The boxes in this left-hand column provide parsing options for Hebrew verbs.

The Vocabulary Box lists Hebrew words that appear in this section of Proverbs.

This right-hand box provides extra info on grammatical topics.

Person & Number

Singular	1st Com	I, Me
	2nd Mas	You
	2nd Fem	You
	3rd Mas	He, Him
	3rd Fem	She, Her
Plural	1st Com	We, Us
	2nd Mas	You
	2nd Fem	You
	3rd Com	They, Them
	3rd Mas	They, Them
	3rd Fem	They, Them

Typical Voice/Aktionsart	Verbal Stem
Active or Stative	**Qal**
Passive or Reflexive	**Niphal**
Active-Intensive	**Piel** (Polel, Pilpel)
Passive-Intensive	**Pual** (Polal, Polpal)
Reflexive-Intensive	**Hithpael** (Hotpaal)
Active-Causative	**Hiphil**
Passive-Causative	**Hophal**

Verbal Conjugations

Perfect: Completed Action

Perfect Consecutive: Narrative Future

Imperfect: Incompleted Action

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Cohortative: 1st Person Volitional

Imperative: 2nd Person Volitional

Jussive: 2nd or 3rd Person Volitional

Infinitive Absolute: Adverbial

Infinitive Construct: Verbal Noun

Participle: Verbal Adjective

Vocabulary

אָב

אֵם

בּוֹשׁ

מֵבִישׁ

חָכָם

יהוה

מָשָׁל

נֶפֶשׁ

צַדִּיק

צְדָקָה

Diphthongs are marked in **blue**. Root letters in **red**. Root letter that is part of a diphthong in **purple**.

The Hebrew Alphabet

א	Aleph	ל	Lamed
ב	Bet	מ ,ם	Mem
ג	Gimel	נ ,ן	Nun
ד	Dalet	ס	Samech
ה	Hey	ע	Ayin
ו	Vav	פ ,ף	Pey
ז	Zayin	צ ,ץ	Tsade
ח	Chet	ק	Qof
ט	Tet	ר	Resh
י	Yod	שׁ ,שׂ	Shin
כ ,ך	Kaf	ת	Tav

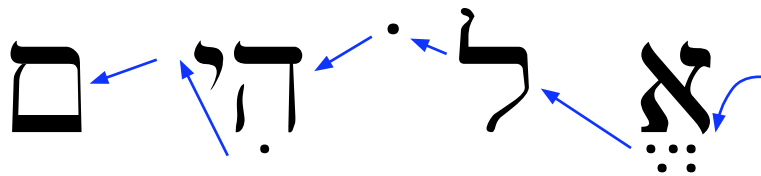## Practical Application & Other Notes

A proverb (מָשָׁל, mashal) is a comparison; it presents the reader/hearer with a choice. Proverbs teach the probable results of (often contrasted) courses of action.

This box is a place to write down insights that were surfaced by our discussion of the passage.

Hebrew Vowel Points

The Hebrew Full Vowels

Spoken Hebrew employed vowel *sounds* from the beginning, but the ancient alphabet used no vowel *signs*. The pronunciation of Hebrew words, written only with consonants, was passed down orally. When Hebrew scholars of the Middle Ages finally decided that the vowel sounds for words in the Scriptures had to be signified to preserve the proper pronunciation for subsequent generations, they realized that they could not add any letters to the 22-sign alphabet because the words and letters of Scripture were sacred![1] Neither the spelling of the words, nor the *number of their letters*, could be changed. Therefore, rather than add letters to the alphabet (as the Greeks had), Hebrew scholars invented a system of vowel points, tiny symbols, that could be placed below or above the Hebrew consonants to indicated vowel sounds *without changing the traditional spelling of words* in the Scriptures. Around AD 500, several vowel pointing systems were developed, frequently giving different sounds to a text! The Tiberian pointing system eventually became the most popular, and has been used in Hebrew Bibles since the thirteenth century.[2]

To read the words in modern editions of the Hebrew Scriptures, the reader's eye must now track up and down and across to see each vowel and consonant (not to mention accent marks!). To read the word *God*, אֱלֹהִים, for example (enlarged below), the eye must begin on the right, noting the the *aleph* and moving downward to see the vowel points, *hateph segol* (E) under it, then move upward to the left to take in the consonant *lamed* (L). From there, the eye must move slightly to the left to take in the dot above the top line (O), and then move left to see the *hey* (H). Then the eye must see the dot below the *hey* and move upward to notice that it is the first mark in the diphthong *chiriq gadol* (I). Finally, the eye must move left for the final letter *mem*(M). Thus, we read E-L-O-H-I-M (except that we've read it the other direction, M-I-H-O-L-E). I only describe this process in detail for your understanding; your eye will track this way naturally once you memorize the alphabet and vowel points.

Qamatz (Kamatz Gadol, Qamets) — בָ

Tsere (Tzere) — בֵ

Tsere Yod — בֵי

Hiriq Gadol (Hirik Male) — בִי

Shuruq (Shuruk, Shureq) — וּ

Holam (Holem) — בֹ

Vav Holam — וֹ

• •

Qamatz Qatan (Kamatz Katan, Kamats Hatuf, Qamets Hatuf) — בָ

Patah (Patach) — בַ

Segol (Seghol) — בֶ

Hiriq (Hireq, Chirik Chaser) — בִ

Qubbuts (Qibbuts, Kubutz) — בֻ

---

1 Although, from around the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, scribes began to use some consonants to represent vowels, namely, *aleph, hey, vav* and *yod*. These letters, when used to help the reader recognize vowel sounds, are called *matres lectionis*, "mothers of reading."

2 The Tiberian pointing system has been preserved in what is known today as the Masoretic text.

Person & Number

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Vocabulary

אֱוִיל

בְּרָכָה

דֶּרֶךְ

הָלַךְ

הוֹלֵךְ

זֶכֶר

חָמָס

רֶשַׁע

תֹּם

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Proverb's Pleasing Participles

In biblical Hebrew, a participle is made from a verb, and is technically a verbal adjective. However, a participle can function as a verb, noun *or* adjective. For example, the verb הָלַךְ means *went, came*, or *walked*. The partciple of this verb used in Pro 10.9, הוֹלֵךְ, means *walks* or *walking*. However, since Hebrew participles have number and gender, we look more closely and see that הוֹלֵךְ is *masculine singular*. Therefore, as an adjective, it describes a *male individual* who *walks*. Since there is no nominal subject in the first colon of Pro 10.9, though, we must mentally insert, "He who" before the participle "walks." Alternatively, we can translate the participle as a whole noun phrase, "The man who walks … ."

Practical Application & Other Notes

Anatomy Of A Poetical Verse

- **S**entence = one complete parallelistic expression of thought (= one *stich*, or *verse* of poetry, sometimes called a *line*, but some authors equate *line*, *stich* and *colon*);
- **Colon** = a *hemistich*, i.e., one of the two or three parallel and developing expressions of the thought, sometimes called a *phrase* or *verset*.

Reviewing Proverbs 10.1-5

The contrast of wise and foolish sons in Proverbs 10.1 and 10.5 may form an inclusio, bracketing the proverbs in 10.2-4. If this is the case, then the proverbs in verses 2-5 have to do with a father's wisdom concerns for his son. He warns his son against involvement in fraudulent get-rich-quick schemes, assures him that YHWH will meet his needs if he will live righteously, but also reminds him of the responsibility to work diligently.

On the other hand, verse 1 may set the theme for the entire chapter, in which wise and foolish persons are characterized by their ways with regard to **wealth** and **speech**. See Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs*, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004).

1   **The proverbs of Solomon.**

A wise son makes a father glad,

But a foolish son is a grief to his mother.

2   **Ill-gotten gains do not profit,**

But righteousness delivers from death.

3   **The Lord will not allow the righteous to hunger,**

But He will reject the craving of the wicked.

4   **Poor is he who works with a negligent hand,**

But the hand of the diligent makes rich.

5   **He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely,**

But he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully.

The LXX does not include the superscription in verse 1 before the first proverb. On the other hand, the LXX includes a bonus verse 4 (besides and following the 4th verse translated from the Hebrew): "A trained son shall be wise, and shall employ the fool for a servant."

The NASB uses the adjective *foolish* in the second colon of the first proverb to coordinate with the adjective *wise* in the first colon. However, the Hebrew is more expressive using a **noun** in the second colon: "… but a son — a fool — grief of his mother."

We notice that the first colon of verse 1 does not employ a pronominal suffix specifying whose (or what) father is in view, while the second colon specifies "*his* mother." Of course Proverbs chapter 1 sets the scene of a father training his son, and the father in view in 10.1 is obviously the son's own father, but could the author of the proverb have also looked beyond the son's earthly father to his heavenly Father? The Fatherhood of God is not so strong an idea in the OT as in the NT, but neither is it foreign to the saints of Solomon's time (Psa 27.10; 68.5; 89.26; 103.13; Pro 3.12; Isa 9.6; 63.16; 64.8; Mal 1.6; 2.10).

