

PROVERBS

A PRIVATE TRANSLATION

By

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PROVERBS

The title of the book of Proverbs stems from the first word in the book: *ylfm* = proverbs. While we have our own understanding of the meaning of the word 'proverb' we soon discover upon reading that these are not always the aphorisms we assume in our culture. In Hebrew the term is in the singular form meaning 'comparison'. It might be a sharp simile, an allegory, pronouncement, maxim, observation, satire, or a dark saying (*riddle*). This might be conveyed in a teaching style that is thought provoking through wit, paradox, common sense, symbolism or frontal attack.

Some prefer to entitle the book "The Proverbs of Solomon" though Solomon's proverbs do not begin until chapter 10 and continue through 22:16. There are other writers whose works are included: the wise men: 22:17 - 24:22 along with further works of the wise men 24:23 - 34. Further proverbs of Solomon: 25:1-29:27, considered to be based on a collection of proverbs made by Hezekiah; the words of Agar: 30:1-33; the words of king Lemuel: 31:1-9; an acrostic declaration of wifely excellence: 31:10 - 31.

The book begins with 9 chapters of proverbs written by an anonymous writer. These were no doubt a collection of proverbs that circulated in one group and perhaps were well known in the Hebrew tradition, thus becoming a kind of introduction to the book. The first 7 verses of chapter 1 form a kind of introduction, followed by praise to wisdom in 1:8 - 4:18. This is part of a series of writings dealing with wisdom, which has, obviously, become "Wisdom Literature" or "Hokmatic Literature". Included along with Proverbs are Ecclesiastes, Job and the Psalms within the Biblical cannon. Other examples of such literature are found in Egypt, Babylon along with other writings from cultures of the Middle East. In some instances parallel examples are found in these non - Biblical writings. In relatively recent years this has become a growing fascination on the part of scholars, in part because much more material has been discovered.

The reader will seldom find reference to God in Proverbs. Writers wrote, based on an assumption that God is of importance to the person who hears or reads the work. The writer(s), or editor(s) seemed to have as their purpose to set before the reader some helps to live properly as human beings and good servants of God. The book of Proverbs was intended as a means of teaching and culture.

The writers of the Law were building up a large structure, the prophets painted with broad strokes. The writer(s) who prepared the portions of Proverbs, along with whoever might have edited it were sifting the grist of life to find in it those important concepts that would shape the life of an individual who believed in the fact of God to become a worthy follower of the Divine Being.

As the book was assembled from its various sources, named and unnamed, it seems there must have been a worthwhile pericope that had been circulating : 'an alphabet of wifely excellence;' 31:10 - 31 which was deemed to be so important to the editor that it was appended to the writing though it did not exactly fit the previous material. It is separated from the other portions of the Book in the LXX. There are also sizable changes in sections of the book in the LXX. 30:1-33 and 31:1-9 are found following 24:34

Several themes are evident and deserving of special attention. Wisdom and a personification of wisdom. In the 'wisdom school' of Israel wisdom is both a subject and the aim of education. 1. a religious attitude. 2. a hidden mystery. 3. insight into daily living. 4. sound judgment and good sense. Other themes are: the fool; the scoffer; the sluggard; the friend; social behavior; words; the family; life and death. A reading of the book, searching out these themes is exceedingly beneficial.

THE STYLE OF POETRY IN PROVERBS

Each of the stichs within the book of Proverbs: 1:1 - 31:9 falls into one of four typical formats. An attempt to designate the style will be seen to the left of the stich. These are:

1. Synonymous. The two stichs express the same idea. cf. 7:1; 8:1. This will be designated with the letter s.

2. Antithetic. The truth of the first stich is contrastingly stated in the second. cf. 10:5; 12:28. This will be designated with the letter a.

3. Synthetic. The second stich simply carries the thought of the first stich, thus forming one sentence. cf. 1:10; 18:13. This will be designated with the letters sy.

4. Triplet. Three stichs join to convey the thought. This will not be designated since it is obvious because of the three lines comprising the verse.

PROVERBS

(or, What Wise People Taught)

<Introduction of the book 1:1> ¹

¹ The proverbs of Solomon, king of Israel, ² son of David.

