׁ שָׁנִים

25a עֲזָרָהּ לְבוּשָׁה

Connected lexically by לְבָשׁ (*labush*) and לְבוּשָׁה (*lebushah*) clothed

C/c' explains the reasons for her confidence. She has protected her household against the snow without (21b) and fortified herself with strength within v. 25a)

d/d'

22a מִרְבָּעִים עָשְׂתָהּ־לָּהּ

24 סָדִין עָשְׂתָהּ וְתִמְכֹּר וְתַגֹּר נָתַנָּה לְכַנְעָנִי

d. 'asetā coverlets & clothing for self-22

d.' 'asetā garments & sashes for merchants 24

“she makes” + double objects

V. 22: for herself

V. 24: for merchants

X. Husband respected at city gate

23 נֹדַע בִּישְׁעָרִים בַּעֲלָהּ בְּשִׁבְתּוֹ עִם־זִקְנֵי־אֶרֶץ:

נֹדַע: “known” > “renown” > “respected”

His apparel adorns him

Her own character and genius praised in the gate, bring him respect

“in the gate”: place of judicial authority

“sits”: metonym for giving rulings

“elders”: guard the internal order and represent the community to outsiders

“of the land”: influence extends beyond local community

**C. Conclusion: praise for woman who fears the LORD**

**28-31**

28 קָמוּ בְּנֵיהּ וַיֹּאשְׁרוּהָ בַּעֲלָהּ וַיְהַלְלֶהּ:

29 רַבּוֹת בָּנוֹת עָשׂוּ חַיִּל לְאִתּוֹ עָלִית עַל־כַּלְנָהּ:

30 אָקָר גַּסּוֹן וְהַבֵּל הַיָּפִי אִשָּׁה יִרְאֵת־יְהוָה הִיא תִתְהַלֵּל:

31 תְּבוֹר־לֶהֱמָה מִפְּרִי יְדֶיהָ וַיִּהְלֶיהָ בְּשֹׁעֲרִים מַעֲשִׂיהָ:

Key word; “praise” (every verse but 29, which contains content of praise)

1. By her family (household) 28-29

28 קָמוּ בְנֵיהָ וַיֹּאשְׁרוּהָ בְּעֵלֶיהָ וַיְהַלְלֶהָ:

רַבּוֹת בָּנוֹת עָשׂוּ חָיִל וְאֵת עֲלִית עַל־כַּלְנָה: 29

Reciprocal: cf. introduction with conclusion

Introduction

valiant

blesses others;

\*gives (*ntn*, v. 15)

\*arises to work (*qum*, v. 15)

Conclusion:

proclaimed valiant

pronounced blessed

extol (*tnh*)

arise to praise (*qum*)

“arise”: See Job 29:8; Isa. 49:7

the young men saw me and stepped aside and the old men rose to their feet;

This is what the LORD says-- the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel-- to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers:

"Kings will see you and stand up, princes will see and bow down, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

“pronounce blessed”: lives as the Creator intended

*Halleyah* sounds a lot like *halleluyah*

“many valiant”: v. 10 a valiant wife is rare as a ruby. By comparison with her extreme rarity, ordinary valiant women are many!

“Daughter”: more delicate, finer term for “women”? Parallel to “sons”? she accepted parental teaching?

2. By all (community) 30-31

30 אָקָר גַּסּוֹן וְהַבֵּל הַיָּפִי אִשָּׁה יִרְאֵת־יְהוָה הִיא תִתְהַלֵּל:

תְּבוֹר־לֶהֱמָה מִפְּרִי יְדֶיהָ וַיִּהְלֶיהָ בְּשֹׁעֲרִים מַעֲשִׂיהָ:

Charm is deceitful because it promises a lifetime of beauty that it cannot give.

Charm is not praiseworthy because it deceives

Charm and beauty stand in opposition to “fear the LORD.” But remember father’s prayer in 5:19.

“if we do not admire what is praiseworthy, we shall be stupid, insensible, and great losers” (C. S. Lewis)

## Lecture 16. Sayings of Agur. Proverbs 30

### OUTLINE OF LECTURE

- I. Translation
- II. Rhetoric/Poetics & Outline
- III. Exegesis

#### Part I. Translation

1 The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh—an inspired utterance.

This man's utterance to Ithiel:

“I am weary, God, but I can prevail.

2 “Surely, I am only a brute, not a man;

I do not have human understanding.

3 I have not learned wisdom,

nor have I attained to the knowledge of the Holy One.

4 Who has gone up to heaven and come down?

Whose hands have gathered up the wind?

Who has wrapped up the waters in a cloak?

Who has established all the ends of the earth?

What is his name? and what is the name of his son?

Surely you know!

5 “Every word of God is flawless;

he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.’

6 ‘Do not add to his words,’

or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

7 “Two things I ask of you, Lord;

do not refuse me before I die:

8 Keep falsehood and lies far from me;

give me neither poverty nor riches,

but give me only my daily bread.

9 Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you  
and say, 'Who is the Lord?'

Or I may become poor and steal,  
and so dishonor the name of my God.

10 "Do not slander a servant to their master,  
or they will curse you, and you will pay for it.

11 "There are those who curse their fathers  
and do not bless their mothers;

12 those who are pure in their own eyes  
and yet are not cleansed of their filth;

13 those whose eyes are ever so haughty,  
whose glances are so disdainful;

14 those whose teeth are swords  
and whose jaws are set with knives  
to devour the poor from the earth

15 "The leech has two daughters.

'Give! Give!' they cry.

"There are three things that are never satisfied,  
four that never say, 'Enough!':

16 the grave, the barren womb,  
land, which is never satisfied with water,  
and fire, which never says, 'Enough!'

17 "The eye that mocks a father, that scorns an aged mother,  
will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley,  
will be eaten by the vultures.  
and the needy from among mankind.

18 "There are three things that are too amazing for me,  
four that I do not understand:

19 the way of an eagle in the sky,  
    the way of a snake on a rock,  
    the way of a ship on the high seas,  
    and the way of a man with a virgin.

20 “This is the way of an adulterous woman:  
    She eats and wipes her mouth  
    and says, ‘I’ve done nothing wrong.’

21 “Under three things the earth trembles,  
    under four it cannot bear up:  
22 an official who becomes king,  
    a godless fool who gets plenty to eat,  
23 a contemptible woman who gets married,  
    and a maid-servant who displaces her mistress.

24 “Four things on earth are small,  
    yet they are extremely wise:  
25 Ants are creatures of little strength,  
    yet they store up their food in the summer;  
26 hyraxes are creatures of little power,  
    yet they make their home in the crags;  
27 locusts have no king,  
    yet they advance together in ranks;  
28 a lizard can be caught with the hand,  
    yet it is found in kings’ palaces.

29 “There are three things that are stately in their stride,  
    four that move with stately bearing:  
30 a lion, mighty among beasts,  
    who retreats before nothing;  
31 a strutting rooster, a he-goat,  
    and a king secure against revolt.

32 “If you play the fool and exalt yourself,

or if you plan evil,  
clap your hand over your mouth!

p

and as twisting the nose produces blood,  
so stirring up anger produces strife.”

## PART II. POETICS AND OUTLINE

### I. STRUCTURE

I. Superscript	
II. Introduction: Autobiography	1-9
III. Body: 7 numerical sayings	10-31
IV. Conclusion: Warning to Ithiel	32--33
Superscript: Sayings, a prophetic burden, by Agur	1a
Autobiography (1 <sup>st</sup> person: “I”)	1b—9
To God: confession of inability and ability to know wisdom	1b
To Ithiel: Agur’s epistemology	2—6
<b>aaaa. Confession in 1<sup>st</sup> person of inability to know wisdom</b>	<b>2—3</b>
1. Confession # 1: ignorant	2
2. Confession # 2: must remain sub-human without knowing God	3



**bbbb. Confession in 2<sup>nd</sup> person: ability to know wisdom**

**cccc.**

**dddd. 3. Confession #3: Must have absolute/comprehensive knowledge for certain knowledge**

**eeee. 4. Confession # 4: The LORD, Israel's covenant keeping God, is omniscient: 4b**

**fff. 5. Confession # 5: Israel is the LORD's son/disciple 4c**

**gggg. Confession in 3<sup>rd</sup> person**

6. Confession # 6: God's word is infallible

5--6

Petitions to God: for truthfulness and modesty 7—9

**hhhh. Introduction (heading line of the numerical petition) 7**

**iiii. Petitions 8**

Two negative petitions

8A

**1. Re. words: to be truthful**

**8Aa**

**2. Re. money: to be modest**

**8Ab**

Positive petition: daily quota of bread

8B

jjjj. Reasons for petitions regarding poverty and wealth 9

Danger of wealth: desertion from the LORD 9A

Danger of poverty: desecration of LORD's name 9B

Seven Mostly Impersonal Numerical Sayings 10—31

Single line saying proscribing overturning social order 10

Three non-initial titled sayings about greed 11—16

Single line proverb proscribing overturning social order 17

Four initialed titled sayings about boundaries 18—31

Seven is the numeral of divine perfection

Initial titled lines are: 3 things...4 things

Titled line of four insatiates is not initial but tucked away as a janus in 15B

The macro-structure sequence of three/four matches the micro-structured sequence of four initial titled sayings.

Note the semantic connection between greed [overstepping boundaries] and recognizing boundaries

Address to Ithiel (“you”): warning not to rebel 32—33

II. TWO SINGLE LINE PROVERBS ARE IN PARALLEL

Verse 10 condemns slander

Verse 17 condemns the haughty eye.

Slander and haughty eyes are placed in parallel in Psalm 101:5

“Whoever *slanders* his neighbor in secret,  
him will I put to silence;  
whoever has *haughty eyes* and proud heart,  
him will I not endure.”

“This expression [slanders...] has to do with arrogance, something that God will not tolerate.” (Perdue, *Proverbs*, p. 260). “Haughty eyes symbolize arrogance (2 Sam. 22:8; Ps. 18:27; Prov. 6:17)(Ibid., 261). This parallelism between “slandering tongue” and haughty eyes in Psalm 101:5 suggest the single line proverbs not to overthrow authority (in government or home) match one another.

God sentences the slanderer and haughty to death in all three texts.

The single line sayings, sentencing the arrogant--who overturn divinely established social order--to death, occur at the seams of the numerical sayings. This is Agur’s “burden.”