How does a wise son gladden his father, and *how* does a fool become the grief of his mother? Proverbs 10.2-5 reminds us that one of a parent's chief concern is the eventual ability of a child to support himself with gainful employment. Therefore, the father of these proverbs warns the child away from the temptations to commit theft or fraud, and encourages a commitment to diligent and responsible work. More so than in our current society, Israelite parents in the times of the kings depended upon their children for their own livelihood in old age; what would parents our grandparents do if their children did not responsibly bring in the harvest, but instead were out trying to get rich by gambling or worse? Verse 4 provides the antithesis to verse 2: Treasures of wickedness do not make rich; diligence makes rich!

Not all English versions put the tetragrammaton in verse 3 in caps, and so the English reader may miss the personal name of God in this proverb. While most proverbs make no promise but only teach probability, this one tells the reader something about the unwavering character of God. English versions also tend to not translate the word נֶפֶשׁ, *soul of*, in verse 3, losing the emphasis upon the innermost part of a person. Furthermore, the hiphil verb is usually translated, "will not allow … to hunger," or "does not let … go hungry," but the LXX draws out the causative aspect of the hiphil by translating with λιμοκτονήσει, "will not starve." Thus, the righteous may have times of physical or spiritual hunger, but YHWH is not the direct cause of it, and if the righteous person does have a time of hunger, it is not forever, and it is YHWH who will meet that need of the inner person.

On the other hand, what wicked people desire is like a mirage that moves further into the distance as one attempts to reach it. A current example is the hope of homosexuals to assuage their guilt by gaining social acceptance and legal status for their unions.

My translation of Pro 10.4: **Poor *the* man *who* works *with* a slack hand; but *the* hand of diligent men makes rich.** The participle עֹשֶׂה is masculine and thus has the man-being/becoming-poor as its subject, rather than the "hand of slackness" (which is feminine) as in the NIV and ESV. We must, therefore, opt for the idea of *working* rather than *making* for the meaning of עָשָׂה in this case. So, while the parallels are between **hand** and **hand**, **man** and **men**, and **poor** and **rich**, the subject of the verb in the first colon is **man**, while the subject of the second colon is **hand**. The main contrast is at the extremities of the verse: **poor** and **rich**.

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Vocabulary

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אַהֲבָה
אֱוִיל
דַל
חַי
כָּסָה
לֵב
מָקוֹר
פֶּה
שָׂנֵא

Wisdom Words

אֱוִיל	fool, foolish
דַעַת	knowledge, discernment
חָכַם	be wise, skillful
חָכָם	wise, skilled, shrewd, *n.* sage
חָכְמָה	wisdom, skill in war
חֲכָמִים	wise men
שָׂכַל	have insight, succeed, give attention, instruct
שֶׂכֶל	understanding, wisdom, discretion, prudence
שִׂכְלוּת	folly: lack of wisdom, insight, prudence

Practical Application & Other Notes

Recommended Resource: Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Vols. 1 & 2, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004).

Important Term: A *janus* (ˈjānəs) is a word with multiple meanings (i.e. a polyvalent word) used in a text to connect the preceding context with the following context. Like the two-faced mythical god Janus, the god of doors, gates and beginnings, a janus word points both forward and backward, connecting the text before it and after it, and forming what is called a *janus parallelism*.

Reviewing Proverbs 10.6-11

The second colon of Proverbs 10.6 is problematic. The **word order** of of the Heb (but-mouth-of wicked-conceals-violence) implies that *mouth* is the subject doing the action, namely, "concealing violence."[1] However, Waltke dismisses this interpretation as only "grammatically possible" (though it is in fact the norm), on the basis that it destroys the parallelism of the verse. The LXX supports Waltke's interpretation, putting πένθος (i.e., *sorrow* in place of *violence*) in the nominative case, making it the subject that covers the mouth. This makes good sense, for as Waltke explains,

> In the chiastic antithetical parallels of v. 6 the subjects "blessings" versus "violence" constitute its outer frame and the predicates, "crown the head of the righteous" versus "cover the mouth of the wicked" its inner core. The parallels … [suggest] that blessings do not crown the wicked and that violence does not cover the mouth of the righteous.

Apparently, then, *violence* is placed at the end of the colon, not because it is the object (being covered by the mouth), but to form a chiasm with *blessings* at the opposite end of the saying.

The exact repetition in the Heb text of Pro 10.6b in Pro 10.11b raises the question of **dittography**. Dittography is a scribal error in which a word or line is unintentionally duplicated. Is it possible that a scribe copying Pro 10 momentarily lost his place in the source document, and inadvertently copied the end of verse 6 at the end of verse 11? Possibly, but this kind of *intentional* repetition is common in the Proverbs (cf. 10.8b and 10.10b), and Pro 11b makes good sense when we understand *violence* as the subject, even though placed in the unusual final position of the sentence. Pro 10.11 paints this picture: while the life-giving words of the righteous are welcomed

6   Blessings are on the head of the righteous,

     But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

7   The memory of the righteous is blessed,

     But the name of the wicked will rot.

8   The wise of heart will receive commands,

     But a babbling fool will be ruined.

9   He who walks in integrity walks securely,

     But he who perverts his ways will be found out.

10   He who winks the eye causes trouble,

     And a babbling fool will be ruined.

11   The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,

     But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

as fresh water from a fountain, the mouth of the wicked will be forcefully stopped up as though it were a poison well."

The word translated *integrity* in Pro 10.9 is the Heb *perfection* (תֹם), as in Job 1.1,8 and 2.3, where the adjective (תָּם) is applied to the man Job. Contemporary translators struggle with this word (contrast the KJV) because we have come to think of the word *perfect* as denoting "flawless performance." Biblical perfection, however, is relational rather than primarily performance based. To be perfect or walk in perfection, biblically speaking, means to walk in relational wholeness and maturity. This requires that one be in good relational standing with both God and man (consider Matthew 5.48). This kind of perfection is seen both in a person's godliness and in his or her integrity in human relationship. You can sin or cause an offense and yet remain perfect *if* you promptly repent and right the offense. You can also be less than fully mature and still be perfect *if* you are living consistently with the revelation and understanding that God has already given you.

The targum (Aramaic translation-paraphrase) of Pro 10.9 interprets "walk securely" as meaning that the man of perfection will receive help as he goes. In contrast, the man who regularly steps away from the path of integrity can expect that his secret intrigues will come to light; he will become known as one not to be trusted, but instead avoided.

Pro 10.10 is among those less common of the proverbs in which the parallelism is *not* antithetical. It's parallelism is either **synonymous**, in which case "babbling fool" is another way of describing the person who "winks the eye," OR the parallelism is **progressive**, in which case a "babbling fool" is *worse* (or has a worse fate) than one who "winks."

The translation "winks" in Pro 10.10 is probably correct, and is so rendered by all our English versions. In this case the proverb means that the insincere kidder or conniver causes trouble (but is redeemable), while the babbling fool is bound for destruction. However, the word translated "winks," the Heb קָרַץ, fundamentally conveys the idea of compressing something, as in pursing the lips. Thus, to "compress the eye" in this proverb could express the idea of narrowing one's eye(s) in an expression of irritation or disapproval. This could paint a slightly different picture, describing a person who narrows an eye in resentment and then plots to cause harm to the object of his irritation. As the LXX puts it, "The man signaling treacherously with his eyes[2] is gathering pain for men …." In this case, the babbling fool of the second colon could be the object of the pain eventually inflicted by the irritated party of the first colon!

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1 For the same word order (Construct Noun + Nominal Adjective + Verb + Noun) see Psa 37.30; Pro 10.31,32; 11.10,11; 15.2,7,28; 18.15; 19.28. Of these instances, only Pro 15.2 can possibly be construed as having the subject follow the verb, but cf. Pro 10.12 with *love* as the subject in the final position.

2 Note the plural.

Proverbs 10.16-22

Roderick Graciano
Timothy Ministries
2017

Person & Number

Singular		
1st Com		I, Me
2nd Mas		You
2nd Fem		You
3rd Mas		He, Him
3rd Fem		She, Her

Plural		
1st Com		We, Us
2nd Mas		You
2nd Fem		You
3rd Com		They, Them
3rd Mas		They, Them
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Vocabulary

דְּבַר

חַטָּאת

כֶּסֶף

לָשׁוֹן

מוּסָר

מוּת

יְמוּתוּ

רֹב

רַב

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חַיִּים

In Gen 2.7, God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of "lives" — if we were to read the Hebrew plural noun woodenly! But why is the noun חַי, *life*, put in the plural form here, and in connection with the tree of life (Gen 2.9)? Indeed, why does Proverbs 10.16 seem to say that "the wages of the righteous is *lives*"? The answer is that חַיִּים is an **abstract plural**, referring to the bundled qualities inherent or essential to a living being. Thus, the "breath of life" was the breath that communicated all the essential qualities of life to Adam. And the reward of the righteous person is all that is essential to life. *L'Chaim!*

Practical Application & Other Notes

Independent Personal Pronouns

These pronouns are called "independent" because the are not affixed to another word. They are sometimes called Subject Pronouns because they are always the subject of a verb (or of a verbless clause), never the object.