<Introduction to the benefits of the book 1:2 - 6>

² These proverbs are intended for the purpose of knowing ³ wisdom and instruction, ⁴ understanding maxims of insight. ³ Through these you receive instruction in wise conduct, righteousness, ⁵ justice and honesty; ⁶ ⁴ that shrewdness ⁷ may be imparted to those with little understanding (or, the naive); knowledge and discernment to the youth---- ⁵ Those who are wise may gain information and increase their learning and those who have understanding may acquire skill, ⁸ ⁶ so that they understand a proverb and interpret an enigma, the words of the wise and their riddles.

<The motto of the book 1:7> ⁹

⁷ The chief part ¹⁰ (or, the best part) of knowledge is reverence of the Lord. Only fools have contempt for wisdom and instruction.

<Instruction and speeches of wisdom 1:8 - 9:18>

<1 Listen to your parents 1:8 - 9>

s ⁸ My child ¹¹ be attentive to the instruction of our father
and do not rebel against your mother's teaching,
s ⁹ for these are a garland of grace (or, a beautiful adornment) for your head,
and a pendant to adorn your neck.

<2 Beware of sinners 1:10 - 19>

sy ¹⁰ My child, if sinners attempt to lead you astray,
do not give in.
¹¹ Suppose they would say to you, "Come with us,
let us waylay and kill someone.
We will ambush someone who is innocent, for no reason:
s ¹² like Sheol let us swallow (or, destroy) them alive

1 While these verses are written in Hebrew as poetic form like the remainder of the book it has been set as prose since it is and introduction. As an introduction prose seems more appropriate.

2 The MT accents demand that "king of Israel" follow the name "Solomon."

3 hmkx = moral and religious intelligence.

4 rsm = discipline, chastisement so that a goal may be achieved.

5 The root meaning of the Hebrew word is "straight" "the norm of conduct."

6 The Hebrew word implies smooth, straight, on the level.

7 Hebrew: "crafty."

8 The term is a nautical one. The root word means "rope" thus to pull on a rope would imply to steer or to guide, hence skill. There are seven different verbs in Proverbs to express the concept of "wise action." There are fourteen different nouns for the concept of "wisdom."

9 Some scholars would consider this as the climax to the introduction and not separate it from verses 2 - 6.

10 So: literally.

11 Literally: "son."

though they are alive and well,¹² we will send them
to their grave (*or, the land of the dead*).¹³

s 13 We will seize all their wealth,
we will fill our houses with the loot.

s 14 Come, be a partner with us
and we will all get a share of the loot."¹⁴

s 15 My child, do not be associated with them
and do not follow them

s 16 [for they are anxious to perpetuate evil
and they are always eager to shed blood.]¹⁵

sy 17 For it does no good to scatter grain on a net
in the sight of a bird
(*or, If you scatter grain on a net,
when a bird is watching,
it surely wouldn't be caught*),¹⁶

s 18 but these wicked ones set a trap that will destroy them
they set an ambush for their own lives.¹⁷

sy 19 That is the way it is for all who, with violence and go after wrongful gain;¹⁸
for it destroys the lives of violent people.

<3 Wisdom's speech 1:20 - 33>

s 20 Wisdom¹⁹ calls loudly in the street:
in the market square²⁰ she raises her voice;

s 21 She cries out on top of the walls (*or, at the head of the noisy street*);
at the entrance of the city gate²¹ she cries out over the noise:²²

22 "How long, O foolish ones, will you despise wisdom,
[how long will scoffers show contempt
and fools reject knowledge.]²³

23 Listen to my reprimand;
behold I will share my understanding with you,

12 Literally: "whole" either physically whole or morally whole.

13 Literally: "Sheol."

14 Literally: "we will all have one purse."

15 Possibly a later addition from Isaiah 59:7. It is omitted in the best LXX manuscripts.

16 Hebrew difficult. Literally: "a possessor of wings." Hunters placed two vanes of netting on either side of a clearing or hole strewn with bait while they hid behind a wall, holding onto the cord. When the birds alighted the vanes were quickly pulled toward each other, catching the birds. There are three ways of interpreting this verse. 1. Birds wouldn't be caught in a trap when they see it being set. 2. Even though birds see the trap they are so eager for the seed they ignore the trap. 3. Just as the bird avoids the trap it sees being set, so the learner will know how to avoid evil.