### PART III. EXEGESIS

#### I. SUPERScript: SAYINGS, A PROPHETIC BURDEN, BY AGUR

1A

The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh, an oracle;  
the inspired utterance of the man to Ithiel:

הַמָּסָא': *hammassa'*, “prophetic burden”

נְאֻם הַגִּבֹּר: *Ne'um haggeber*, “inspired utterance” (Num. 24:3+ [Balaam]; 2 Sam. 23:1 [David])

Cf. vv. 5-6: Every word of God is pure

Cf. vv. 7-8 Keep my words truthful

## II. AUTOBIOGRAPHY (1<sup>ST</sup> PERSON: “I”)

1B—9

### A. To God: summary confession of inability and ability

to know wisdom

1b

לְאִיתִיָּאֵל לְאִיתִיָּאֵל וְאֶכָּל [l<sup>e</sup>’iti’el l<sup>e</sup>’iti’el w<sup>e</sup>’ukal]

MT: “To Ithiel, to Ithiel and to Ukal.” Problematic

1. Unique to repeat name
2. *Ukal*, not a Semitic name
3. “To,” not repeated with Ukal

Emend: לְאִיתִיָּאֵל לְאִיתִיָּאֵל וְאֶכָּל [l<sup>e</sup>’iti’el la’iti’el w<sup>e</sup>’ukal]: “I am weary, God, but I can prevail.” Fits context.

“Weary”: see v. 2—4a: inability to attain wisdom

“Prevail”: see vv. 4b-6: ability to attain wisdom

### B. To Ithiel: Agur’s epistemology

2—6

kkkk.

1. Confession in 1<sup>st</sup> person of inability to know wisdom 2—3

IIII. a. Confession # 1: ignorant: none on own attain wisdom

2

mmmm. b. Confession # 2: must remain ignorant without God

3

Combines confessions # 2 and # 3: 2a + 3b; 2b + 3a

Lacks wisdom innately and by education  
Less than human without wisdom and knowledge of Holy One  
Wisdom depends on a relationship with Holy One

**nnnn. Confession in 2<sup>nd</sup> person: Creator is omniscient:**

**oooo. c. Confession # 3: Certain knowledge depends on comprehensive knowledge of Creator 4a**

Outer frame refers to God's Omniscience as Creator  
Inner core refers to God's omniscience as Sustainer

Woman Wisdom (i.e., Solomon's wisdom) has comprehensive knowledge

I was there when he set the heavens in place,  
when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,  
when he established the clouds above  
and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,  
when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not  
overstep his command,  
and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.  
(8:27—29).

Same chiasm as in 30:4: outer: creator; inner: sustainer.

**pppp. d. Confession # 4: The LORD is omniscient 4b**

Agur challenges Ithiel to confess Israel's faith

**qqqq. e. Confession # 5. The LORD's son/disciple is Israel 4c**

Israel is called God's son at her founding as a nation: "Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you, 'Let my son go,

so he may worship me." But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son.' (Exodus 4:22, 23)

In the Book of Proverbs "son" refers to a son who accepts father's teaching (Proverbs 4:3)

Baruch validates this interpretation of names in confessions #4 and #5.

29 Who has gone up into heaven, and taken her [wisdom],  
and brought her down from the clouds?

30 Who has gone over the sea, and found her,  
and will buy her for pure gold?

31 No one knows the way to her,  
or is concerned about the path to her.

32 But the one who knows all things knows her,  
he found her by his understanding.

The one who prepared the earth for all time  
filled it with four-footed creatures;

35 This is our God;  
no other can be compared to him.

36 He found the whole way to knowledge,  
and gave her to his servant Jacob and to Israel,  
whom he loved. (Baruch 3:29—36)

Job validates this interpretation of names

Confession in 3<sup>rd</sup> person God understands the way to wisdom and he alone knows where it dwells, for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens.

.....  
.....

When he established the force of the wind and measured out the waters, when he made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm, then he looked at wisdom and appraised it; he confirmed it and tested it. 28 And he said to the human race, "The fear of the Lord--that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding." (Job 28:12—28)

“Surely you know”: Agur challenges Ithiel to confess he is God’s son/ disciple

rrr.

#### ssss. f. Confession # 6. God’s word is infallible 5-6

Proverbs 30:5 cites David (Psalm 18:30)

Every word of God is flawless;  
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

כָּל־אִמְרַת אֱלֹהִים צְרוּפָה מִגֵּן הוּא לַחֲסִים בּוֹ

“The word of the LORD is flawless;  
he is a shield to all who take refuge in him.”

Psalm 18:30 אִמְרַת־יְהוָה צְרוּפָה מִגֵּן הוּא לְכָל הַחֲסִים בּוֹ

Summary of Israel’s epistemology: *credo ut intelligam* (Rom. 1:18—22)

- 1) Humans have failed to find wisdom (i.e., how to behave).
- 2) Humans without knowing God cannot establish absolute values.
- 3) Only the Creator and Sustainer of the universe is omniscient
- 4) The wise confess the LORD is omniscient
- 5) The wise confess themselves sons of God.
- 6) They confess God’s word is infallible.

N.B. Agur basis his wisdom on “the fear of I AM”

### C. To God: petitions for truthfulness and modesty

7—9

#### 1. Introduction (heading line of the numerical petition) 7

Numeral “two” a janus into following seven numerical sayings.

#### tttt.a. Petitions 8

1.) Two negative petitions 8A

*a.). Re. words: not to lie 8Aa*

*b.) Re. money: not to have too much or too little 8Ab*

2.) Positive petition: for daily quota of bread 8B

#### uuuu. b. Reasons for petitions regarding poverty and wealth 9

1.) Danger of wealth: desertion from the LORD 9A

Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. (Deuteronomy 8:11--14)

2.) Danger of poverty: desecration of LORD's name 9B

### III. SEVEN MOSTLY IMPERSONAL NUMERICAL SAYINGS 10—31

A. Single line saying proscribing overturning social order of government by slandering king's official 10

Janus

To vv. 8 and 9:



Vocabulary: Slander < falsehood and lies

Syntax: “Otherwise” ....

To v. 11: “There are those who curse their fathers

“Curse”: see v. 11. No higher court of appeal

“Slave”: or official

“you will pay for it”: Slander is liable because slander is penalized and presumably curse does not come to rest (cf. Prov. 26: 2)

## B. Three non-initial titled sayings about greed

11—16

### 1. The greedy generation 11-14

#### www. a. Curse not bless parents 11

Janus: Curse: v. 10; Father/mother: v. 17

“Generation”: Hebraism for distinct sort of person

“Curse” parents: a capital offence in *Torah* (Ex 21:17). Greedy children murder parents to:

Obtain inheritance faster (20:21);

Shirk responsibility to honor parent (Matthew 15:3—6)

“Bless”: mediate God’s prosperity on another

#### www. b. Proud with reference to God: Deluded in thinking they are pure without God’s cleansing 12

xxxx. c. Proud with reference to others: think they are better than others 13

yyyy. d. Exploit weak and defenseless poor 14

## 2. The leech 15a

Presumably parasite is undesirable

Leech: Must be eliminated immediately before it reproduces (2 Thess. 3:10).

## 3. Four insatiables 15b-16

Formula is  $x-1 / x$  [real number]

Sheol ever yearns to end life; barren womb ever yearns to reproduce it

Land ever yearns to produce crops; fire ever yearns to destroy them.

Outside frame refers to death (Sheol, fire); inner frame to life (womb, water)

Lesson: Live within the reality that life and death are eternal insatiables that struggle against one another as long as this creation endures. Persistent evils a given; God's gifts of life overcomes them.

## C. Single line proverb proscribing overturning social order of home: ignominious end of rebellious child 17

Janus to 30:11--14:

catchwords: "eye," "father," "mother," "devour"

semantics: haughty children

Lesson: Judgment: unburied carcass symbolizes tragic and dishonorable end of greedy child/generation

Judgment will be from heaven (birds)

Destruction is total: 2 birds (plurals); wadi (no

other food; 1 Kgs. 17:4, 6)

## D. Four initialed titled sayings about boundaries

18—31

The four sayings refer to four situations of accepting boundaries and of succeeding within them

Sayings 1 and 2: Contrast four amazing orders created by God and man (18--20) and four social disorders (violating boundaries, 20-23).

Sayings 3 and 4: Escalate four wise creatures overcoming weakness to survive within boundaries (24-28) to four wise creatures ruling their realms (29-31)

### 1. Four Awesome Ways & Awful Way of adulteress 18-20

“Wonderful”: extraordinary, evoking astonishment

“Do not know”: beyond ability to internalize knowledge

“Way” of four breath-takers: so transcendent in their conduct and achievements that they humble Agur and fill him with awe.

“eagle”: artless, yet so artful, endless soaring in the sky. One of Palestine’s heaviest birds

“serpent”: gliding movement without legs and having nothing with which to hang on, glides along the rock

“heart of sea”: remote open seas with trade routes, defying ocean’s depths.

“virgin” (*alma*; cf. Isa. 7;14): symbolizes purity. Sex points to transcendence

Leitwort ‘way’ links awful way with awesome way.

‘Adulteress’: number of sexual partners (no marriage boundary) contrast with virgin (marriage boundary)

“wipes her mouth”: just a meal; no awe of sex

“not done iniquity”: no sense of shame for her greed and insubordination, albeit she wrecks the home, the foundation of society. She has no sense / awe of transcendence, including sexual behavior. Without awe she fails to recognize sexual boundary (cf. Romans 1:22—32).

## 2. Four Upside Down Social Situations 21-23

Key word: “Under”

“Earth trembles”: A metonym for society

Topsy-turvy social order: men (v. 22), women (v. 23)

Lesson: Govern wisely in order to forestall unfit upstarts from replacing those fit to rule. The former create a culture red with blood; the latter create a culture green with life.

“Official”: primary responsibility is loyalty to king. This one betrays that trust

“Fool” [lit. “outcast,” *nabal*; see 17:7]: a sacrilegious fool (denies God exists to uphold moral order); opposite of noble; cf. Nabal (1 Samuel 25)

“Full of food”: destroys order by being rewarded for vice; he should be starved.  
Becomes more arrogant and more dangerous

“Contemptible” (lit. “hated”): matches churlish outcast: odious, quarrelsome, unlovable woman whom society rejects

“when she gets married”: as foolish as feeding the fool.

“maidservant”: female equivalent of *‘ebed* (slave, official). Her first responsibility is loyalty to her mistress.