Person	Singular		Plural	
1 c.	אֲנִי / אָנֹכִי	I	אֲנַ֫חְנוּ	we
2 m.	אַתָּה	you	אַתֶּם	you
2 f.	אַתְּ	you	אַתֵּ֫נָה	you
3 m.	הוּא	he	הֵ֫מָּה / הֵם	they
3 f.	הוּא / הִיא	she	הֵ֫נָּה / הֵן	they

Since Hebrew verbs generally express person and number, the independent pronouns are only needed in certain cases, one of which is the verbless clause: in the absence of a verb, the person and number of the subject must be expressed by a pronoun. When an **Independent Personal Pronoun** is used as a subject in a verbless clause, the verb "to be" is understood:

כִּי־עָפָר אַתָּה   For dust [are] **you** … (Genesis 3.19).

וּמוֹצִא דִבָּה הוּא כְסִיל   And a man spreading rumor, **he** [is] a fool. (Proverbs 10.18b)

Sometimes, when a verb is *not* lacking, the independent pronoun seems superfluous, as in Proverbs 8.17, אֲנִי אֹהֲבֶיהָ אֵהָב , literally, "I those loving me I love." In this instance, the independent pronoun is emphatic, and we might translate the clause, "I *myself* love those who love me," or, "I *indeed* love those who love me." (See BHRG, §36.1.)

Proverbs 10.23-27

Roderick Graciano
Timothy Ministries
2017

Person & Number

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	3rd Fem	She, Her
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	2nd Fem	You
	3rd Com	They, Them
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	3rd Fem	They, Them

Suffix

Verbal Stem

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אִישׁ

חָמֵץ

יִרְאָה

כְּסִיל

נָתַן

יִתֶּן

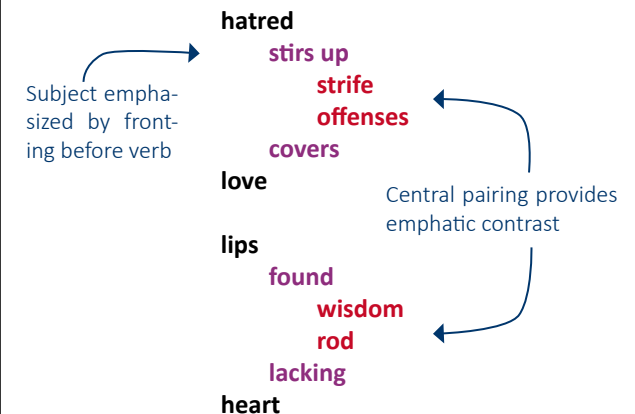סוּפָה

עוֹלָם

עַיִן

עָצֵל

עָשָׁן

שָׁלַח

לְשֹׁלְחָיו

Diphthongs are marked in **blue**. Root letters in **red**. Root letter that is part of a diphthong in **purple**.

Chiasm

A **chiasm** is a literary structure in which paired ideas are expressed in inverse order, emphasizing the central pairing. Proverbs 10.12 and 10.13 have a **chiasmic** structure, as seen in their primary terms:

Subject emphasized by fronting before verb

hatred
   stirs up
     strife
     offenses
   covers
love

lips
   found
     wisdom
     rod
   lacking
heart

Central pairing provides emphatic contrast

Practical Application & Other Notes

Recommended Resource: Christo Van der Merwe, Jackie Naudé, and Jan Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*, electronic ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); abbreviated, **BHRG**.

Reviewing Proverbs 10.11-15

Proverbs 10.12 has a chiastic word order in the Hebrew, i.e, subject—verb—object; object—verb—subject:

Hatred —> will stir up —> strife
but
love <— will cover <— all offenses

The word order is retained in the LXX:

Hatred —> stirs up —> strife
but
affection <— covers <— all those not loving strife

In both original and LXX translation, the opposition of *hatred* and *love* is emphasized by placing the words at opposite ends of the two cola. However, since biblical Heb, with regard to its normal word order, is considered a VSO (verb-subject-object) language, *hatred* is effectually "fronted," in this proverb, giving it extra emphasis. As explained in the BHRG, "If the verb is … preceded by the subject or any other constituent, the word order of that clause is regarded as marked," resulting in emphasis.

Our Eng versions obscure this important word order, as does the ESV:

Hatred —> stirs up —> strife
but
all offenses <— covers <— love

Eng translators are forced to make a choice with a verse like this: Preserve the word order, *or* preserve the active voice of the verb. To preserve the word order, Eng would have to make the verb of the second colon passive:

Hatred —> stirs up —> strife
but
love <— are covered by <— all offenses

Eng translators sacrifice word order to preserve the voice of the verb, *and* for clarity in identifying the subject and the object of the colon. If the Heb word

11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,

But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

12 Hatred stirs up strife,

But love covers all transgressions.

13 On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found,

But a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding.

14 Wise men store up knowledge,

But with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand.

15 The rich man's wealth is his fortress,

The ruin of the poor is their poverty.

order of the second colon were translated literally, "all offences will cover love," the Eng would imply that the offences are the subject covering over love!

How does the Heb word order avoid confusion regarding subject and object? By gender agreement between subject and verb:

Hatred —> will stir up —> strife
but
love <— will cover <— all offenses

Hatred is a feminine noun, and it is paired with the feminine verb *stir up* (while the object noun *strife* is masculine); *love* is also a feminine noun, and it is paired with the feminine verb *cover* (while the object noun *offences* is masculine). Eng verbs do not have gender, so we depend upon word order to differentiate between subject and object.

Pro 10.13 *in the LXX* reads, "He that brings forth wisdom from his lips smites the fool with a rod."[1] Here we see that the LXX has interpreted the two cola of the verse as connected in the sense of action + a result of the action. The Heb text presents the two cola as having a less direct connection, but as nevertheless expressing a strong contrast emphasized by the proverb's chiastic structure: "On the lips of the discerning man will be found wisdom; but a rod [will be found] on the back of the man lacking heart." We see the correspondence between **lips** and **heart**, between **discerning** and **lacking**, and between **wisdom** and **rod**. This first pairing is lost in the Eng versions, since they translate *the sense* of the idiomatic, "lacking heart," which means "lacking mental ability." This proverb, therefore, provides a stiff warning: "Do you want people to find wisdom on your lips, or do you want people to lay a rod on your back? The former? Then *pursue wisdom!*"

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1 Brenton, Lancelot Charles Lee, *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament: English Translation* (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1870).

What is the message? *Hatred* is emphasized; we must make special note of it as a source of strife. *Strife* is a plural noun in the Heb text; hatred does not result in a single nasty incident; it is an ongoing source of conflict. Both verbs in the Heb, *stir up* and *cover* are imperfect, which we generally translate with a future sense. However, imperfect simply means *not yet completed* so an imperfect verb can speak of a fluid, ongoing action. Therefore, the LXX and our Eng versions are correct in translating these verbs as describing a present reality.

We must not miss that the verb *cover* (כָּסָה) connotes the *forgiveness* or *expiation* of sin. This provides us with a definition: **hatred = *not forgiving.*** So the choice presented to us is to *not forgive offenses against us*, and cause strife, or *lovingly forgive* and (by implication) eliminate strife.

Proverbs 10.28-32

Roderick Graciano
Timothy Ministries
2017

Person & Number

Singular	1st Com	I, Me
	2nd Mas	You
	2nd Fem	You
	3rd Mas	He, Him
	3rd Fem	She, Her
Plural	1st Com	We, Us
	2nd Mas	You
	2nd Fem	You
	3rd Com	They, Them
	3rd Mas	They, Them
	3rd Fem	They, Them

Typical Voice/Aktionsart	Verbal Stem
Active or Stative	**Qal**
Passive or Reflexive	**Niphal**
Active-Intensive	**Piel** (Polel, Pilpel)
Passive-Intensive	**Pual** (Polal, Polpal)
Reflexive-Intensive	**Hithpael** (Hotpaal)
Active-Causative	**Hiphil**
Passive-Causative	**Hophal**

Verbal Conjugations

Perfect: Completed Action

Perfect Consecutive: Narrative Future

Imperfect: Incompleted Action

Imperfect Consecutive: Narrative Past

Cohortative: 1st Person Volitional

Imperative: 2nd Person Volitional

Jussive: 2nd or 3rd Person Volitional

Infinitive Absolute: Adverbial

Infinitive Construct: Verbal Noun

Participle: Verbal Adjective

Vocabulary

אָוֶן

אֶרֶץ

בַּל

כָּרַת

תִּכָּרֵת

לוֹא or לֹא

מוֹט

יִמּוֹט

מָעוֹז

רָצוֹן

שִׂמְחָה

שָׂפָה

תִּקְוָה

Diphthongs are marked in **blue**. Root letters in **red**. Root letter that is part of a diphthong in **purple**.