17 Hebrew unclear. The ancient translations: LXX, Syriac, Vulgate and Targums each interpret and translate the verse differently.

18 With the sense of unjust gain based on the Hebrew word *xqy*

19 The Hebrew word form is feminine. Wisdom is personified as a woman who speaks to the reader.

21 Where public business is transacted.

22 Hebrew difficult. Line one of the stich is based on the LXX in this translation.

23 Some scholars feel this is a late addition to the text.

I will declare my understanding plainly with you.

s 24 "Because I have called you and you refused to listen,
I have invited you to hear but you rejected me,
sy 25 and you have ignored (*or, spurned*) all my advice
and would not accept my correction of your ways,
s 26 I also will laugh when you have problems,²⁴
I will ridicule you when terror comes upon you,
27 when terror assails you like a storm,²⁵
and your calamity comes like a whirlwind;
when you have distress and anguish (*or, pain and misery*).

s 28 "Then you will call to me for wisdom but I will not answer;
you will search everywhere for me but will not find me,
s 29 because you have hated knowledge
and have refused to obey and revere the Lord.
s 30 You have not desired any of my counsel
and refused to let me correct you.

s 31 "Because of this you will receive what you deserve²⁶
and become sick²⁷ of your bad behavior.²⁸
s 32 Those who refuse to listen are killed because they reject wisdom
and the indifference of fools destroys them;
s 33 but whoever listens to me will live securely
and will have peace of mind without anguish and trouble."

<CHAPTER 2>

<The second instruction 2:1 - 22>²⁹

<I Seek wisdom 2:1-8>

s 1 "My child, if you accept my words
and store up my commandments within you,
s 2 having your ear attentive to wisdom
and directing your heart to knowledge;
s 3 yes, if you cry out for insight (*or, intelligence*)
and raise your voice to learn (*or, for reason*),
s 4 if you seek it as you seek silver

24 Literally: "calamity."

25 Literally: "when your terror comes like a storm."

26 Literally: "eat the fruit of your way."

27 Literally: "sated" or, gratified to the point of being stuffed.

28 The Hebrew word is generally used only in the bad sense, except for 22:20.

29 This chapter is possibly an acrostic type poem composed of 22 stichs but instead of using a different letter of the alphabet to introduce each stich as in, for example: Psalms 111, 112 and 119 and Proverbs 31:10 ff., the writer has chosen the use of a for the first 11 verses and l the letter introducing the second half of the alphabet for the remaining 11 verses. Because of the placement of these letters in the chapter it falls into two equal parts. In verses 1 - 11 the emphasis is on "Wisdom" and in verses 12 - 22 the emphasis is on "the way". In Hebrew this chapter is one huge sentence.

and search for it as for hidden treasures;
 s 5 then you will understand reverence for the Lord
 and discover the knowledge of God.
 s 6 [For it is the Lord who gives wisdom;
 out of his mouth come knowledge and insight;
 s 7 for he has a store ³⁰ of sound wisdom (*or, helpful advice*) for the upright;
 he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,
 s 8 protecting the paths of justice
 and guarding the way of his saints (*or, those who are faithful to him*)."] ³¹

<2 *Knowing what is right 2:9 - 11*>

sy 9 "Then you will understand righteousness and justice
 and will follow every good (*or, honest*) path, ³²
 s 10 for when wisdom comes into your heart,
 and knowledge becomes pleasant to your soul,
 s 11 discretion will be a safeguard for you;
 reason (*or, understanding*) will protect you."

<3 *Avoiding wicked people 2:12 - 15*>

s 12 "It will deliver you from the evil way,
 from those of perverted (*or, perverse*) speech,
 a 13 who abandon the paths of the righteous
 to walk in the ways of darkness;
 s 14 who delight in doing evil
 and rejoice in the perverseness of evil.
 s 15 Those are the people whose paths are crooked,
 and who are devious in their ways."