### 3. Four Wee but Wise Beasties 24-28

“small” (no offense or defense) but “wise” (live)

“creatures” (lit. “people”): Animals are parables (1:6). Agur is a sage, not a zoologist. Though vulnerable by their wisdom they survive:

ant: make prudent provision

hyraxes/rock badger: find prudent protection

locusts: effect a prudent government

lizard: lives in a royal palace

Lesson: There is no need to overthrow social boundaries. One can live in a royal palace by practicing within created order the social skills of the sage

### 4. Four Stately Marchers 29-31

“Four” wee but wise “people” escalated to four creatures that stride majestically in their realms without fear. Wise may be vulnerable and survive, but more than that they rule

“Hero”: a parable (cf. “people”)

“Secure against revolt”: text?

אֶל־קוּם עִמּוֹ (*'alqum 'immo*): Arab. “without calling up his army”

אֶל־קוּם עִמּוֹ *'l qum 'immo*: “none rising against him” = secure against revolt)

Lesson: rule within created boundaries with wisdom’s heroic strength to prevent revolution.  
(see 8:14—15)

14 Counsel and sound judgment are mine;

I have insight, I have power.

15 By me kings reign

and rulers issue decrees that are just;

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#### IV. ADDRESS TO ITHIEL (“YOU”): WARNING NOT TO REBEL 32—33

“You” (i.e., Ithiel, probably, an official. See v. 22a)

“fool” (*nbl*: see “outcast” v. 22b)

“Exalt”: become an outcast (see vv. 21--23)

“Clap your hand”: immediate and absolute silence (Job 29:9)

“Strife”: upsetting divine order produces strife not *shalom*

#### PART IV. CONCLUSION

A. Priority of the Word of God is a defensible partiality

B. Give us our daily bread and delivers us from evil

- I. Greedy will be punished
- II. Evil persists
- III. Godly poet's imagination perceives boundaries
- IV. Upstarts will not endure
- V. Wisdom empowers the weak to survive
- VI. Wisdom empowers rulers to govern with strength
- VII. Stop rebellion immediately

C. Pray: depend on God, not self: 30-8--9

## Lesson 17. Wise Spouses

### OUTLINE OF LECTURE

- I. Introduction
- II. Wise Husband
- III. Wise Wife

### PART I: INTRODUCTION

#### I. God's Social Institutions

- A.** Home: To propagate the human race in a nuclear community of mutual love and of support. Antedates the Fall.
- B.** State: To restrain crime.
- C.** Church: To create a universal community to worship the LORD God and to love one another

#### II. Need for Study

Divorce rate:     1900: 1 of 12;  
                         1920: 1 of 6  
                         1970 to present: 1 of 2\*

\* Varies with education and income

\* Expectations of marriage shifted from companionship to self-actualization.



Incidence of partnership without marriage is growing

1980s: one in 7 of non-married men

1993: one in 5

Today: a growing tendency

“We have eaten the grapes and destroyed the vine” (Sociologists)

“I Hate Divorce,” says *I AM* (Mal. 2:16)

“Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God....You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both." The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. (1 Cor. 6:9—13)

### III. Need for Direction

“Matrimony is the high sea for which no compass has yet been invented” (Heine).

Proverbs: Success in marriage is much more than finding the right person; it is a matter of being the right person.

In the biblical world marriages were arranged: “Love the person you marry.”

### IV. Marriage: A Most Holy Institution

#### A. Marriage is part of creation order and of order of redemption

##### 1. Order of creation

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it." (Genesis 1:27—28)

2. Order of redemption (salvation history)

a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. (2:24)

B. High Priest [born the most holy person] was Married. Lev. 21:10-13

C. Nazirite [choose to be set apart to God] was Married. Num. 6

D. Celibacy to Better to Serve the Lord.

I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs--how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world--how he can please his wife-- and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world--how she can please her husband. (1 Cor. 7:32—34).

## PART II. WISE HUSBAND

### I. FEARS THE LORD

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline" (1:7).

1. Cognitive response to LORD's revelation: 2:1--5
2. Spiritual response of humility, to the LORD's revelation: 22:4
3. Fear/Awe of *I AM*, who holds keys to life and death: 1:32—33

## II. VALUES HIS GOOD WIFE AS GOD’S GOOD GIFT TO HIM

“Who finds a wife finds what is good  
and so receives favor from the Lord” (18:22)

LXX, Syriac, Vulgate add “good wife,” an interpretative, tautological gloss.

Cf. 8:35 Who finds me [Woman Wisdom] ... receives favor from the LORD.

“The wife is her husband’s good fortune, his life, his wealth, his crown” (rabbis)

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Now *I AM* God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. . . . But as for Adam, he found no suitable helper . . .

N.B. God does not squander his gift on an unappreciative male.

So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man. “

N.B. Celebrates his wife’s equality

“Good”:

"Under three things the earth trembles, under four it cannot bear up:

An official who becomes king,  
a fool who is full of food,  
a contemptible woman [שִׁנְיָה, “hated”] who gets married,  
and a maidservant who displaces her mistress.

### III. PRAISES HIS WIFE

“Her children arise and call her blessed;  
her husband also, and he praises her:  
‘Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.’” (31:28--29)

"When I went to the gate of the city  
and took my seat in the public square,  
the young men saw me and stepped aside  
and the old men rose to their feet (Job 29:7-8)

N.B. Not, “I told you I love you when I married you. If I ever change my mind I’ll let you know”)

“Open rebuke is better than secret love”

N.B. Rebuke expresses love (see below)

N.B. Secret love is like winking at a girl in the dark

### IV. TEACHABLE

Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction;  
pay attention and gain understanding.  
When I was a son in my father's house,  
still tender, and an only child of my mother,  
he taught me and said,  
"Lay hold of my words with all your heart;  
keep my commands and you will live." (4:1—3)

### V. NOBLE

A. Righteous (serves others, not self)

“doing what is right and just and fair”: 1:3

B. Diligent worker: See “moneywise”: 10:2-5

C. Cool-tempered: “the quick tempered do foolish things”: 14:17

D. Sober: “Who has woe...those who linger over wine”: 24:29-35

#### VI. PROVIDER AND LEADER:

“Finish your outdoor work and get your fields ready;  
after that, build your house.” (24:27)

N.B. Provides the economic foundation on which wife can build (see below).

N.B. Build your house is an imperative

#### VII. LOVE’S HIS WIFE WITH CHRIST’S LOVE

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church.... Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. (Ephesians 5:25—33)

### PART III: WISE WIFE

## I. FEARS THE LORD

Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;  
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

N.B. “Deceptive”: beauty that promises a lifetime of happiness fades.

## II. A VIRGIN

There are three things that are too amazing for me,  
four that I do not understand:

the way of an eagle in [ /b- / the sky,  
the way of a snake on [ /b- / a rock,  
the way of a ship on [ /b- / the high seas,  
and the way of a man with [ /b- / a virgin.

This is the way of an adulteress:

She eats and wipes her mouth  
and says, 'I've done nothing wrong.' (30:18—20)

## III. FINDS FULFILLMENT IN THE HOME

“A wise woman builds her house,  
but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.”

14:21

A wife of noble character who can find?  
She is worth far more than rubies.  
Her husband has full confidence in her  
and lacks nothing of value.  
She brings him good, not harm,  
all the days of her life....

She watches over the affairs of her household  
and does not eat the bread of idleness. (31:10--31)

#### IV. FAITHFUL TO HER HUSBAND

Wisdom will save you also from the adulteress,  
from the wayward wife with her seductive words,  
who has left the partner of her youth (2:16—17)  
and ignored the covenant she made before God.

N.B. Exogamous marriage acceptable with foreign wives loyal to husband: Tamar,  
Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba; contra. Delilah

#### V. BRINGS HONOR TO HER HUSBAND

A wife of noble character is her husband's crown,  
but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones. (14:21)

N.B. "In the loving submission of the woman to the man is reflected the inner  
Trinitarian glory of the relationship of the Son to the Father. Could anything greater  
be said about woman" (Werner Meyer)

"For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to  
make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah,  
who obeyed Abraham and called him her master." (1 Peter 3:5—6)

As a result of the Fall woman desires to rule her husband

To the woman he said,  
"Your desire is for your husband,  
and he must rule over you." (Genesis 3:16)

Cf. But if you [Cain] do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; its  
desires is for you, and you must rule over it." (Genesis 4:7)

## VI. NOT QUARRELSOME

Better to live on a corner of the roof  
than share a house with a quarrelsome wife. (21:9)

Better to live in a desert  
than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife. (21:19)

A quarrelsome wife is like  
a constant dripping on a rainy day. (27:15)

## VII. ENTREPRENEURIAL (PROVERBS 31:10—31)

She considers a field and buys it;  
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.

She makes linen garments and sells them,  
and supplies the merchants with sashes.

## VIII. A WILD GOAT

A godly father's prayer for his son:

May your fountain be blessed,  
and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth:  
A loving doe, a graceful deer—  
may her breasts satisfy you always,  
may you ever be captivated by her love.  
N.B. "graceful deer" (lit. "wild goat")



#### IV. SUBMITS HERSELF TO HER HUSBAND IN EVERYTHING

Submit to one another [in the church] out of reverence for Christ.

Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. (Ephesians 5:21—24)

## Lecture 16. Wise Spouses

### I. TOGETHER TEACH *MUSAR* AND *TORAH*

1:8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching

“Teaching” < Heb. *Torah* [catechetical teaching]

“Instruction” < Heb. *Musar* (“instruction” [to prevent folly] “discipline” [to prevent repetition of folly]). Levels of instruction/discipline

The model suggests that optimal disciplinary responses begin with less severe tactics, such as reasoning, but proceed to firmer disciplinary tactics when the initial tactics achieve neither compliance nor an acceptable compromise. This is consistent with many studies showing that a combination of reasoning and punishment is more effective than either one alone.

Robert E. Lazelere, “Combing Love and Limits in Authoritative Parenting: A Conditional Sequence Model of Disciplinary”

#### 1. Show benefits of wisdom

Listen, my son, to your father's instruction  
and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

They will be a garland to grace your head  
and a chain to adorn your neck. 1:8--9

#### 2. Show consequences of folly

Do not envy a violent man  
or choose any of his ways,  
for the LORD detests a perverse man  
but takes the upright into his confidence.

The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked,  
but he blesses the home of the righteous.  
He mocks proud mockers  
but gives grace to the humble.  
The wise inherit honor,  
but fools he holds up to shame. 3:31—35

3. Warn that sin is addictive

Do not set foot on the path of the wicked  
or walk in the way of evil men.  
Avoid it, do not travel on it;  
turn from it and go on your way.  
For they cannot sleep till they do evil;  
they are robbed of slumber till they make someone fall.  
They eat the bread of wickedness  
and drink the wine of violence.