Verbless Clauses

A **clause** is the next grammatical unit below the sentence, and consists of a subject and a predicate, the latter containing a verb and stating something about the subject. "When a tree falls in the forest…" is not a sentence, but it is a clause with a subject (**a tree**), a verb (**falls**), and prepositional phrase (**in the forest**) stating something about the subject.

Hebrew makes wonderful use of *verbless* clauses, usually called **nominal clauses** because they are formed by modifying one *nominal* word (i.e., a noun or word that behaves like a noun) with another nominal word or adjective. Thus, the second clause of Proverbs 10.1, reads literally, "But foolish son grief of his mother." In this verbless clause, the second nominal word *grief* modifies the first nominal word *son.* We translate the Hebrew verbless clause the way we would form a nominal clause in English, namely, by using a linking verb (copula) which will be a form of the verb *to be*. So our English versions will render Proverbs 10.1b, "But a foolish son **is** a grief to his mother."

Practical Application & Other Notes

The Speech Sayings Of Proverbs 10

The speech sayings of Proverbs 10 are tied together by synecdochic references to mouth, lips or tongue, and by references to things spoken (e.g., slander) and manner of speaking (e.g., babbling). These sayings let us know that words can conceal as well as reveal (Proverbs 10.6,11,18), and that we should observe a man's demeanor before taking his words at face value. However, we will do well to listen to the words of the demonstrably righteous and wise, for those words will nourish us a living water from a silver cup (Proverbs 10.11,20), and feed us with the understanding we need for living well. Listening, in this context, means more than hearing: we must heed the instruction and submit to the reproofs of the life-giving words (Proverbs 10.8,17).

The fact that "the lips of the righteous feed many" (Proverbs 10.21), does not mean that we should become chatterboxes, for "he who restrains his lips is wise" (Proverbs 10.19). As James exhorts us, "everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak," particularly when it comes to authoritative speech: "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble , in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well" (James 1.19; 3.1-2). If we put ourselves forward as authorities before we have a righteous life and seasoned wisdom, we will not be able to avoid transgressing with what we say (Proverbs 10.19), and are apt to gain the reputation of a "babbling fool" (Proverbs 10.8,10).

More than our reputation is at stake, however; these are matters of life and death. The one who is a habitual foolish talker will be ruined (Proverbs 10.8,10,14) and the one who will not receive the words of the righteous will "die for lack of understanding" (Proverbs 10.21).

The summary of theses speech sayings in Proverbs 10 is that the things spoken by the righteous are of supreme value to those who receive and apply their truth (Proverbs 10.2), while speech that flows from a wicked heart is perverted and of little worth (Proverbs 10.20,32). We contemporary readers must, however, recognize that **the righteous speakers** in these proverbs are righteous in practice. These proverbs give no credence to a person's words just because that person is presumed to be clothed in the abstract righteousness of Someone else. Rather, the speech that is a fountain of life, that feeds many, and that is as choice silver, is that speech which proceeds from a person who is known to **live righteously**.

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6   Blessings are on the head of the righteous,
But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

11   The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,
But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

18   He who conceals hatred has lying lips,
And he who spreads slander is a fool.

8   The wise of heart will receive commands,
But a babbling fool will be ruined.
10   He who winks the eye causes trouble,
And a babbling fool will be ruined.
19   When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable,
But he who restrains his lips is wise.

17   He is on the path of life who heeds instruction,
But he who ignores reproof goes astray.

13   On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found,
But a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding.
14   Wise men store up knowledge,
But with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand.
21   The lips of the righteous feed many,
But fools die for lack of understanding.
31   The mouth of the righteous flows with wisdom,
But the perverted tongue will be cut out.

20   The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver,
The heart of the wicked is worth little.
32   The lips of the righteous bring forth what is acceptable,
But the mouth of the wicked what is perverted.

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Proverbs 14

Roderick Graciano
Timothy Ministries
2024

Person & Number

Singular	1st Com	I, Me
	2nd Mas	You
	2nd Fem	You
	3rd Mas	He, Him
	3rd Fem	She, Her
Plural	1st Com	We, Us
	2nd Mas	You
	2nd Fem	You
	3rd Com	They, Them
	3rd Mas	They, Them
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Infinitive Absolute: Adverbial

Infinitive Construct: Verbal Noun

Participle: Verbal Adjective

Vocabulary

אִוֶּלֶת
foolishness

דֶּרֶךְ
way

כְּסִיל
stupid

לֵב
heart

חָכָם
wise

בִּין
discern

Diphthongs are marked in **blue**. Root letters in **red**. Root letter that is part of a diphthong in **purple**.

Review: Key Principles

1. Proverbs make use of *verbless* clauses, usually called **nominal clauses**. A verbless clause might look like: "In X a Y," where the reader must mentally provide a verb: "In X *resides* a Y."

2. Biblical Hebrew often uses adjectives with gender and number in place of nouns (or in place of adjective + noun). Thus, instead of a noun, "fool," Hebrew might use an adjective, "foolish (masculine, singular)," i.e., "a foolish man." Or, instead of an adjective, *stupid* + noun, *guys*," in Proverbs we find, "stupid (adj., masculine, plural)."

3. In the same way that Biblical Hebrew uses adjectives, it often uses participles (verbal adjectives) with gender and number in place of a noun (or in place of an adjective + noun). Thus, instead of "(adj.) discerning + (noun) man," in Proverbs we find, "discerning (participle, masculine, single)."

Practical Application & Other Notes

The Text

14:1 חַכְמ֣וֹת נָ֭שִׁים בָּנְתָ֣ה בֵיתָ֑הּ וְ֝אִוֶּ֗לֶת בְּיָדֶ֥יהָ תֶהֶרְסֶֽנּוּ׃