<4 *Avoiding the immoral woman 2:16 - 19*>

s 16 "You will be saved from the prostitute, ³³
 from the adulterous ³⁴ with her smooth words,
 s 17 who forsakes the partner of her youth (*or, her husband*)
 and forgets the covenant of her God;
 s 18 for her path leads ³⁵ down to death,
 and her track to the shades (*or, Rephaim*). ³⁶
 s 19 None who go to her ³⁷ return,
 nor do they regain the paths of life."

30 Hebrew uncertain. So: Targum and Vulgate.

31 Some scholars feel this is a later addition which completed the acrostic nature of the passage.

32 Hebrew uncertain.

33 Hebrew: "strange" or "forbidden woman."

34 Literally: "foreign woman" i.e. one who is not known in the town.

35 So: emended to read ntybt "her path leads." MT reads htyb "her house bows down."

36 Hebrew Rephaim ~yapr These are not extinct souls but are those whose life has little substance. Their case is hopeless.

37 The phrase has sexual connotations in Hebrew.

<5 Rewards and punishment 2:20 - 22>

s 20 "Thus you will walk in the way of a good person,
and keep to the paths of the righteous,
s 21 for the upright will inhabit (*or, dwell in*) the land,
and those who are honest will remain in it (*or, survive*).
s 21 but the wicked will be cut off from the land
and the treacherous will be rooted out of it." ³⁸

<CHAPTER 3>

<The third instruction 3:1 - 12>

s 1 "My child, do not forget my teachings, ³⁹
but always remember to keep my commandments;
sy 2 for they will give you a long life
along with abundant well being (*or, prosperity*).
3 Do not let love (*or, loyalty*) and faithfulness fail;
let these be like a cord around your neck. ⁴⁰
[Write them on the tablets of your heart.] ⁴¹
sy 4 Thus you will find favor ⁴² and good reputation ⁴³
in the sight of God and people.

s 5 "Put all your trust in the Lord
and do not rely on your own intelligence.
sy 6 Let him lead you in all your ways
and he will make your paths straight (*or, smooth*).
s 7 Do not think proudly about your own wisdom;
revere the Lord and reject evil,
s 8 for this will be a cure for your body ⁴⁴
and a tonic (*or, lineament*) for your limbs. ⁴⁵
s 9 Honor the Lord with your wealth,
and with the first fruits of your produce. ⁴⁶
s 10 Then your barns will be filled with plenty
and your vats ⁴⁷ will be overflowing with wine.
s 11 My child, do not reject the Lord's correction (*or, discipline*),
or abhor (*or, be offended by*) ⁴⁸ his reproof,
s 12 for the Lord corrects the ones he loves,

38 To reject wisdom's call means death and obedience means life.

39 Literally: "law."

40 Literally: "bind these around your neck."

41 This stich is not in LXX and was a possible later addition to the Hebrew text.

42 The Hebrew has an imperative.

43 So: emended. Hebrew: "understanding" with the concept of shrewdness.

44 So: LXX. Hebrew: "navel."

45 Literally: "your bones."

46 Hebrew: &taubt "increase." An agricultural term.

47 Technically the Hebrew word is for the lower portion of the wine press %ybaq

48 Literally: "shrink from."

just as parents correct the child in whom they delight." ⁴⁹

<The fourth instruction>

<1 In praise of Wisdom 3:13 - 18>

s 13 "Happy are those who find wisdom,
and those who gain understanding;
s 14 for the profit from wisdom is more valuable than profit from silver
and even more valuable than gold.
s 15 She (*or, Wisdom*) is more precious than jewels, ⁵⁰
and nothing you desire (*or, long for*) can compare with her.
s 16 In her right hand is long life, ⁵¹
in her left hand are riches and honor.
s 17 Her ways are pleasant ones
and all her paths are peaceful.
s 18 Wisdom is like a tree that gives people who grasp her, long life;
those who cling tightly to Wisdom are happy (*or, fortunate*)."

<2 Wisdom and creation 3:19 - 20>

s 19 "The Lord created the earth by his wisdom;
he established the heavens by wisdom and knowledge;
s 20 by his knowledge the rivers began to flow
and the clouds provided rain for the earth."

