

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.

HOT: PROVERBS LESSON 1 PROVERBS 10.1-5

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Timothy Ministries
2016

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

TYPICAL VOICE/AKTIONSART

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

אב
אם
בזש
מבש
חכם
יהוה
משל
נפש
צדיק
צדקה

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	ש, שׂ	Shin
כ, ך	Kaf	ת	Tav

PRACTICAL APPLICATION & OTHER NOTES

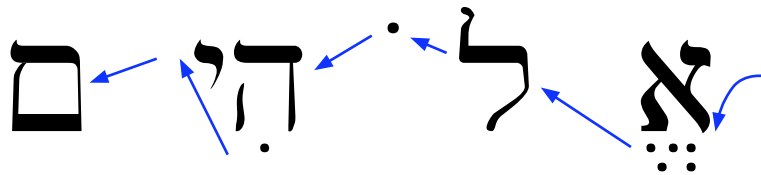
A proverb (משל, mashal) is a comparison; it presents the reader/hearer with a choice. Proverbs teach the probable results of (often contrasted) courses of action.

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

HEBREW VOWEL POINTS

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 indicate 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.



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.

HOT: PROVERBS LESSON 1B

THE HEBREW FULL VOWELS

Qamatz (Kamatz Gadol, Qamets)	ֶ
Tsere (Tzere)	ֵ
Tsere Yod	ֵי
Hiriq Gadol (Hirik Male)	ִ
Shuruq (Shuruk, Shureq)	וֹ
Holam (Holem)	וּ
Vav Holam	וּוֹ
.....	
Qamatz Qatan (Kamatz Katan, Kamats Hatuf, Qamets Hatuf)	ֶּ
Patah (Patach)	ֶֹ
Segol (Seghol)	ֶֹֹ
Hiriq (Hireq, Chirik Chaser)	ִֹ
Qubbutz (Qibbutz, Kubutz)	ִֹֹ

HOT: PROVERBS LESSON 2 PROVERBS 10.6-10

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PERSON & NUMBER		
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Participle: Verbal Adjective ←

VOCABULARY

אָוִיל

בָּרַכָּה

הִרְדָּה

הִלְךָ

הוֹלֵךְ

זָכַר

חָמַס

רָשַׁע

תָּם

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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 הִלְךָ means *went, came, or walked*. The participle 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

- **Sentence** = 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

HOT: PROVERBS LESSON 2B

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).

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!

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 עֲשֵׂה 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 עֲשֵׂה 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**.

- 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).

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 שׁוֹמֵר, *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.

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	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)
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VERBAL CONJUGATIONS

Perfect: Completed Action

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Jussive: 2nd or 3rd Person Volitional

Infinitive Absolute: Adverbial

Infinitive Construct: Verbal Noun

Participle: Verbal Adjective

VOCABULARY

אֶהְבֵּהּ

אֹיִל

דַּל

חֵי

כֶּסֶה

לֵב

מְקוֹר

פֶּה

שִׁנְאָה

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

HOT: PROVERBS LESSON 3 PROVERBS 10.11-15

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WISDOM WORDS

אֹיִל	fool, foolish
דַּעַת	knowledge, discernment
חָכָם	be wise, skillful
חָכָם	wise, skilled, shrewd, <i>n.</i> sage
חֲכִמָּה	wisdom, skill in war
חֲכָמִים	wise men
שָׂכַל	have insight, succeed, give attention, instruct
שָׂכָל	understanding, wisdom, discretion, prudence
שִׂכְלוֹת	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* ('jānəs) 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 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 chiasmic 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

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.

- 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.”

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 eyes² 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!

2 Note the plural.

The word translated *integrity* in Pro 10.9 is the Heb *perfection* (קָדַשׁ), as in Job 1.1,8 and 2.3, where the adjective (קָדַשׁ) 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.

HOT: PROVERBS LESSON 4 PROVERBS 10.16-22

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VOCABULARY
דְּבַר
חַטָּאת
כֶּסֶף
לְשׁוֹן
מוֹסֵר
מֵוֹת
יְמֵוֹתָיו
רַב
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 חַיִּים, *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 they 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 / אֲנֹכִי I	אֲנָּחְנוּ we
2 m.	אַתָּה you	אַתֶּם you
2 f.	אַתְּ you	אַתֶּנָּה you
3 m.	הוא he	הֵמָּה / הֵם they
3 f.	היא / הִיא she	הֵנָּה / 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).

וּמוֹצֵא דְבָרָה הוּא כְּסִיל 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 אֶהְבֶּיָה אֹהֲבֵי, 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.)