2 הוֹלֵ֣ךְ בְּ֭יָשְׁרוֹ יְרֵ֣א יְהוָ֑ה וּנְל֖וֹז דְּרָכָ֣יו בּוֹזֵֽהוּ׃

3 בְּֽפִי־אֱ֭וִיל חֹ֣טֶר גַּאֲוָ֑ה וְשִׂפְתֵ֥י חֲ֝כָמִ֗ים תִּשְׁמוּרֵֽם׃

4 בְּאֵ֣ין אֲ֭לָפִים אֵב֣וּס בָּ֑ר וְרָב־תְּ֝בוּא֗וֹת בְּכֹ֣חַ שֽׁוֹר׃

5 עֵ֣ד אֱ֭מוּנִים לֹ֣א יְכַזֵּ֑ב וְיָפִ֥יחַ כְּ֝זָבִ֗ים עֵ֣ד שָֽׁקֶר׃

6 בִּקֶּשׁ־לֵ֣ץ חָכְמָ֣ה וָאָ֑יִן וְדַ֖עַת לְנָב֣וֹן נָקָֽל׃

7 לֵ֣ךְ מִ֭נֶּגֶד לְאִ֣ישׁ כְּסִ֑יל וּבַל־יָ֝דַ֗עְתָּ שִׂפְתֵי־דָֽעַת׃

8 חָכְמַ֣ת עָ֭רוּם הָבִ֣ין דַּרְכּ֑וֹ וְאִוֶּ֖לֶת כְּסִילִ֣ים מִרְמָֽה׃

9 אֱ֭וִלִים יָלִ֣יץ אָשָׁ֑ם וּבֵ֖ין יְשָׁרִ֣ים רָצֽוֹן׃

10 לֵ֗ב י֭וֹדֵעַ מָרַ֣ת נַפְשׁ֑וֹ וּ֝בְשִׂמְחָת֗וֹ לֹא־יִתְעָ֥רַב זָֽר׃

11 בֵּ֣ית רְ֭שָׁעִים יִשָּׁמֵ֑ד וְאֹ֖הֶל יְשָׁרִ֣ים יַפְרִֽיחַ׃

12 יֵ֤שׁ דֶּ֣רֶךְ יָ֭שָׁר לִפְנֵי־אִ֑ישׁ וְ֝אַחֲרִיתָ֗הּ דַּרְכֵי־מָֽוֶת׃

14:13 גַּם־בִּשְׂחוֹק יִכְאַב־לֵב וְאַחֲרִיתָהּ
שִׂמְחָה תוּגָה׃

14 מִדְּרָכָיו יִשְׂבַּע סוּג לֵב וּמֵעָלָיו אִישׁ
טוֹב׃

15 פֶּתִי יַאֲמִין לְכָל־דָּבָר וְעָרוּם יָבִין
לַאֲשֻׁרוֹ׃

16 חָכָם יָרֵא וְסָר מֵרָע וּכְסִיל מִתְעַבֵּר
וּבוֹטֵחַ׃

17 קְצַר־אַפַּיִם יַעֲשֶׂה אִוֶּלֶת וְאִישׁ מְזִמּוֹת
יִשָּׂנֵא׃

18 נָחֲלוּ פְתָאיִם אִוֶּלֶת וַעֲרוּמִים יַכְתִּרוּ
דָעַת׃

19 שַׁחוּ רָעִים לִפְנֵי טוֹבִים וּרְשָׁעִים
עַל־שַׁעֲרֵי צַדִּיק׃

20 גַּם־לְרֵעֵהוּ יִשָּׂנֵא רָשׁ וְאֹהֲבֵי עָשִׁיר
רַבִּים׃

21 בָּז־לְרֵעֵהוּ חוֹטֵא וּמְחוֹנֵן עֲנָיִים
אַשְׁרָיו׃

22 הֲלוֹא־יִתְעוּ חֹרְשֵׁי רָע וְחֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת
חֹרְשֵׁי טוֹב׃

23 בְּכָל־עֶצֶב יִהְיֶה מוֹתָר וּדְבַר־שְׂפָ־
תַיִם אַךְ־לְמַחְסוֹר׃

24 עֲטֶרֶת חֲכָמִים עָשְׁרָם אִוֶּלֶת כְּסִי־
לִים אִוֶּלֶת׃

עֹשֵׁק־דָּל חֵרֵף עֹשֵׂהוּ וּמְכַבְּדוֹ חֹנֵן אֶבְיוֹן׃	**31**	**14:25** מַצִּיל נְפָשׁוֹת עֵד אֱמֶת וְיָפִחַ כְּזָבִים מִרְמָה׃	
בְּרָעָתוֹ יִדָּחֶה רָשָׁע וְחֹסֶה בְמוֹ־ תוֹ צַדִּיק׃	**32**	בְּיִרְאַת יְהוָה מִבְטַח־עֹז וּלְבָנָיו יִהְיֶה מַחְסֶה׃	**26**
בְּלֵב נָבוֹן תָּנוּחַ חָכְמָה וּבְקֶרֶב כְּסִילִים תִּוָּדֵעַ׃	**33**	יִרְאַת יְהוָה מְקוֹר חַיִּים לָסוּר מִמֹּקְשֵׁי מָוֶת׃	**27**
צְדָקָה תְרוֹמֵם־גּוֹי וְחֶסֶד לְאֻ־ מִּים חַטָּאת׃	**34**	בְּרָב־עָם הַדְרַת־מֶלֶךְ וּבְאֶפֶס לְאֹם מְחִתַּת רָזוֹן׃	**28**
רְצוֹן־מֶלֶךְ לְעֶבֶד מַשְׂכִּיל וְעֶ־ בְרָתוֹ תִּהְיֶה מֵבִישׁ׃	**35**	אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם רַב־תְּבוּנָה וּקְצַר־רוּחַ מֵרִים אִוֶּלֶת׃	**29**
		חַיֵּי בְשָׂרִים לֵב מַרְפֵּא וּרְקַב עֲצָמוֹת קִנְאָה׃	**30**

Person & Number

Singular	**1st Com**	**I, Me**
	2nd Mas	**You**
	2nd Fem	**You**
	3rd Mas	**He, Him**
	3rd Fem	**She, Her**
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	2nd Fem	**You**
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Participle: Verbal Adjective

Vocabulary

Diphthongs are marked in **blue**. Root letters in **red**. Root letter that is part of a diphthong in **purple**.

אֱמֶת	Truth, integrity
גָּלַל	Roll, roll up
גֹּל	You (sing.) roll
דֶּרֶךְ	Road, way, conduct
חֶסֶד	Covenant faithfulness
חָשַׁב	Weave, think
יַחְשֵׁב	
טוֹב	Good
יָד	Hand
יִרְאָה	Fear

What Is A Proverb?

The word *proverb* in Hebrew is מָשָׁל (*mashal*). This word connotes the following: Similitued, likeness, pair, twin, mirror, example, comparison, analogy, illustration.

Thus, **a proverb is a comparison**. It presents the hearer or reader with an option. Proverbs teach the probable results of (often contrasted) courses of action. Although the biblical proverbs often express eternal truths, they are not promises.

Practical Application & Other Notes

The Wisdom Literature Of The Bible

The wisdom writings of the Bible include the books of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, as well as passages in the Psalms and prophets, along with a variety of sayings scattered throughout the historical books of the Bible (OT and NT), and in the NT epistles. The Bible's wisdom literature includes ten subgenres listed by Charles Foster Kent:[1]:

1. Similitude

2. Enigma

3. Fable

4. Parable

5. Proverb (simple)

6. Paradox

7. Gnomic Essay = A thematic grouping of maxims as in Pro 26.3-12 and Pro 26.13-16.

8. Didactic Drama: Kent mentions the Song of Songs as the only biblical instance of this subgenre.

9. Philosophical Drama: Kent mentions the book of Job as the only biblical instance of this subgenre.

10. Philosophical Homily: Ecclesiastes is our biblical instance of this subgenre.

Although these subgenres represent a wonderful variety of literary approaches, **they all have a common purpose, namely to present the reader or listener with a guide to choosing the wise path over the foolish alternative, sometimes with regard to life in general and often with regard to a specific situation**. Just as Moses set before the people of Israel the ways of life and death (Deu. 30.15,19), and Joshua called them to choose between the pagan gods and YHVH (Jos. 24.15), now the wisdom passages of the The Bible speak at the forks of the road in our lives, urging us to take the path that leads to success instead of the path that leads to destruction. These wisdom road signs are vital to us because we are members of a fallen race, all born with a distorted sense of what is right and smart (Pro 12.15; 14.12; 16.25). The writings of wisdom are a gift from God, who is the only one who sees beyond the curves in the path of life and anticipates the short and long-term results of human actions.

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1   Kent, Charles Foster. *The Wise Men Of Ancient Israel And Their Proverbs*, (New York: Silver, Burdett & Company, 1899).

Questions For The Exegesis And Exposition Of Proverbs 1.1-9,33

1. (A) Translate Proverbs 16.1. (B) Is the "answer of the tongue" 1b spoken by the man of 1a, or by another? (C) What is the essential principle of the proverb? (D) With what choice does Proverbs 16.1 confront the hearer?

2. (A) Translate Proverbs 16.2. (B) What does it mean to weigh the spirits? (C) What is the essential principle of the proverb? (D) With what choice does Proverbs 16.2 confront the hearer?

3. (A) Translate Proverbss 16.3. (B) What does it mean to roll our actions unto YHVH? (C) What is the essential principle of the proverb? (D) With what choice does Proverbs 16.3 confront the hearer? (E) What is the interrelationship between the first three proverbs of Proverbs 16?

4. (A) Translate Proverbs 16.4. (B) Does the word מַעֲנֵהוּ signify *answer*, *purpose*, *den* or *furrow*? (C) How does this verse connect with v. 1? (D) What is the day of evil (Psalm 27.5; 41.1; Ecclesiastes 7.14; 12.1; Jeremiah 17.17-18; 51.1)? (E) What purpose might God have for a wicked man in the day of evil? (F) What is the essential principle of the proverb? (G) With what choice does Proverbs 16.4 confront the hearer?

5. (A) Translate Proverbs 16.5. (B) What is the meaning of *abomination of YHVH*? (C) What is meant by the expression "hand to hand" (Proverbs 11.21)? (D) What is the essential principle of the proverb? (E) With what choice does Proverbs 16.5 confront the hearer?

Questions For The Exegesis And Exposition Of Proverbs 1.1-9,33

6. (A) Translate Proverbs 16.6. (B) By whose kindness and truth is iniquity atoned for? (C) How does the fear of YHVH detour one from evil? (D) What is the essential principle of the proverb? (E) With what choice does Proverbios 16.6 confront the hearer?

7. (A) Translate Proverbs 16.7. (B) What is the essential principle of the proverb? (C) With what choice does Proverbios 16.7 confront the hearer?

8. (A) Translate Proverbs 16.8. (B) What is the essential principle of the proverb? (C) With what choice does Proverbios 16.8 confront the hearer?