4. Rebuke wrongdoing: a sign of love

Do not hate your brother in your heart.  
Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt.  
Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people,  
but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD (Leviticus 19:17—18)

5. Punish wrongdoing: a sign of love

My son, do not despise *I AM*'s discipline  
and do not resent his rebuke,  
because *I AM* disciplines those he loves,  
as a father the son he delights in. 3:11--12

“And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons:  
"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he

rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son“ (Heb. 12:5-6)

He who spares the rod hates his son,  
but he who loves him is careful to discipline [*musar*] him 13:24

Do not withhold discipline [*musar*] from a child;  
if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. 23:13

Punish him with the rod  
and save him from death. 23:14

The rod of correction imparts wisdom,  
but a child left to himself disgraces his mother. 29:15

10:1 A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son brings grief to his mother.

“Father” and “mother” at seams of book.

31:26 She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

“instruction”: Heb. *torah*

1 Timothy 2:12—3:1. How a woman is “saved” from loss of leadership

I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing--if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.

Timothy

Genesis

13. Man 1<sup>st</sup> formed

2:18—25 Gift of Bride

14. Woman Deceived

3:14 “Serpent deceived me”

15 She saved through childbearing if they 3:16 enmity between seed of Serp. & of woman

[children] continue

3:1 Overseers  
feet.

God of peace will soon crush Satan under your  
feet.

(Rom 16:20)

“Hand that rocks the cradle rules the world” (William Ross Wallace, 1865. Most quoted saying)

“In loving memory of Louise Waltke, who by faith, though dead, still speaks”

## II. BELIEVE IN ORIGINAL SIN

Stop listening to instruction, my son,  
and you will stray from the words of knowledge (19:27)

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child,  
but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him (22:15).

Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint;  
but blessed are those who heed wisdom's instruction. (29:18)

## III. BELIEVE *MUSAR/TORAH* IS EFFECTIVE 22:6

Do not withhold discipline [*musar*] from a child;  
if you punish him with the rod, he will not die.  
Punish him with the rod  
and save him from death. 23:13, 14

The rod of correction imparts wisdom,  
but a child left to himself disgraces his mother. 29:15

Train a child in the way he should go,  
and when he is old he will not turn from it. 22:6

N.B. “Give me a boy until he is seven, and he is mine for life” (Ignatius Loyola)

N.B. A truth but not the whole truth about child rearing.

Book is addressed to youth, not parents, holding child responsible to listen to Solomon’s teaching

The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child. The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them.  
(Ezekiel 18:20)

Blows and wounds cleanse away evil,  
and beatings purge the inmost being. (20:30)

N.B. Not stated that parents should inflict such blows upon children. The agent may be an enemy, state or Providence.

#### IV. RESPECT THE CHILD’S DIGNITY 4:3

For I was an [obedient] son to my father,  
still tender, and an only child of my mother.

“When parents are loving and firm and communicate well with the child, the children are exceptionally competent and well adjusted, whether or not their parents spanked them as preschoolers” (Diana Baumrind, “Child Care Practices Antedating Three Patterns of Preschool Behavior,” *Genetic Psychology Monographs* 75 (1967) 43-88.

## V. EXEMPLIFY THE TEACHING 4:3

For I was an [obedient] son to my father,  
still tender, and an only child of my mother.

“Son”: biological and spiritual. For I also was a son obedient to *my* father, and loved in the sight of *my* mother (LXX).

N.B. Mind is like a tape recorder. When word and action re-enforce one another, recording is permanent; not so when they conflict

## VI. PROACTIVE

### A. Recreate scene of easy money: 1:10--19

My son, if sinful men entice you,  
do not give in to them.  
If they say, "Come along with us;  
.....  
-- my son, do not go along with them,  
do not set foot on their paths;  
for their feet rush into sin,  
they are swift to shed blood....

### B. Recreate scene of easy sex: chapter 7

At the window of my house  
I looked down through the lattice.  
I saw among the simple,  
I noticed among the young men,  
a youth who had no sense.  
He was going down the street near her corner,  
walking along in the direction of her house  
at twilight, as the day was fading,

as the dark of night set in....

## VII. BE DISCERNING OF CHILD'S SPIRITUAL NATURE

Flog a mocker, and the simple will learn prudence;  
rebuke the discerning, and they will gain knowledge. 19:25

"Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult;  
whoever rebukes the wicked incurs abuse.  
Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you;  
rebuke a wise man and he will love you. 9:7--8



## Lectures 19—20. Proverbs and Politics.

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. DEFINITIONS

**A. Ethics: a branch of [philosophy](#) that involves systematizing, defending and recommending concepts and rules of right and wrong [conduct](#), often addressing disputes of [moral diversity](#).**

B. Morals: Ethics and morals both relate to “right” and “wrong” conduct. Ethics, however, refers to the series of rules provided to an individual by an external source, e.g. their profession, the university guided by the Enlightenment, or the church guided by the Bible. Morals refer to an individual’s own principles regarding right and wrong. Morals are often derived from ethics.

N.B. Proverbs aims to make the Solomon’s ethics/wisdom the son’s/the disciple’s morals. “The proverbs of Solomon ... to know [personally] wisdom” (1:1, 2).

**C. Politics: involves the debate or conflict among individuals or parties with different views of ethics and morality, having or hoping to achieve power in government over those with other views of ethics and morality.**

1. Oxford Dictionary: “The activities associated with the governance of a country or other area, especially the debate or conflict among individuals or parties having or hoping to achieve power.
2. Applied to Book of Proverbs: The activities associated with achieving the wisdom of Book of Proverbs in the governance of America over those of wicked men and women, whose ethics are derived from what is right in their own eyes and whose morals may include killing the innocent.
3. Bill Moyers: Ideas are great arrows, but there has to be a bow. And politics is the bow of idealism.

**II. CHRISTIAN INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY**

**A. Negative assessment of Christian involvement in politics because of:**

1. Separation of church and state: a metaphorical description of the distance between religion and the civil government. But that difference varies in Christian understanding.
  - a. Historically (Jefferson): State should not interfere with humankind’s worship and conscience.

N.B. Humankind’s worship and conscience will influence their political activities
  - b. Some organized “Christian” religions (e.g. Anabaptist and their descendants--Amish, Mennonites, Quakers—and in the 20th century Jehovah Witnesses) it means not to be involved in politics in any way: they refuse to vote, carry arms or participate in civil government in any way. They believe that by not participating in government they are closer to the kingdom of God, since Jesus answered Pilate: “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place” (John 18:36).

**zzzz. N.B. Fails to recognize that Christians belong to the civil government and the spiritual Kingdom of God:**

“Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." (Matth. 22:21)

“Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do

wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor." (Romans 12:1—7)

2. Church should prioritize its time and efforts to save souls. The world is likened to a sinking ship from which people need to be saved. When a ship is sinking, you don't shine its brass. You make every effort to get people into life boats.

N.B. Christian political activity is not shining brass on a sinking boat but rather being salt and light in a corrupt and dark world. Christian political activity keeps the boat from sinking into Sheol and Abaddon. English reformers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as Gladstone, saved England from the hell of the French revolution and subsequently from Napoleon's debatably dictatorship and conquest of Europe. Abraham Lincoln emancipated Afro-Americans, and Martin Luther King gave them equality. This is more than shining brass; it is giving people a life.

3. Politics is a dirty business. Cannot wear a white suit into a coal mine and expect to come out of it without a black spot.

**Mark Twain:** "No public interest is anything other or nobler than a massed accumulation of private interests." Private interests are largely selfish. Like going into a coal mine: cannot come out clean. Kevin on "Shark Tank": "Its all about money, all of the time."

**José Maria de Eça de Queiroz** (generally considered to be the greatest Portuguese writer in the [realist](#) style [i.e., depictions of everyday life]: "Politicians and diapers should be changed frequently and all for the same reason."

**Harry S. Truman** (*Plain Speaking*) that "My choice early in life was either to be a piano player in a whorehouse or a politician. And to tell the truth, there's hardly any difference."

**Ronald Reagan:** Politics is supposed to be the second-oldest profession. I have come to realize that it bears a very close resemblance to the first. ~Ronald Reagan

4. Church loses its universal appeal

**Alexis de Tocqueville:** "When religion becomes allied with a political party it loses its universal appeal. By sharing the passions of the world, defending the peculiar interests of its political allies, and joining the temporal power of the state it merely created animosity and alienation. (Norman Graebner, "Christianity and Democracy: Tocqueville's Views of Christianity in America," *Journal of Religion*, 56, No. 3 (July, 1976)

**Jerry Falwell**, founder of Moral Majority: "The only difference between Republicans and Democrats is Republican drink better whisky than Democrats."

N.B. Above, politics is defined above in terms of values, not party allegiance. Church has a prophetic obligation to clean up politics.

## **B. Positive assessment of Christian involvement in political activity because:**

1. Politics-- is inevitable and inescapable.

**aaaaa. a. Proverbs originally composed for budding, governing officials. Its ethics were then democratized to shape the morals of the nation.**

N.B. The word “king” occurs 34x in the book. Royal proverbs serve as exemplars for good government

**bbbbb. b. Prologue to Proverbs: Many lectures and sermons represent a conflict of Solomon’s ethics versus morals of wicked.**

1.) Parent’s 1<sup>st</sup> lecture: two views of life compete for souls of youth: parents versus wicked men.

<sup>8</sup> Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

....

<sup>10</sup> My son, if sinful men entice you, do not give in to them.( Proverbs 1:8—10)

2.) Parents’ 7<sup>th</sup>—9<sup>th</sup> lectures: parent’s values versus those of wicked woman

My son, pay attention to my wisdom, turn your ear to my words of insight,  
that you may maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge.

For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey,

and her speech is smoother than oil;

but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. (5:1—4)

3.) Woman Wisdom addresses the masses of humanity, especially the uncommitted, at the city gate (see below)

a.) <sup>20</sup> Out in the open wisdom calls aloud, she raises her voice in the public square;

<sup>21</sup> on top of the wall she cries out, at the city gate she makes her speech:

<sup>22</sup> "How long will you who are simple love your simple ways?  
How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?  
(1:20---23)

b.) <sup>1</sup> Does not Wisdom call out?  
and Understanding raise her voice?

<sup>2</sup> At the highest points beside the way,  
at the crossroads she takes her stand;

<sup>3</sup> Beside the gates leading into the city,  
at the entrance, she cries aloud:

<sup>4</sup> "To you, O people, I call out;  
I cry aloud to you, humankind.

<sup>5</sup> You who are uncommitted, gain prudence;  
and you who are foolish, set your hearts on it. (8:1—5)

4.) Epilogue: Two rival banquets representing Wisdom's and Folly's moral values.