<The fifth instruction 3:21 - 35>

<1 Wisdom gives you a happy life 3:21 - 26>

s 21 "My child, hold on to sound wisdom and discretion;
always keep them in mind
sy 22 for they provide life for your soul;
a long and beautiful life. ⁵²
sy 23 Then you will walk safely on your way,
and you will never stumble.
s 24 When you sit down ⁵³ you will not be afraid;
when you lie down you will have a pleasant nights sleep.
s 25 Do not be afraid of sudden terror
or the disaster ⁵⁴ that strikes the wicked, ⁵⁵
s 26 for the Lord will keep you safely, ⁵⁶
and will keep your foot from harm."

49 Hebrew unclear. LXX: "afflicts."

50 The Hebrew word ~gynpm is not clear. the root word means "ruddy." Possibly "rubies." Some translators use the word "coral."

51 Literally: "length of days."

52 Literally: "adornment for your neck."

53 So: LXX. Emended. Hebrew: "lie down."

54 Literally: "storm."

55 Hebrew: ~y[v^ The word "wicked" is used 75 times, often being compared with the righteous.

56 LXX: "on all your roads." Hebrew: "your storm."

<2 *How to behave 3:27 - 31*>

- sy 27 "Do not withhold good from those who deserve it,⁵⁷
when you have the ability to assist.
- sy 28 Do not say to your neighbors, 'Go. Come back later.
Tomorrow I will give it.' --- when you have it with you.
- sy 29 Do not devise evil plots that will harm your neighbor,
when he trustingly resides beside you.
- sy 30 Do not quarrel with others for no reason,
when they have done you no harm.
- s 31 Do not be jealous of a lawless person
and do not follow that person's example."

<3 *How the Lord deals with good and evil 3:32 - 35*>

- a 32 "The devious persons are an abomination to the Lord,
but the upright are his confidence."⁵⁸
- a 33 The Lord's curse rests on the house of the wicked,
but he blesses the abode of the righteous.
- a 34 He is scornful toward those who are conceited,
but he shows favor toward the humble (*or, wretched*).
- a 35 The wise will gain honorable reparation
but fools will be disgraced."⁵⁹

<CHAPTER 4>

<*The sixth instruction 4:1 - 27*>

<1 *Listen to your father about the benefits of wisdom 4:1 - 9*>

- s 1 "My child, heed a father's instruction
and be attentive, that you may gain⁶⁰ insight;
- a 2 for I give you excellent (*or, beneficial*) instruction.
Do not forsake my instruction.
- s 3 "When I was my father's little boy,
young, the only child of my mother,⁶¹
- 4 he taught me, and said to me,
'Be sure to remember my words;
follow my instruction and you will live (*a long life*);
- a 5 Acquire wisdom! Acquire insight!⁶²
Do not forget!⁶³ Do not ignore what I teach you!
- s 6 Do not abandon wisdom and she will protect you;

57 Hebrew literally: "do not withhold good from its owners." LXX: "your neighbors."

58 Literally: "but his private counsel is upright."

59 So: emended. Hebrew: "exalt" Literally: "the fools raise dishonor high." LXX: "The ungodly exalt dishonor."

60 Literally: "know."

61 LXX also inserts "beloved."

62 Not in LXX.

63 Not in Syriac.

love her and she will keep you safe. ⁶⁴
 sy 7 [First of all, to be wise: acquire wisdom, ⁶⁵
 and whatever you acquire, acquire insight.] ⁶⁶
 s 8 Extol her and she will exalt you, ⁶⁷
 embrace her and she will bring you honor.
 s 9 She will adorn your head with a beautiful wreath,
 and will bestow on you a glorious crown'. " ⁶⁸

<2 *Wisdom gives you long life and protection 4:10 - 19*>

sy 10 "My child, heed and accept my words,
 that you may have a long life.
 s 11 I have taught you how to live wisely;
 I have guided you in the paths of uprightness.
 s 12 When you walk, your step will not be hampered
 (*or, you will not break your stride*); ⁶⁹
 and if you run you will not stumble. ⁷⁰
 s 13 Keep remembering the instruction, don't become lax;
 guard wisdom for it is basic in your life..
 s 14 Avoid the path of the wicked,
 do not follow the example of evildoers.
 s 15 Avoid it! Stay away from it!
 Reject it and pass by!
 s 16 The evildoers cannot sleep unless they have done evil;
 they are robbed of sleep unless they have
 caused someone to stumble (*or, harmed someone*).
 s 17 They eat the bread of wickedness
 and drink the wine of violence.
 sy 18 But the path of the righteous is like dawn's light
 which shines brighter and brighter until it is broad daylight. ⁷¹
 sy 19 The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; ⁷²
 they do not know what will cause them to stumble."