9. (A) Translate Proverbs 16.9. (B) What is meant by *weaving ways*? (C) What is the essential principle of the proverb? (D) With what choice does Proverbios 16.9 confront the hearer? (E) What is the relationship between Proverbs 16.9 and Proverbs 16.1?

33. (A) Translate Proverbs 16.33. (B) What is the essential principle of the proverb? (C) With what choice does Proverbios 16.33 confront the hearer?

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	3rd Fem	She, Her
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	2nd Fem	You
	3rd Com	They, Them
	3rd Mas	They, Them
	3rd Fem	They, Them

Typical Voice/Aktionsart	Verbal Stem
Active or Stative	**Qal**
Passive or Reflexive	**Niphal**
Active-Intensive	**Piel** (Polel, Pilpel)
Passive-Intensive	**Pual** (Polal, Polpal)
Reflexive-Intensive	**Hithpael** (Hotpaal)
Active-Causative	**Hiphil**
Passive-Causative	**Hophal**

Verbal Conjugations

Perfect: Completed Action
 Perfect Consecutive: Narrative Future
Imperfect: Incompleted Action
 Imperfect Consecutive: Narrative Past
 Cohortative: 1st Person Volitional
 Imperative: 2nd Person Volitional
 Jussive: 2nd or 3rd Person Volitional
Infinitive Absolute: Adverbial
Infinitive Construct: Verbal Noun
Participle: Verbal Adjective

Vocabulary

Diphthongs are marked in **blue**. Root letters in **red**. Root letter that is part of a diphthong in **purple**.

אָהֵב , אָהַב	He loved
יֵאָהֵב	He is loved
אוֹר	Light
אִישׁ	Man
דִּבֶּר	Speak
דִבֵּר	Speaking
חַי , חַיִּים	Life
חָכָם	Adj. Wise
חֵמָה	Heat, poison
מֶלֶךְ	King

Proverb Structures

- Amplification
- Antithetical Parallel
- Beatitude
- Better-More / Than-Than If
- Characterization
- Consequence
- Counsel
- Either Or
- Gnomic Essay
- Here / There
- If-Since X / Then Y
- Interrogative
- List (N does 1,2,3)
- Means (By X is Y)
- Much More
- Numerical ("Four things that…")
- Paradox
- Purpose Clause
- Redirect (A ≙ B and/but C ≙ D)
- Simple affirmation
- Synonymous Parallel
- ¡Woe!

Practical Application & Other Notes

Questions For The Exegesis And Exposition Of Proverbs 16.10-15

10. (A) Translate Pro 16.10 . (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) Why is the use of the word קֶסֶם surprising in this proverb, and why would the author have used it? (D) How should we understand this proverb in view of the many passages that describe unjust kings? (E) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (F) With what choice does Pro 16.10 confront the reader?

11. (A) Translate Pro 16.11. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) Is this proverb really about weights and scales, or is it about something more fundamental? (D) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (E) With what choice does Pro 16.11 confront the reader?

12. (A) Translate Pro 16.12. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) Why should we care if a king undermines his own rule? (D) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (E) With what choice does Pro 16.12 confront the reader?

13. (A) Translate Pro 16.13. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (D) With what choice does Pro 16.13 confront the reader?

14. (A) Translate Pro 16.14. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (D) With what choice does Pro 16.14 confront the reader?

15. (A) Translate Pro 16.15. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (D) With what choice does Pro 16.15 confront the reader? (E) **What further insights can we derive from these verses by consiering Proverbios 16.10-15 as a thematic grouping**?

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Vocabulary

Diphthongs are marked in **blue**. Root letters in **red**. Root letter that is part of a diphthong in **purple**.

אֱוִיל	Fool
אִוֶּלֶת	Foolishness
אֹמֶר	Word
אַשְׁרֵי	Happy, blessed
אֶת	With
בִּינָה	Understanding
בַּעַל	Owner
גֵּאֶה	Arrogant
גָּאוֹן	Pride
חָכְמָה	Wisdom

Hebrew Participles

In Hebrew, participles may function as verbs, adjectives or nouns. Hebrew participles express gender and number. Thus, when used as a stand-alone masculine singular adjective, a partciple can be interpreted as *the man* or *the one* doing the action expressed:

Verb: *he sinned*
Masculine singular participle: *sinning man*

Because the Hebrew participle can function as a noun, it is the only kind of verb that can take a definite article:

Masc. sing. part. + article: *the sinning man*

Hebrew participles can be active, passive, or reflexive, but the majority of participles that we find in the Hebrew scriptures will be in the active voice. We can often spot a Hebrew participle by the holem placed after the first consonant.

Practical Application & Other Notes

Questions For The Exegesis And Exposition Of Proverbs 16.16-24

16. (A) Translate Pro 16.16. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) Should we take the participle, *chosen*, as a verb or as an adj. modifying *silver* (see Pro 10.20)? (D) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (E) With what choice does Pro 16.16 confront the reader?

17. (A) Translate Pro 16.17. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) How does departing from evil become a highway? (D) What is the specific meaning of נֶפֶשׁ in this verse? (E) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (F) With what choice does Pro 16.17 confront the reader?

18. (A) Translate Pro 16.18. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (D) With what choice does Pro 16.18 confront the reader?

19. (A) Translate Pro 16.19. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (D) With what choice does Pro 16.19 confront the person working for the king in matters of state?

20. (A) Translate Pro 16.20. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) Of what "word" does the first colon speak? (D) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (D) With what choice does Pro 16.20 confront the reader?

21. (A) Translate Pro 16.21. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) How do sweet lips add to learning? (D) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (E) With what choice does Pro 16.21 confront the reader?

22. (A) Translate Pro 16.22. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) What are some examples of understanding giving life to its owner, and folly bringing discipline to a fool? (D) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (E) With what choice does Pro 16.22 confront the reader?

23. (A) Translate Pro 16.23. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (D) With what choice does Pro 16.22 confront the reader?

24. (A) Translate Pro 16.24. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) How does pleasant speech heal bone? (D) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (E) With what choice does Pro 16.22 confront the reader?

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Vocabulary

Diphthongs are marked in **blue**. Root letters in **red**. Root letter that is part of a diphthong in **purple**.

Hebrew	Gloss
אַחֲרִית	After part, end
אַלּוּף	Close friend
אַף	Nose
אֵשׁ	Fire
גִּבּוֹר	Mighty
יֵשׁ	Exists (affirm. particle)
יָשָׁר	Straight, level
מָ֫וֶת	Death, dying, plague
מָצָא	Attain, find
תִּמָּצֵא	

בְּלִיַּעַל ⮕ Βελιάρ

To what did Paul refer in the single NT use of *Belial* (*Beliar*) in 2Co 6.15? The OT word meant *worthlessness*, and "sons of belial" meant *worthless* or *wicked men* (Deu 13.14; Jdg 29.22; 1Sa 2.12; 1Ki 21.10,13; 2Ch 13.7). However, by the late 2nd century BC, *Belial* appears as a name for the devil who who tempts people to promiscuity. In the 1st century BC, the Dead Sea Scrolls used the term *Belial* frequently as the proper name of evil personified (e.g. *Damascus Document* Col. 4, v. 13), referring to the devil or to Antichrist. The *Testament of Dan* confirms Belial as the great Satanic end-time enemy. The 1st or 2nd-century AD redaction of the Sibylline Oracles (Vol. 2, v. 167) also uses the name Beliar in apparent reference to the Antichrist. On the other hand, the *Martyrdom Of Isaiah* (1st or 2nd century AD) calls Beliar "the angel of iniquity who rules this world" and "the king of this world," titles that coordinate well with Paul's "god of this world" in 2Co 4.4. Thus, Paul seems to have used *Belial* as a name for the devil, though commentators continue to debate why he used that name in 2Co instead of his usual *Satan*.

Practical Application & Other Notes

Questions For The Exegesis And Exposition Of Proverbs 16.25-32

25. (A) Translate Pro 16.25. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) What makes a way seem right to a man? (D) Is there something inherently deadly in a pleasant path? (E) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (F) With what choice does Pro 16.25 confront the reader?

26. (A) Translate Pro 16.26. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) What is the specific meaning of נֶפֶשׁ in this verse? (D) What is the connotation of פִּיהוּ in the second colon? (E) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (F) With what choice does Pro 16.26 confront the reader?

27. (A) Translate Pro 16.27. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) What is the alternative reading of the first colon? (D) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (E) With what choice does Pro 16.27 confront the reader?

28. (A) Translate Pro 16.28. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) How does the piel of שָׁלַח intensify its meaning in the first colon? (D) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (E) With what choice does Pro 16.28 confront the person working for the king in matters of state?

29. (A) Translate Pro 16.29. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) How does the piel of פָּתָה intensify its meaning in the first colon?