HOT: PROVERBS LESSON 5 PROVERBS 10.23-27

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PERSON & NUMBER		
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VOCABULARY

אִישׁ
חָמֵץ
יִרְאָה
כְּסִיל
נָתַן
יָתַן
סוֹפָה
עוֹלָם
עֵינַי
עָצַל
עָשָׂן
שָׁלַח
לְשַׁחֵי

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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 chiasmic word order in the Hebrew, i.e. subject—verb—object; object—verb—subject:

Hatred → will stir up → strife
love ← will cover ← all offenses

The word order is retained in the LXX:

Hatred → stirs up → strife
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
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
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
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.

HOT: PROVERBS LESSON 5B

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 chiasmic 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!*”

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* (כִּפֶּה) 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.

HOT: PROVERBS LESSON 6 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
אֵוָו
אֶרֶץ
בָּל
כָּרַת
תְּכַרְתֶּם
לֹא or לֹא
מוֹט
יְמוֹט
מְעוֹז
רְצוֹן
שְׂמֵחָה
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

HOT: PROVERBS LESSON 6B

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 these 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*.

- 6 Blessings are on the head of the righteous,
But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.
- 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.
- 11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,
But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.
- 12 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.
- 17 He is on the path of life who heeds instruction,
But he who ignores reproof goes astray.
- 18 He who conceals hatred has lying lips,
And he who spreads slander is a fool.
- 19 When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable,
But he who restrains his lips is wise.
- 20 The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver,
The heart of the wicked is worth little.
- 21 The lips of the righteous feed many,
But fools die for lack of understanding.
- 23 The mouth of the righteous flows with wisdom,
But the perverted tongue will be cut out.
- 31 The mouth of the righteous flows with wisdom,
But the perverted tongue will be cut out.
- 32 The lips of the righteous bring forth what is acceptable,
But the mouth of the wicked what is perverted.

HOT: PROVERBS LESSON 7
PROVERBS 16.1-9,33

Roderick Graciano
 Timothy Ministries
 2020

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

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

WHAT IS A PROVERB?

The word *proverb* in Hebrew is מִשְׁלָל (*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. Gnostic 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 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.

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 Proverbs 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 **פִּעֵנָה** 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?

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 **מִשְׁפָּט** 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?**

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.

אִיל	Fool
אִילת	Foolishness
אָמַר	Word
אֲשֶׁרִי	Happy, blessed
אֵת	With
בִּינָה	Understanding
בַּעַל	Owner
נִאָּה	Arrogant
נִאֲוֹן	Pride
חִכְמָה	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 participle 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 **שׁוּבָה** 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?

PERSON & NUMBER		
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	3rd Mas	They, Them
	3rd Fem	They, Them

VOCABULARY	
אַחֲרַיִת	After part, end
אֶלֹּף	Close friend
אַף	Nose
אֵשׁ	Fire
גִּבּוֹר	Mighty
יֵשׁ	Exists (affirm. particle)
יָשָׁר	Straight, level
מָוֶת	Death, dying, plague
מָצָא	Attain, find
תִּמְצָא	

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

בְּלִיעַל ➔ 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*.

TYPICAL VOICE/AKTIONSART	VERBAL STEM
Active or Stative	Qal
Passive or Reflexive	Niphal
Active-Intensive	Piel (Polel, Pilpel)
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Participle: Verbal Adjective

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 **נִפְשׁוֹ** in this verse? (D) What is the connotation of **פִּי־הוֹי** 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 **פָּתַח** 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?**

PRO 30.1-10

Roderick Graciano
Timothy Ministries

2020

PERSON & NUMBER		
Singular	1st Com	I, Me
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	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	
אָמַרָה	word, saying
אָנִי	I
אָנֹכִי	I
אָסַף	he gathered
כָּזַב	a lie
כִּחַשׁ	he denied
וּכְחַשְׁתִּי	
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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	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

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Imperfect Consecutive: Narrative Past

Cohortative: 1st Person Volitional

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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.

אָח	brother
בֵּין	between
דָּם	blood
הֵנָּה	they
מַחְשָׁבָה	thought, intent
רֶגֶל	foot
רָעָה	evil
שֶׁבַע	seven
שָׁקַר	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 שְׁשֶׁה־הֵנָּה שָׁנָא יְהוָה וְשִׁבַּע תּוֹעֲבוֹת נִפְשׁוֹ:

17 עֵינַיִם רָמוֹת לְשׁוֹן שֶׁקֶר וְיָדַיִם שֹׁפְכוֹת דָּם־נֶקִי:

18 לֵב חָרֵשׁ מִחֲשֻׁבוֹת אָוֶן רַגְלִים מְמַהְרֹת לָרוּץ לָרָעָה:

19 יִפְיֵחַ כְּזָבִים עַד שֶׁקֶר וּמִשְׁלַח מְדַנִּים בֵּין אֲחֵים: 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.)