<sup>3</sup> Wisdom has sent out her servants, and she calls from the highest point of the city,

<sup>4</sup> "Let all who are simple come to my house!" (9:3—4)

<sup>14</sup> Folly sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city,

<sup>15</sup> calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their way,

<sup>16</sup> "Let all who are simple come to my house!" (9:14—16)

**cccc. c. Salvation History a metanarrative of the struggle between good and evil to rule the world**

1. Satan is a political activist, competing with God for power and leadership on earth. He seduced Adam and Eve to join his anti-god party, and he tried unsuccessfully to seduce the Lord Jesus Christ to rule within his kingdom. This conflict is the metanarrative of the Bible.
2. Christ commands his disciples to baptize all nations: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18—20)

**ddddd. d. Thoughtful quotes**

**Aristotle:** "Man is by nature a political animal." By nature people seek to influence one another.

N.B. Mankind is more than an economic and political animal; each human is the image of God and so to represent the rule of God.

**Med Yones** [President of International Institute of Management]: "It is not possible to have a politics-free organization. The desire for power is part of human nature, our business and our world."

**Molly Ivins** (an American newspaper columnist, author, liberal, political commentator, and humorist): "You can't ignore politics, no matter how much you'd like to."

**2. Politics, God and ethics are inseparable.** (I lean heavily here on D. Vincent Twomey, “Introduction to Christianity: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow,” in *The Essence of Pope Benedict XVI*, edited by John F. Thornton and Susan B. Varenne [HarperSanFrancisco, 2007], pp. 1—13)

- a. Today, Marxist and secularist at best restrict God to the private, not political, realm and at the worse declare “God is dead.” As Nietzsche observed: once that credo reaches the masses-- as it has-- everything changes—as it did in the 1960s .
- b. It makes a world of difference whether God is acknowledge in the common activities of public life as One who from whom we derive and to whom we are going; a God who suffers with the afflicted and judges all; a God who sets limits and standards of human behavior; a God who loves sinners and humbles himself to death on a cross.
- c. It makes a world of difference whether Jesus Christ is the Logos (“Word”: outward, creative form of inward thought): the unblemished revelation of God, Truth and Wisdom.
- d. Without such a God and Logos, “everything is permissible” (Dostoyevsky). No life is safe. God died in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; man died in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: “a shadow cannot produce a shadow.”
  - 1) man becomes a technological animal: human embryos are artificially cultivated as “research material.”
  - 2) Albanian girls are for sale in a world-wide sex trade
  - 3) Violence increases in our public schools
  - 4) Marriage is redefined as a fruitless relationship in homosexuality
  - 5.) If the church acquiesces to behave as though God does not exist in order to get along, it defaults on its fundamental obligation to be light and salt

eeee. d. Thoughtful quote

**Mohandas K. Gandhi** . [Indian Leader, Peace Guru]: “Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is.”

3. A just government is the foundation for a nation’s economic prosperity social well-being.

Without a just government philanthropy is mostly wasted. Gary Haugen, *The Locust Effect*. Injustice in a country is as devastating as the locust plague that destroyed America’s bread basket in the 1930s. It is a plague of hidden, everyday violence, like rape, trafficking, bribes and police brutality. The plague is spawned by the rich and powerful.

4. In a democracy every eligible citizen rules: people replace the king

**fffff. a. Proverbs: concerned with establishing a just society through a good king (government).**

1.) Proverbs 16:1—15

*a.) The LORD's sovereign and righteous rule (16:1—9)b.)*

*(1.) The LORD's sovereignty and human's responsibility*

<sup>1</sup> To humans belong the plans of the heart, but from the LORD comes the proper answer of the tongue.

<sup>2</sup> All a person's ways seem pure in his own eyes, but the LORD is the one who evaluates motives.

<sup>3</sup> Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.

<sup>4</sup> The LORD works out everything to its proper end

*(2.) The LORD's morality and human accountability*

-- even the wicked for a day of disaster.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: That person will not go unpunished.

<sup>6</sup> Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD evil is avoided.

<sup>7</sup> When the LORD takes pleasure in anyone's way, he causes their enemies to make peace with them.

*(3.) LORD's morality and sovereignty and human accountability*

<sup>8</sup> Better a little with righteousness than a large income with injustice.

<sup>9</sup> The heart of a human being plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.

*b.) The LORD's mediated rule through his righteous rule (16:10—15)*

*(1.) The king's authority and morality*

<sup>10</sup> An inspired verdict is on the king's lips; and his mouth does not betray justice.

<sup>11</sup> A just balance and hand scale belong to the LORD; all the weights in a pouch are his work.

*(2.) The king's moral sensibility*

<sup>12</sup> Kings detest wrongdoing, for a throne is established through righteousness.

<sup>13</sup> Kings take pleasure in honest lips; they value the one who speaks what is right.

*(3.) The king's power of death and life*

<sup>14</sup> A king's wrath is a messenger of death, but the wise will "atone" [appease] it.



<sup>15</sup> When a king's face brightens, it means life; his favor is like a rain cloud in spring.

### *c. Comments*

1. "LORD" occurs in every verse of 1—9, except v. 8, and "king" in every verse of 10—16, except v. 11. LORD occurs in verse 11, for he is the Author of the king's justice. The LORD expects righteousness and justice (v. 8) and the king upholds justice (v. 11)
2. Compare "the LORD detests" with "kings detest" (vv. 5, 12) and "the LORD takes pleasure" and "kings take pleasure" (vv. 7, 13). Both the LORD and king have moral sensibility.
4. The LORD could be inserted for "king" in vv. 10—15.
5. The king's just verdicts and moral sensibilities have little value unless he has the will and power to effect them.
5. Summary: The sovereign LORD mediates his justice on earth through his wise and just king.

#### 2.) When a king sits on his throne to judge,

he winnows out all evil with his eyes. (20:8)

"Throne": the symbol of authority and is associated with justice. The king is God's vice-gerent in the administration of justice. The king's throne was at the right hand of God's throne that housed the Ten Commandments.

"winnows": scatters and drives off in various directions. When people are the object the verb pictures a defeat so devastating that none survive to take root again against the victor

"with his eyes": symbolizes his discernment. His keen discernment is a gift from God.

#### 3.) In the LORD's hand the king's heart is a stream of water

that he channels toward all who please him. (21:1)

A good ruler reciprocally depends on the piety and morality of the ruled

### **ggggg. b. Thoughtful quotes**

**John Gardner** [[Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare](#) under [President Lyndon Johnson](#)]: "The citizen can bring our political and governmental institutions back to life, make them responsive and accountable, and keep them honest. No one else can."

**Elie Wiesel** [awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, 1986): "It may well be that our means are fairly limited and our possibilities restricted when it comes to applying pressure on our government. But is this a reason to do nothing? Despair is not an answer. Neither is resignation. Resignation only leads to indifference, which is not merely a sin but a punishment"

5. The wise recognize they are in a spiritual war with fools.

#### hhhhh. a. Proverbs

##### 1.) The conflict

How long will mockers delight in mockery  
and fools hate knowledge? (1:22)

The bloodthirsty hate a person of integrity  
and seek to kill the upright. (29:10)

N.B. Advocates of "co-exist" are dangerously naïve

##### 2.) The sluggard is defeated in this conflict

<sup>30</sup> I went past the field of a sluggard,  
past the vineyard of someone who has no sense;  
<sup>31</sup> thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds,  
and the stone wall was in ruins.  
<sup>32</sup> I applied my heart to what I observed  
and learned a lesson from what I saw:  
<sup>33</sup> A little sleep, a little slumber,  
a little folding of the hands to rest--  
<sup>34</sup> and poverty will come on you like a thief  
and scarcity like an armed man. (30:30—34)

#### iiii. b. Quotes

##### 1.) Lord Jesus Christ

"When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes

and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation." (Matt 12:43—45). And that is how America is in the 21<sup>st</sup> century after Billy Graham's revivals in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. An apostate mission field is worse than an unchurched mission-field: the ground is hard, not arable (i.e., capable of being plowed and cultivated).

## 2.) Apostle Paul

Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. (Eph 5:11—18)

## 3.) Matthew Henry:

**"They that drive the good Spirit away from them, do of course become prey to the evil spirit. If God and His grace do not rule us, and Satan will have possession of us."**

**DISCIPLINE**

sin

6. The wise restrain evil by punishing wrong doers,

### jjjjj. a. Proverbs

<sup>25</sup> Flog a mocker, and the simple will learn prudence;  
rebuke the discerning, and they will gain knowledge (19:25).

### kkkkk. b. Thoughtful quotes

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*

"There is only one way to salvation, and that is to make yourself responsible for all men's sins. As soon as you make yourself responsible in all sincerity for everything and for everyone, you will see at once that this is really so, and that you are in fact to blame for everyone and for all things."

N. B. A theme of this book is that even minor actions can touch heavily on the lives of others, and that we are "all responsible for one another".

Lord Jesus Christ:

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven (Matt 5:13-16)

#### 7. Non-involvement is a vote for the wicked

If you falter in a time of trouble,  
how small is your strength!  
Rescue those being led away to death;  
hold back those staggering toward slaughter.  
If you say, "But we knew nothing about this,"  
does not he who weighs the heart discern [the truth]?  
Does not he who guards your life know it?  
Will he not repay everyone according to what they have done? 24:10—12

"If": a hypothetical lie

"you say": as a defendant in a court of law

"we": escapes personal culpability in community indifference.

"this": the innocent, unjustly perishing

"does not": demands an emphatic affirmative answer

"and": adds his omnipotence to his omniscience

"guards your life": If the son turns a blind eye to innocent victims, the LORD will turn a blind eye to the son, when the son is in crisis

"repay": the active LORD is unlike the passive coward.

#### IIII. b. Thoughtful quotes

**George Jean Nathan** [American author, editor, and drama critic, who is credited with raising the standards of play producers and playgoers alike]:

"Bad officials are elected by good citizens who do not vote."

**Plato**: "One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors."

"The price of apathy towards public affairs is to be ruled by evil men."

**Dante Alighieri**: "The darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis."

**Paulo Freire [Brazilian educator]:** “Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.”

**Justice William O. Douglas [Associate justice of Supreme Court: 1939—1975]:** “As nightfall does not come all at once, neither does oppression. In both instances, there is a twilight when everything remains seemingly unchanged. And it is in such twilight that we all must be aware of change in the air however slight, lest we become unwitting victims of the darkness.”