<3 *Remember Wisdom and enjoy life 4:20 - 27*>

s 20 "My child, be attentive to my words;
 listen to what I say.
 s 21 Do not lose sight of my teachings,

64 Verse 6 in LXX is: "Guard the commandments, do not forget, and do not deviate from the words of my mouth."

65 Literally: "the primary thing is wisdom."

66 Not in LXX. Literally: "with all your possessions get insight" or "get insight at all costs."

67 Hebrew uncertain.

68 The pursuit of wisdom is the pursuit of a life partner who becomes a companion bestowing benefits.

69 The root Hebrew word is rrc "to be narrow." Here the word becomes rcy Broadness in Hebrew denotes well-being, prosperity. Narrowness denotes adversity and enmity.

70 The Hebrew word for "stumble" is different in 3:23. It is the same word, however, in 4:16 and 19.

71 Literally: "until the day is established." Vulgate: "the perfect day."

72 hlpak = the entire absence of light.

but keep them in your mind.
 s 22 They provide life to whoever discovers them,
 and healing to the entire body.
 sy 23 Guard your thoughts with vigilance;⁷³
 because they determine your life (*or, are the source of life*).⁷⁴
 s 24 Do not speak falsehoods
 and do not speak so as to mislead.⁷⁵
 s 25 Let your eyes look straight ahead,
 and always have a straight forward appearance.⁷⁶
 s 26 Survey carefully⁷⁷ your way of life,
 and all your ways will be proper.
 s 27 do not deviate from being morally correct,
 keep yourself from evil."⁷⁸

<CHAPTER 5>

<The seventh instruction>

<1 Avoid adultery 5:1 - 14>

s 1 "My child, be attentive to my wisdom;
 listen to my insight (*or, understanding*),
 s 2 that you may choose wisely (*or, live properly*)
 and your lips may watch over knowledge.⁷⁹
 s 3 The conversation⁸⁰ of an adulteress (*or, prostitute*)⁸¹ is seductive.
 Her words⁸² are flattering (*or, her kisses are very delightful*),⁸³
 s 4 but the aftereffect⁸⁴ is bitter as wormwood,⁸⁵
 as cutting as a two-edged sword.⁸⁶
 s 5 Her manner of life leads to death,
 her steps lead to the grave.⁸⁷
 6 She does not concern herself with living morally;
 her course meanders and she does not realize it
 (*or, she does not realize her restlessness*).

73 So: emended. Literally: "above all guarding, guard your heart."

74 Targum: "From all treasure guard your heart, for from it is the departure of life (= death)."

75 Literally: "with perverse lips."

76 Literally: "let your eyelids be straight in front of you."

77 Hebrew uncertain. dlp = to be even, to weigh, to ponder, to make level.

78 LXX adds: "For God knows the ways of those on the right, but those on the left are perverted. He will make your paths straight; will guide your ways in peace."

79 LXX: "and the knowledge of my lips is commanded you."

80 Literally: "the lips."

81 Literally: "a stranger" or "loose woman."

82 Literally: "her palate."

83 Literally: "is smoother than oil."

84 Literally: "when it is over she..." The Hebrew word htyra implies the idea of final judgment or punishment.

85 Wormwood: *artemissa herba-alba* is a plant with bitter taste. The sweet words of the adulteress leads to bitter experience.

86 Literally: "a sword of edges."

87 Hebrew: "lay hold of Sheol."

s 7 "And now, children,⁸⁸ listen to me;
 and do not forget (*or, reject*) what I have to say.
 s 8 Keep yourselves far from her;
 and do not even go near the doorway of her house;
 s 9 or you will lose your dignity (*or, good name*)
 and your life will be subject to one who is merciless.
 s 10 Strangers will take their fill of your wealth (*or, strength*),⁸⁹
 and your earnings will go to strangers.
 s 11 At the end of your life you will groan
 when your flesh and muscles⁹⁰ are being eaten away
 s 12 and you say, 'Why did I hate discipline,
 and why did my heart despise being corrected?'
 s 13 Why did I not listen to the voice of my teacher
 or pay attention to my instructor?
 s 14 Suddenly I am at the brink of utter ruin,
 disgraced in the public assembly'."