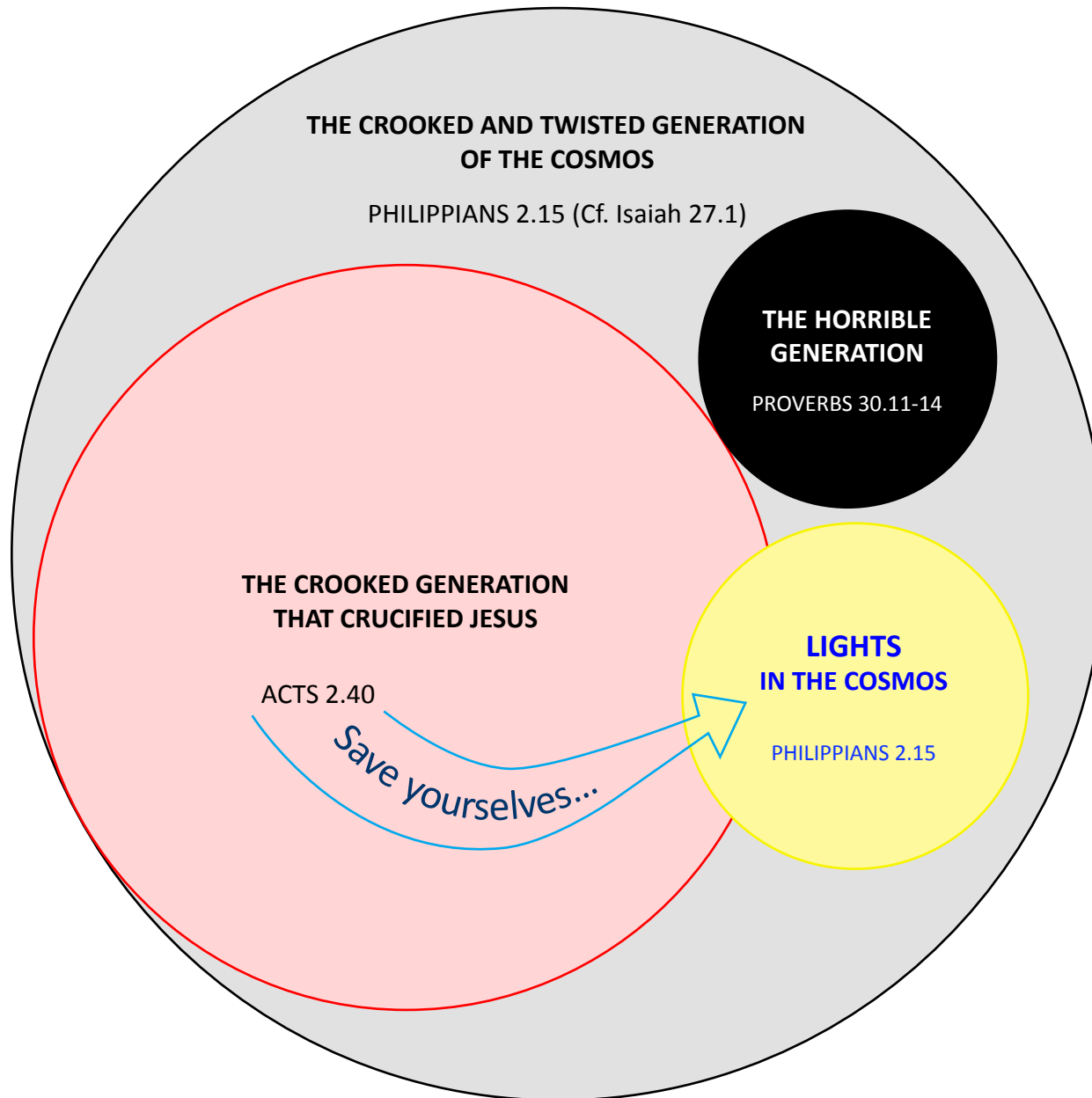
2. How should we summarize the four traits of this horrible “generation” of Proverbs 30.11-14?
 -
 -
 -
 -

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



HOT: PROVERBS LESSON 12D

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.

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

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

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	
בַּיִת	house, dwelling
בָּעַל	possess, marry, rule over
תַּבְּעַל	
נְבִיָּה	queen, mistress
הַיְכָל	palace, temple
חָכָם	adj.: wise, clever
יֵצֵא	go/come out
יֵצֵא	
נָבֵל	adj.: foolish, worthless
עֶבֶד	servant, slave

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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	
בְּהֵמָה	animals, livestock
דָּם	blood
זָמַם	he pondered, planned
זְמוֹת	
חֵלֶב	milk
לִישׁ	lion
מִתְנַיִם	loins, hips
פָּנָה	front, face
שָׁבַח	he turned, retreated
שׁוֹבֵב	

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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?