8. The freedom and opportunity of future generations depend on the present generation's political action.

mmmmm.      **a. Book of Proverbs addressed by Israel's parents to their youths**

nnnnn.      **b. Thoughtful quotes**

**John Adams:**

“I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history, naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry, and porcelain.”

9. Apostolic teaching and practice

ooooo.      **a. Teaching:**

1.) Romans 13:1—8 (God's servant for righteousness; when serves unrighteousness it steps out from under the rule of God)

2.) 1 Timothy 2: 1—2. I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people-- <sup>2</sup> for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” If we are to pray for those in authority, then, if we are the authority, should we not govern in a way that leads to peace and quiet, and that way is the Book of Proverbs.

ppppp.      **b. practice**

The jailer told Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace." But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out." The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. (Acts 16:36—39)

10. Anti-Christian bias—a “wicked” bias-- in American government demands a righteous response.

qqqqq. a. Destruction of nuclear family: same sex marriage.

rrrr. b. Destruction of American liberty: government versus individual conscience and privacy.

## **BODY**

### **I. INTRODUCTION: HERMENEUTICAL ISSUE**

#### **A. Differences:**

1. Theocracy versus separation of church and state
2. Monarchy versus democracy: absolute power vested in a king versus distributed power vested in the people.
3. Citizen of democracy both ruler and ruled.

#### **B. Resolution:**

1. Fear of the LORD versus fear of God: a standard of morality recognized by revelation versus conscience.
2. Abstraction for both: both concerned with establishing a moral government of righteousness and justice.
3. Lecture pertains to Proverbs teachings on being a ruler and ruled.

### **II. MOTIVATIONS FOR A RIGHTEOUS AND JUST GOVERNMENT**

#### **A. For the good of the governed**

1. Proverbs

sssss. a. For emotional well-being: elation and joy

- 1.) In the prosperity of the righteous a city rejoices,

And when the wicked perish, there is a shout of praise. 11:10

The righteous use their 'good' to promote the civic good.

2.) When the righteous triumph, the splendor is great;

but when the wicked rise to power, mortals must be searched out people

28:12

"splendor": i.e., public splendor of people who have come out of hiding.

"rise to power": entails "swing into action"

"searched out": as with lamps from their hiding places. People do not venture to come out into the streets and public places, for mistrust and suspicion oppress them,

3.) When the wicked rise to power, people go into hiding,

but when they perish, the righteous thrive. 28:28

#### ttttt. **b.. For influential esteem**

Righteousness exalts a nation,

but sin is a condemnation to peoples. (14:34).

From its posture of serving others, not self, the esteemed nation provides political and moral leadership, and derives from its prestige the benefits of power, peace and prosperity.

"Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'" (Deut 4:6)

Ultimately a nation's exaltation depends on its piety and ethics, not on its political, military, and /or economic greatness. In its external affairs a sinful nation among other things breaks treaties, propagandizes lies and bullies weaker nation.

#### uuuuu. **c. for prosperity**

1.) By me [Woman Wisdom] kings reign and rulers issue decrees that are just;  
by me princes govern, and nobles--all who rule on earth.  
I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me.  
With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity.  
My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver.  
I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice,  
bestowing a rich inheritance on those who love me and making their treasuries full.  
8:15—21

2.) The unplowed field of poor people yields plenty of food,  
but injustice sweeps it away. (13:23)

“The problem of the poor in Proverbs is not God’s creation but injustice.”

3.) A roaring lion and a ravenous, charging bear  
is a wicked ruler over a poor people. 28:15

“No sentiment of pity softens his bosom. No principle of justice regulates his conduct” (Paxton, cited by Bridges).

4.) A destitute man and one who oppresses the poor—  
a rain that washes away and there is no food. 28:3

“man”: Heb. *geber*: “strong man,” capable of producing a crop

“and”: joins the destitute strong man with the tyrant who oppresses the poor.

“who oppresses the poor”: the tyrant is stronger than the strong man, for he takes away the latter’s produce--probably through a corrupt judges and brutal police.

“a rain that washes away”: A metaphor for the “one who oppresses the poor.”

Normally rain promotes a crop’s growth but a driving rain sweeps away both the crop and the soil. The oppressive ruler betrayed his role, inflicting ruin and squalor upon the citizens he should have enabled to produce splendor.



“there is no food”: connected with a strong man who without oppression could have produced food for himself and others.

5.) By justice a king gives a country stability,

but whoever is exacts “contributions” or gives them tears it down.

(Pro 29:4)

“contributions”: a cultic term, a metaphor for bribes, extortion, blackmail and all other forms of ill-gotten gain. The metaphor connotes that the one exacts bribes makes himself a god; and the one who gives them makes himself the worshiper of the blasphemers.

## 2. Thoughtful quotes

**Christopher Stone** [Harvard Scholar, head of Open Society Foundation]:

“In terms of social and economic development, high levels of crime and violence threaten to undermine the best-laid plans to reduce poverty, improve governance, and relieve human misery.”

**Gary Haugen** [head of International Justice Ministries]: “The truth is, very high rates of common criminal violence can have the same devastating impact on economic development as a civil war, economic shocks, or the worst natural disasters.”

Criminal violence in Guatemala cost an estimated US 2.4 billion, or 7.3 percent of GDP, *more than twice* the damage of Hurricane Stan that year. Crime and Violence reduced economic growth 25 percent in El Salvador, 25 percent in Columbia, or 11 percent in Brazil” (*Locust Effect*, p. 101)

**Molly Ivins**: “Naturally, when it comes to voting, we in Texas are accustomed to discerning that fine hair's-breadth worth of difference that makes one hopeless dipstick slightly less awful than the other. But it does raise the question: Why bother? Oh, it's just that your life is at stake.”

**Charles de Gaulle**: I have come to the conclusion that politics is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians.

## B. For the good of the governing: retains power

### 1. Proverbs

#### vvvv. a. Kindness and reliability guard the king;

He upholds his throne with kindness 20:28).

#### b. These also are sayings of the wise:

To show partiality in giving a verdict is not good:

Whoever says to the guilty, "You are innocent," will be cursed by peoples and  
and nations will strike him with a curse.

But it will go well with those who convict the guilty,

On them will come a blessing that brings good (Pro 24:23-25)

"Not good is expanded into people curse" and that contrasted with their  
pronouncing a blessing.

#### c. A leader who is lacking in understanding multiplies extortions;

But he who hates unjust gain prolongs his days (28:16).

"lacks sense": i.e., cannot survive

#### d. The king judges the poor through truth,

His throne is established forever (29:14).

Refers to a king who establishes the disturbed harmony of his realm by punishing the  
oppressive rich and delivering the powerless and oppressed poor through reliable  
witnesses and reliable data.

#### e. A large population is a king's glory,

but without subjects a prince is ruined. (14:28)

"The proverb implicitly encourages the disciple to be competent person to whom  
people devote themselves, not a fool, whom they desert." See below for  
characteristics of a competent king.

#### f. Be sure you know the condition of your flocks,

give careful attention to your herds;  
for riches do not endure forever,  
and a crown is not secure for all generations.  
When the hay is removed and new growth appears  
and the grass from the hills is gathered in,  
the lambs will provide you with clothing,  
and the goats with the price of a field.  
You will have plenty of goats' milk to feed your family  
and to nourish your female servants. (27:23-27)

The proverb, addressing the son as an owner of flocks and probably as a ruler, admonishes him to concern himself intimately and personally with the well-being of his wards.

2. [John Quincy Adams](#): "When those who govern are righteous, their administration will be successful and stable."

### **III. FOUNDATIONS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT:**

#### **A. Bible:**

##### **1. Mosaic Law:**

##### **www. a. Supreme Court: Priest and judge:**

If cases come before your courts that are too difficult for you to judge--whether bloodshed, lawsuits or assaults--take them to the place the LORD your God will choose. Go to the Levitical priests and to the judge who is in office at that time. Inquire of them and they will give you the verdict. You must act according to the decisions they give you at the place the LORD will choose. Be careful to do everything they instruct you to do. Act according to whatever they teach you and the decisions they give you. Do not turn aside from what they tell you, to the right or to the left. Anyone who shows contempt for the judge or for the priest who stands ministering there to the LORD your God is to be put to death. You must purge the evil from Israel. (Deut 17:8-12)

##### **xxxx. b. King copies law upon his inauguration to the throne.**

When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees<sup>20</sup> and not consider himself better than his

fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel. (Deuteronomy 17:18-20)

Put the Ten Commandments back in school

**yyyyy. c. David's command to descendants**

"If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel" (1 Kings. 2:1-4).

**zzzzz. d. Book of Law has had greater impact for social good than any other book.**

"Deuteronomy has had greater consequences for human history than any other single book... the regulations of the LORD's covenants are the first to establish universal education and health for all members of a nations and fixes the only welfare system that was in existence in ancient times" (AOTT, p. 479)

2. Sages' wisdom

**aaaaaa. a. Greater definition in social and cultural issues than Book of the Law. Love God and neighbor > Ten commandments > Proverbs**

Do not murder	>	Feed enemy
Do not commit adultery	>	honor wife
Do not steal	>	feed poor
Do not bear false witness	>	covers all transgressions

Broken Window Theory: James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, *Broken Windows The Atlantic Monthly* (March 1982).

"Consider a building with a few broken windows. If the windows are not repaired, the tendency is for vandals to break a few more windows. Eventually, they may even break into the building, and if it's unoccupied, perhaps become squatters or light fires inside."

"Or consider a sidewalk. Some litter accumulates. Soon, more litter accumulates. Eventually, people even start leaving bags of trash from take-out restaurants there or breaking into cars.

"A successful strategy for preventing vandalism, say the theory's authors, is to fix the problems when they are small. Repair the broken windows within a short time, say, a day or a week, and the tendency is that vandals are much less likely to break more windows or do further damage. Clean up the sidewalk every day, and the tendency is for litter not to accumulate (or for the rate of littering to be much less). Problems do not escalate and thus respectable residents do not flee a neighborhood."

“When Mayor Rudolph Giuliani applied the broken window theory to New York City, he significantly reduced crime in that great metropolis. So likewise when youth learn to feed their enemies, to honor those to whom honor is due, to be generous to the poor and to protect another’s reputations, the larger matters, such as those of the Ten Commandments, not to murder, not to commit adultery, not to steal and not to bear false witness will become a reality and society will become a place where people love one another as themselves. That sort of culture establishes the City of God and LORD’s blessings crown it.”

#### bbbbbb. b. Wisdom literature in ANE:

Viziers address their sons with the special purpose of preparing the young men to succeed them in their offices or high positions among the ranks of court-officials.

