

# Triennial Torah Study – 6<sup>th</sup> Year 11/04/2015

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We continue this weekend with our regular Triennial Torah reading which can be found at [https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon\\_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf](https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf)

Ex 37	Jer 7-9	Prov 9-10	Acts 7:23-60
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## The Tabernacle Accoutrements (Exodus 37-38)

The building of the tabernacle and the items God commanded to be in it was a monumental task. In chapters 37 and 38, Bezalel makes the implements of the temple according to the commands God had earlier given Moses. No doubt the details are repeated to show that all was done exactly as God had instructed. And it should be pointed out that Bezalel did not work alone. He was the overseer and had many artisans working under him (see 36:8). Aholiab and those under *him* didprover all of the weaving and engraving (38:23). Chapter 37, concerning the furnishings of the sanctuary, begins with the manner in which Bezalel constructed the Ark of the Covenant, including the mercy seat and the cherubim. The text exactly follows the instructions God had given Moses on how the construction was to be done (see 25:10-22). The only thing left out here is God's instruction that the tablets of the Testimony be put into the ark and that the mercy seat be put on top of it—which we will later find Moses doing once the tabernacle is complete (40:20). In the same way, all of the instructions God gave regarding the table of showbread (25:23-30) are followed by Bezalel in chapter 37. The only detail not repeated is God's instruction that the showbread be placed on the table—which, again, is something that happens once the tabernacle is finished (40:4, 22-23). Then we see here the construction of the lampstand or menorah—also according to God's instructions in chapter 25 (verses 31-40). The only thing left out is the lighting of its lamps, which, still again, is done when the tabernacle is completed (40:4, 25). Then we are presented with the making of the altar of incense, following the instructions God gave in chapter 30.

Chapter 38 concerns the court of the tabernacle. It begins with the construction of the altar of burnt offering, according to God's instructions in 27:1-8. Then follows the bronze laver or washbasin, according to God's instructions from 30:17-21. Finally, we see the construction of the court itself, following what God told Moses in 27:9-19. Notice that the various furnishings, including those inside the sanctuary, were made with rings to slide poles through for carrying. This was to keep people from touching the holy implements. God's perfection and glory were symbolized by these items, and thus they were not to be profaned.

The chapter ends with a summary of the precious metals that went into the building of the construction of the tabernacle and its furnishings. As a talent weighed about 70 pounds, equaling 3,000 shekels, the weight of all the gold used may have been around a ton. The weight of the bronze was around 2 1/2 tons. And the silver added up to the enormous weight of 3 1/2 tons! Indeed, silver was used in even the most basic

elements of the tabernacle and its accoutrements. As *The Nelson Study Bible* notes: “Although the tabernacle was a tent, it was not a makeshift dwelling. It was a glorious shrine that symbolized the presence of the living God in the midst of His people.” Lest we think these are unimportant or insignificant details, Hebrews 8:5 and 9:23 remind us that the tabernacle and its furnishings were “the copy and shadow of the heavenly things” and “copies of the things in the heavens.”

## Trusting in Form Without Substance (Jeremiah 7:1-27)

The message here is one of rebuke, warning and exhortation. Delivered in a public place, it is a call for the people to “amend their ways” (verse 3). The people of Jeremiah’s day had a *form* of religion—they worshiped in God’s temple. But this gave them a false sense of security—indeed, they believed a lie. The temple of the Lord is presented in verse 4 as almost a chant. It was viewed as a superstitious talisman to save them. The same thing often happens today. People may place too much faith in considering themselves part of God’s *spiritual* temple—His *Assembly*—rather than in God Himself. They may think that just because they attend worship services and consider themselves a member of the Assembly that this will save them—an example of the false reasoning of righteousness by association.

But God demands heartfelt obedience. Incredibly, part of the lie the people believe is that God’s law somehow no longer applies—that, in a twisted view of God’s grace, they are “delivered to do all these abominations” (verse 10). Yet God decries this for the outrage that it is, stating that His temple has become to them a “den of thieves” (verse 11). “The ‘den’ of robbers was the refuge where they hid out in search of their next victim. The analogy is devastating. How could God’s people steal, murder, commit adultery and perjury, and worship other gods (v. 9), and then assume ‘we are safe’ because of God’s house?” (*Bible Reader’s Companion*, note on verse 11). Yeshua would later quote verse 11 when He chased the moneychangers out of the temple of His day (Matthew 21:13).