30. (A) Translate Pro 16.30. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) Is this verse a separate proverb, or a continuation of Pro 16.29? (D) If this verse is a continuation of the preceding, how does it add to the meaning of Pro 16.29? (E) With what choice does Pro 16.29-30 confront the reader?

31. (A) Translate Pro 16.31. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) How does this proverb relate to Pro 16.25? (D) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (E) With what choice does Pro 16.31 confront the reader?

32. (A) Translate Pro 16.32. (B) What is the structure of this proverb? (C) What is the meaning of the expression, "long nostrils"? (D) What is the essential principle of this proverb? (E) With what choice does Pro 16.22 confront the reader? (F) **What title can we give to Pro 16.25-32 as a group of sayings**?

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Vocabulary

אִמְרָה	word, saying
אֲנִי	I
אָנֹכִי	I
אָסַף	he gathered
כָּזָב	a lie
כָּחַשׁ	he denied
וְכִחַשְׁתִּי	
כִּי	surely
כֹּל	all, [the] whole
לֶחֶם	bread

> Diphthongs are marked in **blue**. Root letters in **red**. Root letter that is part of a diphthong in **purple**.

Agur bin Jakeh

Who was Agur? The Midrash on Proverbs assumes that the words of Proverbs 30 are Solomon's, and that Solomon speaks of himself in this chapter using a symbolic name. Sadly, we have insufficient evidence to prove or disprove this hypothesis. If we assume that Agur was a different sage, we still must wonder if Agur was his name given at birth, or a pen name, "The Gatherer, son of Piety." Likewise, were Ithiel and Ucal real sons (or disciples), or were their names symbolic, "God is with me," and "I shall be established"? (The ESV rendering, "I am weary O God, ...and worn out," requires changing the Hebrew vowels.) Notice the synonyms (from different roots) for "gathered" and "established" in verse 4. It appears that Agur was a gatherer of proverbial sayings, and his teaching encouraged right relationship with God and avoidance of that which would undermine a well-established life.

It appears that all the verses of Pro 30 are the words of this sage, just as all those of Pro 31 are the words of King Lemuel. The presumed authorial unity of chapter 30 will guide our interpretation of the sayings.

Practical Application & Other Notes

Interpreting Agur's Introduction: Options

A Dialogue

Agur responds to a skeptic who pretends to be stupid and demands answers to the questions of Proverbs 30.4.

Who asks/answers the questions of v. 4?
A skeptic asks, demanding that Agur try to answer.

A Confession

Agur humbly confesses his ignorance relative to all that could be known.

Who asks/answers the questions of v. 4?
Agur asks, challenging his sons/students to answer if they can. Alternatively, Agur reports the questions that God has asked him to answer.

A Ironic Reproof

Agur reproves the one who thinks that, having now read (almost) all the proverbs, he knows all the answers to life's questions.

Who asks/answers the questions of v. 4?
Agur asks, challenging the over-confident student of Proverbs to answer if he can.

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אָח	brother
בֵּין	between
דָּם	blood
הֵנָּה	they
מַחֲשָׁבָה	thought, intent
רֶגֶל	foot
רָעָה	evil
שֶׁבַע	seven
שֶׁקֶר	lie, deception
שֵׁשׁ	six

Extra-Biblical Numerical Proverbs

The Greek philosopher Democritus(d. 370 BC) wrote:

There are two things which are good,
and a third which is pleasing to [the sun-god];
one who drinks and shares it,
one who masters wisdom [and observes it;]
and one who hears a word but tells it not.
Now that is precious to Samas [the sun-god].

A more ancient Aramaic numerical proverb appears in the writings of Ahiqar, the relative of Tobit:

Of practical wisdom these are the three fruits:
to deliberate well,
to speak to the point,
to do what is right.

This latter saying lacks the traditional "plus-one" introduction as do half of the numerical sayings in the book of Sirach, and all of the numerical sayings in the Sayings of the Fathers in the Mishnah's chapter *Aboth*. The Mishnaic authors seem to have lost the genius of the numerical proverbs and contented themselves with making clever lists.

Practical Application & Other Notes

Introduction To Numerical Proverbs: Proverbs 6.16-19

16 שֶׁשׁ־הֵ֭נָּה שָׂנֵ֣א יְהוָ֑ה וְ֝שֶׁ֗בַע תּוֹעֲבוֹת נַפְשֽׁוֹ׃

17 עֵינַ֣יִם רָ֭מוֹת לְשׁ֣וֹן שָׁ֑קֶר וְ֝יָדַ֗יִם שֹׁפְכ֥וֹת דָּם־נָקִֽי׃

18 לֵ֗ב חֹ֭רֵשׁ מַחְשְׁב֣וֹת אָ֑וֶן רַגְלַ֥יִם מְ֝מַהֲר֗וֹת לָר֥וּץ לָֽרָעָֽה׃

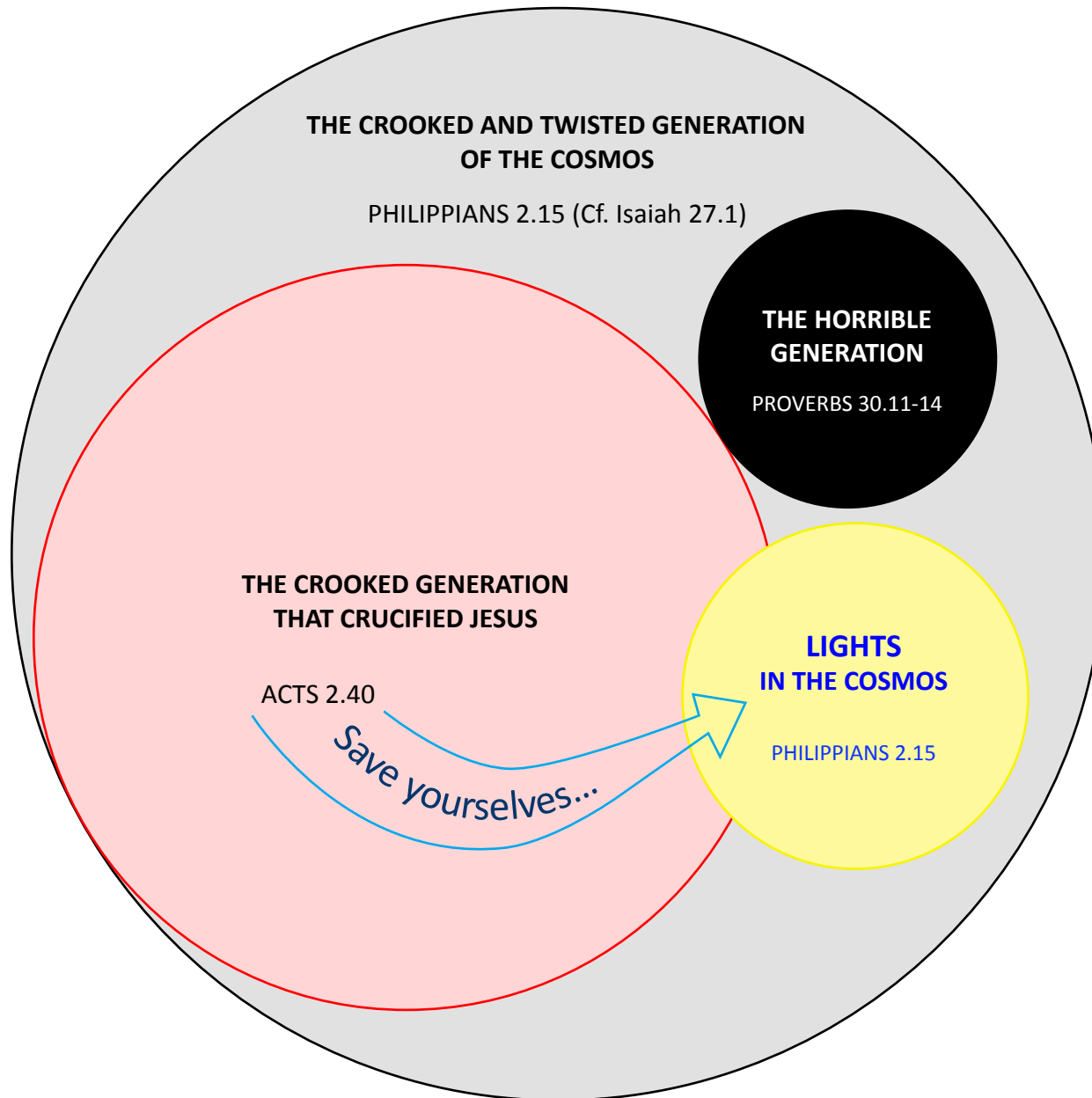**19** יָפִ֣יחַ כְּ֭זָבִים עֵ֣ד שָׁ֑קֶר וּמְשַׁלֵּ֥חַ מְ֝דָנִ֗ים בֵּ֣ין אַחִֽים׃ פ

Questions About Interpreting The Numerical Proverbs

1. What is the advantage of a numerical proverb that lists three or more items, over all the short proverbs that speak only of a single item?