#### cccccc. c. Original court context of proverbs shows through in:

##### 1) Collection 1 (e.g. 8:12—21)

<sup>15</sup> By me kings reign and rulers issue decrees that are just;

<sup>16</sup> by me princes govern, and nobles--all who rule on earth.

##### 2) Collection II (B: cf. 16:10—15)

<sup>10</sup> The lips of a king speak as an oracle, and his mouth does not betray justice.

<sup>15</sup> When a king's face brightens, it means life; his favor is like a rain cloud in spring.

Every verse, apart from v. 11, mentions “the king”

##### 3) Collection III (23:1—3)

When you sit to dine with a ruler, note well what is before you (23:1),

##### 4) Collection V:

a. “Court Hierarchy and the Conflict of the Righteous and the Wicked (25:2—27)

- b. "Caring for 'flocks' and 'herds'" (27:24—27)
- c. "Relationship of Torah as a Measure for Ruling and Gaining Wealth" (28:1—11).
- d. "Importance of One's Relationship with God for Ruling and Gaining Wealth"(28:12—27)
- e. "Rearing and Ruling Proved Worthwhile in Dealing with the Poor" (29:2—15).

5.) Collection VII. "The sayings of King Lemuel--an inspired utterance his mother taught him" (31:1)

### 3. Necessity of Christianity for Democracy. Graebner, "Christianity and Democracy."

#### dddddd. a. Dangers to democracy:

- 1) Selfish individualism: always on move in search of a better life. This destroys community. Visitors in their own town
- 2) Consumerism: a passion for more comfort and ease. So desires become insatiable
- 3) Conformity: individualism but no certainty about absolutes. Unlimited confidence in judgment of majority.
- 4) Disregard for the past and future
- 5) Ultimately the establishment of a despotic nanny state.

#### eeeeee. b. Salvation from dangers:

Christianity, a powerful force in American life. "[Religion in America] is an established and irresistible fact which no one undertakes to attack or defend." "There is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America; and there can be no greater proof of its utility and its conformity to human nature than that its influence is powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth."

- 1) concern for community
- 2) better values than materialism
- 3) conscience over conformity
- 4) concern for past and future
- 5) Care for poor, not self

4. Necessity for belief in afterlife, for a psychology of ultimate responsibility. Megan Glavin [Master's degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice from Portland State University], "Mass Shooting and the Afterlife," *Seattle Times*, July 18 (2014).

- a. Problem: Shootings in high-school, college campuses, public places and in the home.
  - b. Inadequate solutions: mental-health issues, prevalence of violence in American entertainment, and gun-control issues. "Americans expected science, psychology, counseling, a sophisticated intellect to replace ultimate accountability as a control of evil. It has not."
  - c. Change psychology a collective belief in ultimate accountability. "Ultimate accountability asserts that it does not matter if the evil a person does on Earth is never seen nor detected, and it does not matter if one commits suicide after committing evil. There is still judgment of some kind, and consequences to face in eternity." "Many American do not believe in an afterlife and divine judgment. Thus homicide is attractive for revenge, gaining attention, escaping the misery of life and the expression of emotional pain, and suicide is attractive for escape."

## D. Conscience

A mortal who is laden with the guilt of human blood

Will flee to the pit. Let no one support him. (28:17).

Martin Luther King Jr., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches*

"There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because conscience tells him it is right."

## IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD RULER

### A. Inseparable from character of the person: to be wise/righteous oneself.

#### 1. Proverbs

Book's teachings on politics within framework of the Preamble

Evil men do not discern what is right,

but the one who seeks the Lord discerns everything (28:5).

## 2. Thoughtful quotes

**Confucius:** To put the world right in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right.

**Harriet Lerner** [best known for her work on marriage and family relationships and the psychology of women]: Although the connections are not always obvious, personal change is inseparable from social and political change.

## B. Righteous: seeks the best for others, not self.

### 1. Proverbs: righteous

An abomination to kings is doing wickedness,

Because a throne is established through righteousness (16:12)

## 2. Thoughtful quotes

**Thomas Jefferson:** A politician looks forward only to the next election. A statesman looks forward to the next generation. [American President]

**Margaret Chase Smith** [American politician. A member of the Republican Party, she served as a U.S Representative and a U.S. Senator from Maine]: My creed is that public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people and to the nation with full recognition that every human being is entitled to courtesy and consideration, that constructive criticism is not only to be expected but sought, that smears are not only to be expected but fought, that honor is to be earned, not bought.

**Vaclav Havel** [the Czech writer and dissident whose eloquent dissections of Communist rule helped to destroy it in revolutions that brought down the [Berlin Wall](#) and swept Mr. Havel himself into power]:

“Genuine politics -- the only politics I am willing to devote myself to -- is simply a matter of serving those around us: serving the community and serving those who will come after us. Its deepest roots are moral because it is a responsibility expressed through action, to and for the whole.”

## C. Stand for principles, not for parties

### 1. Proverb

Introduction: Inseparable from being righteous:

a. The righteous knows court decisions for the poor,

but the wicked does not understand knowing [them] (29:7)

b. One who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth

and one who gives gifts to the rich--both come to poverty. (22:16)



- c. Like a muddied spring or a polluted well  
are the righteous who give way to the wicked. (25:26)

2. Thoughtful quotes:

**Richard Armour** [American poet and author who wrote over sixty-five books]. "Politics, it seems to me, for years, or all too long, has been concerned with right or left instead of right or wrong."

**Alexis de Tocqueville.** "There are many men of principle in both parties in America, but there is no party of principle."

**John F. Kennedy.** "Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer, but the right answer. Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past. Let us accept our own responsibility for the future."

**John Quincy Adams.** "Always vote for principle, though you may vote alone, and you may cherish the sweetest reflection that your vote is never lost."

**Carl Schurz** [A German revolutionary, American statesman and reformer, U.S. Minister to Spain, Union Army General in the American Civil War, U. S. Senator, and Secretary of the Interior.] "The peace and welfare of this and coming generations of Americans will be secure only as we cling to the watchword of true patriotism: "Our country -- when right to be kept right; when wrong to be put right."

**Mahatma Gandhi:** "Seven Deadly Sins"

"Wealth without work  
Pleasure without conscience  
Science without humanity  
Knowledge without character  
Politics without principle  
Commerce without morality  
Worship without sacrifice."

**Vaclav Havel** [Czech playwright, essayist, poet, philosopher, dissident and statesman. He was the first democratically elected president of Czechoslovakia and the first president of the Czech Republic after the Czech-Slovak split]: "Genuine politics -- even politics worthy of the name -- the only politics I am willing to devote myself to -- is simply a matter of serving those around us: serving the community and serving those who will come after us. Its deepest roots are moral because it is a responsibility expressed through action, to and for the whole."

## D. By justice, equity

### 1. Proverbs (justice especially for the poor and powerless [cf. Naboth's vineyard])

#### fffff. a. Does justice:

- 1.) Doing what is right and just and fair (1:3).
- 2.) Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent

Both, yes both, are an abomination to the LORD (17:15)

The proverb corrects the popular misconception that it is better to set free ten guilty persons than to condemn one innocent person. Both situations are an abomination to the LORD.

- 3.) If even imposing a fine on the innocent is not good,

How much more flogging nobles is against what is right. (17:26)

"Not good": imposes tyranny as the coin of the realm.

"Nobles": honest officials

"flogging": more painful than a financial penalty

- 4.) It is not good to be partial to the wicked

and so deprive the innocent of justice. 18:5

#### gggggg. b. Cannot be bribed

- 1.) Many seek the favor of a nobleman,

and the generous person has everyone for a companion. 19:6

"seek the favor"> Lit "make the face pleasant." Refers to the introductory act of a ceremony defining the fundamental relationship that commonly issues in a petition. The subject performing the action declares a subordinate position to the one whose favor is sought: here of a litigant to a nobleman. The introductory act probably included the giving a gift or gifts to incline the official to bestow the soon-to-be-asked-for benefaction.

“Generous person” is in a position to attach to his person or cause the beneficiary through his munificence. The gift is in danger of becoming a bribe. The connection with vv. 5 and 7 suggests that justice on behalf of the poor is not being well served:

<sup>5</sup> A false witness will not go unpunished,  
and whoever pours out lies will not go free.

<sup>6</sup> Many curry favor with a ruler,  
and everyone is the friend of one who gives gifts.

<sup>7</sup> The poor are shunned by all their relatives—  
how much more do their friends avoid them!

Though the poor pursue them with pleading,  
they are nowhere to be found.

2.) The wicked accept bribes in secret to pervert the course of justice. (Pro 17:23)

#### hhhhh. c. Defends the poor

1.) Do not exploit the poor because they are poor

and do not crush the needy in court,  
for the LORD will take up their case  
and will exact life for life. (Pro 22:22-23)

2.) These also are sayings of the wise.

To show partiality in judgment is not good.  
He who says to the wicked, “You are righteous,”  
Peoples will curse him, nations will abhor him;  
But to those who rebuke the wicked will be delight,  
And good blessing will come upon them. (24:23-25)

3.) It is not for kings, O Lemuel,

It is not for kings to drink wine,  
Or for rulers to desire strong drink.  
Lest they drink and forget what is decreed,  
And pervert the rights of all the afflicted (31:4-5).  
Open your mouth for the dumb,  
For the rights of all the unfortunate.  
Open your mouth, judge righteously,  
And defend the rights of the afflicted and needy (31:8-9).

## 2. Thoughtful quotes

**John Wolcott** [an English satirist, who wrote under the pseudonym of "Peter Pindar"].

"Midas, they say, possessed the art of old  
Of turning whatsoe'er he touch'd to gold;  
This modern statesmen can reverse with ease —  
Touch *them* with gold, *they'll turn to what you please.*"

**John Gardner [Secretary of Health and Human Services Under Lyndon Johnson]:** "When one may pay out over two million dollars to presidential and Congressional campaigns, the U.S. government is virtually up for sale."

**Aesop:** "We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office."

**Lord Acton:** "The one pervading evil of democracy is the tyranny of the party that succeeds, by force or fraud, in carrying elections."

**Caroline Baum** [Journalist writing about macro-economy & intersection between politics and economics. Her specialty is exposing economic nonsense.] "Members of Congress should be compelled to wear uniforms like NASCAR drivers, so we could identify their corporate sponsors."

**Mark Twain:** "Wherefore being all of one mind, we do highly resolve that government of the grafted by the grafter for the grafter shall not perish from the earth."

"No public interest is anything other or nobler than a massed accumulation of private interests."