God brings up an example from Israel’s history to make His point. In the time of the judges, Shiloh, in the land of Ephraim (Joshua 18:1), was the site of the tabernacle of God with the Ark of the Covenant—just as Jerusalem was later the site of the temple. Back then, “leaders in the family of Eli had abused their priestly position for personal gain, and idolatry was rampant in the land. When the Israelites attempted to use the ark as a victory-giving talisman, the ark was captured (see 1 Sam. 4) and the sanctuary was destroyed by the Philistines” (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on Jeremiah 7:12). Shiloh was later destroyed and abandoned, and today, as in Jeremiah’s day, one can go to Shiloh and see nothing but desolation and a few scattered ruins. The lesson is striking. Clearly, Judah’s confidence in the temple is misplaced. So is placing such confidence in any Assembly or organization. Such thinking carried many into apostasy at the end of the first century—and the pattern has been sadly repeated throughout the centuries. What is vital is that we be firmly grounded with a personal relationship with God, rather than unquestioningly following a Assembly or organization and trusting in loyalty to that organization to ensure our salvation.

In verse 16, the people had descended so far into depravity that God actually forbade Jeremiah from interceding for them.

God then strongly rebukes Israel for worshipping “the queen of heaven” (verses 17-18). This goddess, also mentioned in Jeremiah 44:15-30, is elsewhere referred to as Ashtoreth—known to other Middle Eastern cultures as Ishtar or Astarte—from which the modern name *Easter* derives. As *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* reports: “The term ‘Easter’ is not of Messiahian origin. It is another form of *Astarte*, one of the titles of the Chaldean goddess, the queen of heaven. The festival of Pasch [Passover] in post apostolic times was a continuation of the Jewish feast.... From this Pasch the

pagan festival of ‘Easter’ was quite distinct and was introduced into the apostate Western religion, as part of the attempt to adapt pagan festivals to Messiahianity” (“Easter,” New Testament section, 1985).

Ishtar was a fertility goddess. And today rabbits and eggs are the symbols of sexual fertility and procreation used to celebrate the holiday named after her. Indeed, the special “cakes for the queen of heaven” (verse 18) may be the origin of the popular Easter custom of hot cross buns. It is also interesting to note that many of those who worship Mary as the “Mother of God” today also refer to her as the “Queen of Heaven.”

Because of their rebellion, terrible punishment was coming on the Jews of Jeremiah’s day (verse 20)—and will likewise come upon all Israel of the *latter* days, as many other prophecies confirm.

Again, God says there is too much emphasis on *form* of religion and not enough on right *substance*. He tells them to go ahead and make all the sacrifices they want but that it won’t do them any good (verse 21). God did not command such sacrifices when He first delivered Israel from Egypt. The first thing He commanded was obedience (verses 22-23). Consider that some people today may give offerings or do a few good deeds believing that’s enough to satisfy God. Others may do far more—being legalistically meticulous over the smallest details of obedience—and yet ignore the weightier matters of the law, as was the case with the Pharisees whom Messiah denounced in His day (see Matthew 23:23; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

Through the centuries, the Israelites had failed to obey (Jeremiah 7:24)—and this despite the fact that God had sent so many prophets. In Mark 12:1-12, Messiah related a parable that expressed the efforts God had made in this regard—all to no avail. God tells Jeremiah that his situation will be no different—the people will not listen to him either (Jeremiah 7:27). And even now, with Jeremiah’s words nearly everywhere in modern Israel (being part of the Bible), they still don’t.

**Supplementary Reading:** “Easter: Masking a Biblical Truth,” *Holidays or Holidays: Does It Matter Which Days We Keep?*, pp. 10-16.