<2 Be faithful to your wife 5:15 - 20>

s 15 "Drink water from your own cistern;
 water flowing from your own well.
 s 16 Should your springs overflow in public⁹¹
 like rivulets of water in the street?
 s 17 Let them be yours alone
 and not shared with strangers.⁹²
 s 18 Let your sexuality be a blessing;
 rejoice in the wife of your youth.
 s 19 a lovely doe, a graceful mountain goat.
 Let her breasts delight you at all times.
 Always be intoxicated with her love.
 s 20 My child, why should you be impassioned⁹³ by an adulterous woman⁹⁴
 and fondle the breasts of a prostitute."

{A non-figurative translation of verses 15 - 20}

s 15 *Be faithful to your own wife;
 you have a wife, be faithful to her.*
 s 16 *Should you have children from other women
 running about the street?*
 s 17 *Your children should be devoted to you.
 Do not share your sexual pleasures with others.*

88 Hebrew plural. LXX & Vulgate singular.

89 The Hebrew word %xk = that which one acquires or that which one achieves.

90 The word translated "flesh" rfb = outside skin. rav = inner flesh next to the bone.

91 Hebrew: "your fountains will spread abroad."

92 Hebrew unclear. So: LXX.

93 The Hebrew word hgvt = "to go astray" or "to err."

94 Cf. Footnote 81, page 9.

18 *May your marital relationships be blessed
as you rejoice in your relationship with the one you married
when you were young.*
19 *She is as pretty and graceful as a deer,
having a figure that always delights you.
Always be passionate in your love for her.*
20 *My child, why should you become sexually involved with a prostitute
and be seduced by the charms of an adulterous?"*

*<3 the fate of the wicked 5:21 - 23>*⁹⁵

s 21 "The ways of humans are always seen by the Lord.
He examines⁹⁶ all their paths.
s 22 The wicked are ensnared by their own iniquities
and they are caught in the net of their own sins.
s 23 They die because of a lack of self control (*or, discipline*)
and are lost because of their great folly."^{97 98}

<CHAPTER 6>

<The eighth instruction>

<1 Avoid other people's debts 6:1 - 5>

s 1 "My child, if you have promised to be responsible⁹⁹
for your neighbor's debts,
and have made this promise to someone,¹⁰⁰
s 2 if you are trapped by the utterances of your lips,¹⁰¹
caught up in the words of your mouth;
sy 3 do this, my child, to extricate yourself
for you have come under your neighbor's power;¹⁰²
go, hurry to your neighbor and humble¹⁰³ yourself (*or, plead, grovel*).
s 4 Do not waste a moment,
don't delay, go now;¹⁰⁴
s 5 save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter
like a bird escaping from the snare of the one who traps birds."

<2 Don't be lazy 6:6 - 11>

sy 6 "Go to the ant, you lazybones;¹⁰⁵

95 These verses are considered to be an addition by some scholars who then connect them with 6:1 - 19 rather than with 5:1 - 20.

96 Hebrew uncertain.

97 So: emended.

98 The Hebrew poetry with its repetition of key words and ironic contrasts is particularly interesting in this chapter.

99 תבר[This Hebrew word has been taken over in Greek meaning pledge, earnest, security. ἀρραβών.

100 Literally: "if you have struck your palms with a foreigner."

101 So emended by LXX & Syriac. Hebrew: "the words of your mouth."

102 Literally: "you have come into the palm of your neighbor."

103 The Hebrew word spr = to stamp out, to tread. LXX & Vulgate read similarly to the emendation in this translation.

104 Literally: "your eyelids no slumber."

105 lk[is only found in Proverbs in the form of a noun.