**Jimmy Carter:** "The sad duty of politics is to establish justice in a sinful world."

## E. Reliably kind and gracious

Kindness and reliability guard the king;

He upholds his throne with kindness. 20:28.

“These virtues to a helpless covenant partner are personified”

## F. Surrounds himself with good advisers

1. For lack of guidance [תְּהִבְלוֹת] a people falls,  
but safety lies in many advisers. (Pro 11:14)

“safety”: bringing help to those in trouble rather than rescuing them from it.

“advisers/counselors” is always plural. Their arguments and counter-arguments ensure that their agreed-upon plan will not miscarry but succeed in spite of danger.

2. Plans fail for lack of counsel,  
but with many advisers each one succeeds. (15:22)

“Necessary because of self-deception: All a person's ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the LORD” (16:2).

## G. Disassociates himself from the wicked

1. The righteous searches out his confidential friend,  
but the way of the wicked leads them astray. (Pro 12:26)

“way of the wicked”: pride, selfishness and incorrigibility blind them to reality.

2. A king is one who sits on the throne of justice  
Winnowing all evil with his eyes (20:8).

“His sharp discerning eye perceives all that is morally corrupt and socially disruptive to the well-being of God’s kingdom, and his binding decisions are so effective that not a trace of evil is left to take root again.”

3. The wise king winnows the wicked,  
And brings back the cartwheel over them. 20:26

4. Remove the dross from the silver,

and a vessel comes forth for silversmith;

remove a wicked official from the king's presence,

and his throne will be established through righteousness. (Pro 25:4-5)

“dross” = “wicked official”

“vessel” = an established throne

“comes forth” : an immediate connection between the process of refining metal in a cupel and casting of the refined metal into a mold = the same certain connection between the process of reforming an administration and producing an established throne.

“silversmith”= the king

“vessel” = “his throne will be established.”

## G. Seeks the truth

### 1. Proverbs

a. Kings take pleasure in honest lips;

they value the one who speaks what is right. 16:13

<sup>7</sup>What you have seen with your eyes

do not bring hastily to trial (*rib*).

<sup>8</sup> Lest what will you do in the end

when your peer puts you to shame?

<sup>9</sup> Plead your case (*rib*) with your peer,

But do not divulge a confidence.

<sup>10</sup> Lest an arbiter will pronounce you guilty,

And the accusation against you will never depart. (25:7-10)

Proverb pairs are closely related by:

1.) Court Setting: *Rib*: “Trial,” “case” (vv. 7, 9) between “peers” (v. 8, 9). “Arbiter”: the judge hearing the case.

2.) Imperatives: “do not bring hastily to trial” and “do not divulge a confidence”

Do no jump to conclusion from what you have seen or breach a confidence you have heard.

3.) Motive: “lest” (negative consequences): loss of career through shaming (vv. 8 and 10).

4.) Permanent shame: “in the end,” “will never depart.”

The second proverb balances the first. The first warns against impetuous litigation. The second assumes conflicts have be resolved, but it must be done in the right way: by a well prepared case without divulging a confidence.

b. If a ruler pays attention to falsehood,

All his attendants become wicked (29:12).

“pays attention”: through indifference to truth and/or cynicism about God and humans.

*Qualis rex, talis grex* (“like king, like people).

c. It is the glory of God to conceal a matter,

But the glory of kings is to search out a matter (25:2).

Cf. hate e-mails and Snopes . Christians write protests by the millions concerning matters that are factually erroneous.

## 2. Thoughtful quotes

**Edward T. Cheyfitz** [author of *Constructive Collective Bargaining*]: “Nobody believes a rumor here in Washington until it's officially denied.”

**George Orwell**: “In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act.”

**Kurt Krauthammer**: “Every two years the American politics industry fills the airwaves with the most virulent, scurrilous, wall-to-wall character assassination of nearly every political practitioner in the country — and then declares itself puzzled that America has lost trust in its politicians.”

## H. Exposes and punishes wicked

### 1. A ruler's obligation

#### iiii. a. Proverbs

##### 1.) A wise king winnows out the wicked;

he drives the threshing wheel over them. (Pro 20:26; cf. 20:8)

##### 2.) A mortal who is laden with the guilt of human blood

Will flee to the pit. Let no one support him (28:17).

“flee”: As his conscience drove him to flee phantom enemies (v. 1), it now drives him to flee to the entrance of the grave, where he hopes to escape his inward torment.

“no one support him”: do not interfere with divinely established lex talionis

#### b. Thoughtful quote

**Blaise Pascal:** “Justice without force is powerless; force without justice is tyrannical.”

### 2. Beneficial to Society

#### a. A hothead is one who incurs a penalty;

Surely, if you rescue him, you will have to do it again. (19:19)

“hothead”: a person characterized by heated excitement of resentment against a perceived offender, not by love for him (19:11), making his behavior irrational

“penalty”: must be corrected by experiencing the penalties from the foibles of his ways.

#### b. Flog a mocker, and the uncommitted will become prudent;

And if one corrects the insightful, he discerns knowledge. (19:25)

“Flogging” is penal to the mocker, remedial to the uncommitted. Merely a word corrects the discerning person



- c. By fining a mocker, the uncommitted becomes wise,

And by paying attention to the wise he gains knowledge. (Pro 21:11)

### 3. Tempered by mercy

Whoever conceals his sins does not prosper,

but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Pro 28:13)

“renounces”. Lit. “abandons”

David sinned egregiously but was forgiven.

## I. Sober

It is not for kings, Lemuel, not for kings to drink wine,

Nor for rulers to crave intoxicants;

Lest he drink and forget what is decreed,

And lest he change a verdict for every oppressed person. 31:4—5

“Instead of forgetting the oppressed, the king must speak up for them.”

## V. HOW TO HAVE POLITICAL INFLUENCE

### A. Be wise

1. The king’s favor is toward a prudent servant who acts wisely,  
But his fury ruins a shameful [servant]. (14:35).

The proverb motivates the servant to act wisely, not shamefully, by promising him the king’s favor, not his wrath for appropriate behavior. The proverb also admonishes the king to promote competence, loyalty and efficiency in ventures and not to tolerate mismanagement incompetence .

2. A king's wrath is a messenger of death,  
but the wise will appease it.  
When a king's face brightens, it means life;  
his favor is like a rain cloud in spring.(16:14—15)

“wrath...death.” The LORD upholds ultimate justice; the king upholds immediate justice.

“appease it’: by confessing and abandoning wrong doing (28:13). This entails humility (15:33), repentance (1:23), love and fidelity (16:6; 3:3) and patience in giving gentle

answers (15:1). Abigail appeased David (1 Samuel 25); David appeased the LORD (Psalm 51); Esther appeased Xerxes (Esther 7:2—4);

## B. Be gracious

As for the one who loves a pure heart,

whose lips are gracious, the king is his friend (22:11).

“loves”: zealous desire and quest for something

“Pure”: free of any contaminating, extraneous matter, which is different from something’s essential nature. In Proverbs it refers to that which is ethically pure according to the LORD’s morals.

“heart”: precedes lips to protect elegant speech from being a mere façade.

“gracious”: free of lies and distortion.

“friend”: will have a career in the palace

## C. Be patient

By patience a ruler is persuaded,

And a soft tongue shatters the bone. (25:15)

Inward “patience” finds expression in a gentle tongue

“ruler”: highest member of the body politic

“soft tongue”: soothes and comforts the listener’s heart

“soft...shatters.” An oxymoron

“bone”: hardest member of the body. Virtues of patience and gentleness break down the deepest, most hardened resistance to an idea a person possesses.

**Newt Gingrich:** Perseverance is the hard work you do after you get tired of doing the hard work you already did.

## D. Be humble

Do not claim honor in the presence of the king,

And do not stand in the place of great men;

For it is better that it be said to you, “Come up here,”

Than that one humiliate you before a noble (25:6-7).

“The proverb pair cautions the courtier not to cross over on his own initiative into the higher social rank and dignity of the king and his nobles. It is better that superiors elevate him because his aptitude warrants it than that he outreach his limits and rise a reprimand and loss of face that will damage his career prospects (cf. Lk 14:8—11).”

## E. Be temperate

When you sit down to eat with a ruler,

Consider carefully what is before you;

And put a knife to your throat,

If you are a glutton

Do not crave his delicacies,

For it is deceptive food (23:1-3).

“The ruler’s invitation to dine with him presents an unusual opportunity for success or failure, for his host can influence his career for good or ill. The ruler (*moshel*) ...will take note of the glutton, detest him, and wreck his career. Dining with a ruler is the moment to display the “well-proportioned behaviour and self-control” of a model statesman (McKane)... The stakes are high—so much so that, if the subordinate knows he has trouble restraining his appetite, he should abstain altogether.”

## F. Be proficient

Do you see a person who is skillful in his commission?

He will present himself before kings;

He will not present himself before obscure people (22:29).

Daniel and his three Hebrew companions were very influential in government, even though they were young and political prisoners. They were chosen to hold positions of power because they were skillful and wise ([Dan. 1:17, 19-20](#)). Likewise, Pharaoh chose Joseph to be second in command in spite of the fact that he was a Hebrew, for whom the Egyptians had little regard ([Gen. 43:32; 46:34](#)), because he manifested greater wisdom than any other man in Egypt ([Gen. 41:39](#)).

## G. Fear the LORD and the king

Fear the LORD, my son, and the king, my son,  
With intriguing officials do not get involved,  
for those two will send sudden destruction on them,  
and who knows what ruin the two of them can inflict? (24:21-22)

“The identification of the king with the LORD shows that the sage regarded the king’s throne on earth as the legitimate representation of God’s throne in heaven (cf. Matt 17:24—27; 22:21; Rom 13:1—5; Tit 3:1; 1 Pet 2:13—17),

“The admonitions imply that the way to advance yourself and not to threaten your career is to revere legitimate authority and avoid becoming involved in plots to undermine them and seize power for oneself.”

### CONCLUSION: LIVE BY FAITH IN THE LORD

Hopes placed in mortals die with them;  
all the promise of their power comes to nothing. (11:7)

Commit to the LORD whatever you do,  
and he will establish your plans. (16:3)

In the LORD's hand the king's heart is a stream of water  
that he channels toward all who please him. (21:1)

The Righteous One takes note of the household of the wicked  
and brings the wicked to ruin. (21:12)

There is no wisdom, no insight,  
And no counsel that can succeed against the LORD.

The horse is made ready for the day of battle,  
but victory rests with the LORD. (21:30-31)

Many seek an audience with a ruler,  
but it is from the LORD that one gets justice. (29:26)