## Judgment on Abominations (Jeremiah 7:28-8:17)

Because of the people’s refusal to obey, God has Jeremiah tell them to cut off their hair—an apparently figurative reference. “The Heb[rew] feminine form tells us that it’s Jerusalem [rather than Jeremiah] who is to cut her hair. The reference is to a person who made a Nazarite vow and was set aside as holy [as all Israel was supposed to be in a sense]. If defiled, one had to cut off his or her hair to symbolize pollution [see Numbers 6:1-21]” (*Bible Reader’s Companion*, note on 7:29).

The Jews had gone so far as to set up abominations—idols and pagan altars—in the temple of God (this having occurred a few decades earlier during the reign of Manasseh). And they went further still, sacrificing their children at Tophet: “In the valley of Hinnom, a gruesome place throughout the history of Judah, King Manasseh had built an altar to the pagan god, Molech. There the children of worshippers were burned on a fiery altar as sacrifices to the pagan god. ‘Topheth’ means ‘fireplace’ or ‘furnace’ and was probably the name of a pit dug in the ground for this abominable ritual” (Russell Dilday, *Mastering the Old Testament*, 1987, Vol. 9, p. 484).

Of this ghastly practice, God says, “...which I did *not* command, nor did it [even] come into My heart” (Jeremiah 7:31)—seeming to imply that they believed God *had* commanded it. Why would they have thought such a thing? Because their worship was syncretistic—blending paganism into the true religion. The Hebrew word for “Lord” was *Baal*, a name that also denoted the false sun god. And God was their King, the Hebrew word for which was *Melek* or *Molech*, another name denoting a pagan deity. Many thus believed that the Lord and King—in their mind the true God—had commanded their traditional religious

practices, when these practices had actually come from paganism. God would not accept such worship even if people believed they were properly serving Him through it (see Deuteronomy 12:29-32).

God says the Valley of Hinnom (*Gai Hinnom* or, in the Greek New Testament, *Gehenna*) will be renamed the Valley of Slaughter—”so named because of the great slaughter of the Jews about to take place at Jerusalem: a just retribution of their sin in slaying their children to Moloch in Tophet” (*Jamieson, Fausset & Brown’s Commentary*, note on Jeremiah 7:32). However, it is likely that this is also representative of the terrible punishment to come on Judah and Israel in the end time. It may also be typical of the final judgment on all rebellion since the New Testament 12 times uses Gehenna as a designation for the place of final punishment, where the incorrigibly wicked will be burned up—called the “lake of fire” in the book of Revelation.

In chapter 8, we see the propensity of conquering nations to dishonor the dead. In ancient times, they would often dig up the graves—usually tombs and ossuaries—for anything of value to plunder (verses 1-2). This was, of course, looked upon as a horrible desecration. The point is that death and destruction are not the full measure of punishment. The people are also to suffer national ignominy and shame. The ones who aren’t dead will *wish* they were dead—being dragged away as slaves (verse 3).

God laments that His people are perpetual backsliders (verse 5). He heard their past cries for relief and rescued them many times—but they just won’t turn their lives around (verse 6). In verse 7 God points out that while birds know when it is time to take major action in migrating, responding to promptings God has put within them, human beings seem oblivious to God’s promptings to obey Him—the increasing calamities intended as warnings.

In verses 8-9, the educated people who are supposed to be preserving and teaching God’s Word have actually rejected it—and proclaim falsehood instead. As the apostle Paul later remarked of pagan philosophers, “Professing to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:22).

Warning of judgment then, God repeats the reason He gave for it in Jeremiah 6:10-15 (8:10-12). God tells Jeremiah that punishment is coming (verse 13), whereupon the prophet relates the sentiments the people will express when judgment falls (verses 14-16). Forces of enemy invasion are described in the past tense to demonstrate the certainty of their coming—and, terrifyingly, they are declared to be *God’s* forces (verse 16)—carrying out His will—and likened to the plague of serpents He sent among the ancient Israelites when they rebelled in the wilderness (verse 17; see Numbers 21:6).