2. The biblical numerical proverbs are traditionally introduced by a number, which is then increased by one. What is the unspoken messages of this clever introduction?

3. If the author of a numerical proverb wishes to draw our attention to one item of his list in particular, what are the clues that point us to the item in the list that the proverb is really about?

A Horrible Generation: Proverbs 30.11-14,17

1. Why does the saying of Proverbs 30.11-14 address a *generation* rather than an *individual*? (Compare Deuteronomy 32.5,20; also the many "generation" sayings of Jesus, Matthew 11.16; 12.39-45; 16.4; 17.17; etc.)

2. How should we summarize the four traits of this horrible "generation" of Proverbs 30.11-14?

   •

   •

   •

   •

3. This numerical proverb lacks the N+1 introduction; which of the four items should draw our attention, and why?

4. How does the proverb about the horrible generation show a connection between the proverbs and the law of Moses?

5. In our next lesson, we will discuss why the saying of Proverbs 30.17 follows the saying about things never satisfied. For now, what connects the saying of Proverbs 30.17 to the preceding tetrad about the horrible generation?

A Crooked Generation: Acts 2.40

**THE CROOKED AND TWISTED GENERATION
OF THE COSMOS**

PHILIPPIANS 2.15 (Cf. Isaiah 27.1)

**THE HORRIBLE
GENERATION**

PROVERBS 30.11-14

**THE CROOKED GENERATION
THAT CRUCIFIED JESUS**

ACTS 2.40

Save yourselves...

**LIGHTS
IN THE COSMOS**

PHILIPPIANS 2.15

The term *generation* points to several ideas:

1. Birth: People are born into the crooked and twisted generation; they must be born again to become God's children, part of the righteous generation.
2. Influence: The people of a certain generation influence those within their own generation, as well as those of generations that emerge from their own.
3. Legacy: One generation leaves certain conditions behind, for better or for worse, to be inherited by the following generation(s).

The generation of this cosmos, and that which crucified Jesus, are "crooked" (σκολιᾶς) like the Serpent (σκολιὸν) of Isaiah 27.1. This "crookedness" and "twistedness" describes the fallen nature of humanity, bent toward self and sin. This is the generation into which all human beings are born, Jew and Gentile.

In contrast, there is a "righteous generation" (Psalm 14.5). This is presumably the same as that which Asaph calls "the generation of Your [God's] children" (Psalm 73.15), and perhaps also the same as "the seed of the righteous" (Proverbs 11.21).

Members of the crooked generation can be saved and become members of the righteous generation. However, because of the state of the human race and the present world system, the "righteous generation" must continue to exist and let its light shine *within* the crooked and twisted generation of the cosmos. The final removal of the crooked generation awaits the coming of the righteous King, and the binding of the crooked Serpent.

Person & Number

Singular		
	1st Com	I, Me
	2nd Mas	You
	2nd Fem	You
	3rd Mas	He, Him
	3rd Fem	She, Her

Plural		
	1st Com	We, Us
	2nd Mas	You
	2nd Fem	You
	3rd Com	They, Them
	3rd Mas	They, Them
	3rd Fem	They, Them

Typical Voice/Aktionsart	Verbal Stem
Active or Stative	**Qal**
Passive or Reflexive	**Niphal**
Active-Intensive	**Piel** (Polel, Pilpel)
Passive-Intensive	**Pual** (Polal, Polpal)
Reflexive-Intensive	**Hithpael** (Hotpaal)
Active-Causative	**Hiphil**
Passive-Causative	**Hophal**

Verbal Conjugations

Perfect: Completed Action

Perfect Consecutive: Narrative Future

Imperfect: Incompleted Action

Imperfect Consecutive: Narrative Past

Cohortative: 1st Person Volitional

Imperative: 2nd Person Volitional

Jussive: 2nd or 3rd Person Volitional

Infinitive Absolute: Adverbial

Infinitive Construct: Verbal Noun

Participle: Verbal Adjective

Vocabulary

Diphthongs are marked in **blue**. Root letters in **red**. Root letter that is part of a diphthong in **purple**.

אָמַר	he said, he has said
אָמְרוּ	they said, have said
אֳנִיָּה	ship
אַרְבַּע	four
גֶּבֶר	young, strong man
הוֹן	sufficient
יָם	sea
מַיִם	water
נֶשֶׁר	eagle, vulture
עַלְמָה	virgin, maiden

A Saying from Arabia

Three things are not satisfied by three:

the womb,

and wood by fire,

and the earth by rain.

A Saying from India

Fire is not sated with wood,

nor the ocean with the streams,

nor death with all the living,

nor the beauty-eyed with men.

Practical Application & Other Notes

Leech's Daughters & The Way Of Things

1. What is an appropriate title for the numerical proverb of Proverbs 30.15-16?

2. The numerical proverb of Proverbs 30.15-16 has a lengthier introduction than the other numerical proverbs of Scripture. What is the significance of the extra couplet at the beginning about leeches?

3. What general attitude does the numerical proverb of Proverbs 30.15-16 warn us against?

4. What is the ultimate message of the numerical proverb of Proverbs 30.15-16, and what are the two ways that it implies?

5. How does the numerical proverb of Proverbs 30.15-16 serve as an introduction to one of the main teachings of Ecclesiastes (see Ecc 7.2,4; 12.1-7)?

6. What is an appropriate title for the numerical proverb of Proverbs 30.18-19?

7. What general attitude does the numerical proverb of Proverbs 30.18-19 warn us against?

8. What is the ultimate message of the numerical proverb of Proverbs 30.18-19, and what are the two ways that it implies?

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Vocabulary

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בַּ֫יִת	house, dwelling
בָּעַל	possess, marry, rule over
תִּבְעַל	
גְּבִירָה	queen, mistress
הֵיכָל	palace, temple
חָכָם	adj.: wise, clever
יָצָא	go/come out
וַיֵּצֵא	
נָבָל	adj.: foolish, worthless
עֶ֫בֶד	servant, slave

Teaching The Numerical Proverbs

When teaching a class on the numerical proverbs of Proverbs 6 and 30, you can help students understand the beauty and usefulness of this type of saying by having them compose one their own. Find the instructions for completing this task in the Application box below. Here is an example of one of my own numerical proverbs, composed to complete this exercise:

Three habits make a good friend,
Indeed, there are four things
* a friend should do:*
*   Listen well,*
*   Be real not a faker,*
*   Share your heart,*
*   Be a giver not a taker.*

Practical Application & Other Notes

A homework assignment: write an original numerical proverb.
Step 1: Think of a wisdom topic.
Step 2: Think about the most important thing you know about your topic.
Step 3: Think of three other principles or examples related to your main point.
Step 4: Write the introductory N + 1 couplet for your tetrad.
Step 5: Make a list of your four points after the introduction, and put your most important idea in the first or last position in the list.

The Unbearable And The Attainable

1. What is an appropriate title for the numerical proverb of Proverbs 30.21-23?

2. What makes the four things of the proverb unbearable, and to which of the four did the author wish to draw our attention?

3. What is the overall message of the saying about unbearable things?

4. What is an appropriate title for the numerical proverb of Proverbs 30.24-28?

5. If the N+1 introduction of the numerical proverbs serves to draw attention to the most important item in the list, then what is expressed by the lack of the N+1 introduction in a numerical proverb?

6. In the saying about small wise creatures, why do three couplets speak of a "people" or a large group?

7. How can wise persons imitate each of the four small animals? How can a wise nation imitate each of them?

8. What is the overall message of the saying about the four small animals?

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Vocabulary

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בְּהֵמָה	animals, livestock
דָּם	blood
זָמַם	he pondered, plannned
זִמּוֹת	
חָלָב	milk
לַיִשׁ	lion
מָתְנַיִם	loins, hips
פָּנֶה	front, face
שׁוּב	he turned, retreated
יָשׁוּב	

The Sources Of Exaltation

There are reasons for the stately walk of the four entities named in Proverbs 30.29-30. What are they?

1.

2.

3.

4.

Why then is it foolish to exalt oneself (besides the fact that it leads to the same kinds of consequences as plotting evil)?

Practical Application & Other Notes

True And False Exaltation

1. What is an appropriate title for the numerical proverb of Proverbs 30.29-31?

2. What is the thought progression between this final numerical proverb and the closing verses (32-33) of Proverbs 30?

3. What is the overall message of the saying about stately things?

4. What wisdom is there for the individual (if any) in each of the four items of the numerical proverb. In other words, what wisdom can we learn from the stately walk of the lion, the rooster, the ram, and the king with his army?

5. Is there an overall message that emerges from Proverbs chapter 30?