learn by observing the life of an ant.
 s 7 Without having a leader .
 officer ¹⁰⁶ or ruler,
 s 8 it prepares its food in summer
 and gathers its food during the harvest season. ^{107 108}
 s 9 How long will you lie there, O lazybones?
 When will you rise from your sleep?
 s 10 A little more sleep, a little more slumber,
 a little folding of the hands to rest, ¹⁰⁹
 s 11 and poverty will come upon you like a robber (*or, vagrant*)
 and scarcity like an armed man, (*or, like a beggar*)."¹¹⁰

<3 *Fate of the wicked 6:12 - 15*>

sy 12 "A scoundrel ¹¹¹ and villain,
 who goes about telling lies; ¹¹²
 sy 13 with shifty eyes, shuffling feet;
 pointing ¹¹³ with his finger;
 sy 14 and all the while plotting evil schemes;
 continually inciting arguments.
 s 15 Because of this calamity will strike him suddenly;
 in a moment he will be damaged beyond repair."

<4 *Seven things the Lord hates 6:16 - 19*>

s 16 "The Lord hates six things,
 seven are an abomination to him; ¹¹⁴
 sy 17 arrogance, ¹¹⁵ a lying tongue,
 hands that shed innocent blood,
 sy 18 a mind that devises evil schemes,
 feet that quickly hurry to do evil,
 sy 19 a false witness whose testimony is lies
 and one who incites brothers into quarreling."

<*The ninth instruction 6:20 - 35*>

<1 *Rewards for accepting your parent's teaching 6:20 - 23*>

s 20 "My child, keep your father's commandments.

106 Literally: "scribe" one who keeps records.

107 Possibly this reference is to "harvester ants," common in the Middle East, known to store grain in their nests.

108 LXX adds additional verses describing the business of the bee, probably added by a scribe to emphasize industriousness and diligence.

109 The Hebrew word for "rest" means "to lie down."

110 Hebrew uncertain. Literally: "like an armed man."

111 Literally: "a man of belial." Late Judaism applied this word to Satan. The word means "depravity" or "degradation."

112 Literally: "with a crooked mouth."

113 Literally: "instructs."

114 To say six and then revise to seven is standard poetic parallelism. It does not imply a change in the writer's mind but rather it is rhetorical style for emphasis.

115 Literally: "haughty eyes."

Do not forsake your mother's teaching.¹¹⁶
 s 21 Always keep these in mind;
 keep them fresh in your memory.¹¹⁷
 22 They will guide you when you walk,
 they will protect you when you lie down,
 they will advise you when you awake.
 s 23 The commandments are a lamp and teaching;
 and the rebukes that discipline you will show you how to live."

<2 Avoid adultery 6:24 - 29>

s 24 "These will preserve you from someone else's wife,
 from the smooth tongue of the adulteress.
 s 25 Do not lust for her beauty
 and do not let her captivate you with her flirting eyes,
 sy 25 for a prostitute's fee is a loaf of bread,¹¹⁸
 but an adulteress stalks a man's very life.¹¹⁹
 sy 27 Can a person carry glowing embers against his body
 without burning his clothing?
 sy 28 Or: can one walk on live coals¹²⁰
 and not scorch his feet?
 sy 29 In the same way whoever has sexual relations with a neighbor's wife --
 no one who touches her will go unpunished."

<3 Results of adultery 6:30 - 35>

sy 30 "People do not despise a thief if he steals
 to appease his great hunger.¹²¹
 s 31 Yet, if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold;
 though he will need to give up everything he owns.
 s 32 He who commits adultery is devoid of sense;
 he who does it destroys himself.
 s 33 He will experience disease and dishonor
 and his disgrace will be permanent.
 s 34 For jealousy makes a husband vindictive
 and when he takes revenge he will not show pity.
 35 He will accept no restitution (*or, ransom*),¹²²
 nor be appeased, no matter how much you increase your bribe."¹²³

116 Literally: "law."

117 Literally: "tie them about your neck."

118 Emended as per LXX, Syriac, Vulgate & Targums: "round loaf of bread."

119 I. e. a harlot can be hired for a small sum but an adulteress takes a man's very soul.

120 Literally: "glowing wood."

121 A difficult verse. If a thief is despised for stealing bread when he is hungry, how much more is a person despised for stealing another man's wife.

122 Literally: "covering."

123 I. e. no amount of money will appease an angry husband whose wife has been unfaithful.