## Proceeding From Evil to Evil (Jeremiah 8:18-9:26)

As we read through these sections, it is evident that a dialogue is transpiring, wherein sometimes Jeremiah speaks and sometimes God speaks directly—and sometimes one of them relates the words, or *future* words, of the people. Verse 18 begins a lament of Jeremiah. In verse 19, he quotes the future words of the people, “wondering that God should have delivered them up to the enemy, seeing that He is Zion’s king, dwelling in her” (*Jamieson, Fausset & Brown’s Commentary*, note on verse 19). Of course, they shouldn’t have placed so much stock in this—just as they shouldn’t have relied too much on the temple in chapter 7. God interjects at the end of 8:19 to explain that the people have brought the situation on themselves. Verse 20 then has the people speaking a proverb about the harvest being past and the summer being ended. “Meaning: One season of hope after another has passed, but the looked-for deliverance never came, and now all hope is gone” (note on verse 20).

This is all too much for Jeremiah. He says he is deeply hurt over what is going to happen to his people—the NIV has “crushed,” the Hebrew here meaning “broken” or “shattered” (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verses

20-22). “Rather than gloat at the vindication of his ministry, Jeremiah is heartbroken at the suffering of his fellow countrymen. Love for God and love for others sometimes are in tension. But loving God doesn’t mean we must stop caring for others, even when their tragedies are a consequence of their own sins” (*Bible Reader’s Companion*, note on verse 21). Indeed, God Himself actually cares for these others even more than we do. And He looks for people who will love as He loves—who are willing to “stand in the gap” for mankind (compare Ezekiel 22:30). This quality abounds in Scripture among the leaders God chose—such as Abraham (Genesis 18:24), Job and Noah (Ezekiel 14:14, 20), Moses (Psalm 106:23), the apostle Paul (Romans 11:1), and of course Yeshua Messiah (John 3:17; Hebrews 7:25). We must exhibit this quality too (1 Timothy 2:1).

Jeremiah asks, “Is there no balm in Gilead...?”—that is, to heal the people. “The region of Gilead was known for its balsam ointment (see Gen. 37:25). There is no healing, physical or spiritual, for a people intent on rebelling against God” (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on Jeremiah 8:20-22). The prophet’s lament continues into verse 2. Yet it appears that the last sentence of this verse begins another interjection by God, an interjection made clearer in verse 3, wherein He identifies blatant sins of the people—that they are not “valiant for the truth” but, instead, “proceed from evil to evil.” In the same verse He says, “They do not know Me.” Nor, as we previously read, did they understand His judgment (8:7). “Like his northern counterpart Hosea (see Hosea 4:6), Jeremiah identified the people’s major deficiency as their lack of knowledge of the Lord and His judgment” (note on 8:7). And yet they were supposed to be Israelites—of God’s own nation. Sadly, in one negative respect they did take after their father Israel—or, rather, Jacob as he was named before his conversion. God says, “Every brother will utterly supplant” or, literally, “trip up by the heel” (*JFB Commentary*, note on verse 4). This is the root meaning of the name Jacob, who was deceitful in supplanting His brother Esau before he changed and turned his life around.

In verse 9, God repeats His question regarding punishment from chapter 5 (verses 9, 29). It is almost as if He is convincing Himself that this action needs to take place. He is loath to completely remove His people and allow destruction to come. But He must—for their sake and for *everyone’s* sake. All people must know where forsaking God’s law leads (compare verses 12-16).

In verses 17-22, God speaks of a resultant time of great sorrow. “This brief poem has been called the most brilliant elegy in the O[ld] T[estament]. The weeping women are professional mourners hired to wail loudly at funerals. The prophet calls for them to quickly train their daughters, for there will not be enough of such women to put to rest all the slain. When death, like a robber, climbs in through the windows [verse 21], every household will be affected. We can lock our doors against disaster. But there is always some window through which calamity can creep unexpectedly. For security we must rely on the Lord (v. 23)” (*Bible Reader’s Companion*, note on verses 17-22).

Indeed, verse 23 shows that the only way we as human beings should legitimately feel good about ourselves is through the acceptance we have in God through knowing Him, understanding His character and—as the clear implication is—exhibiting His character traits in our own lives. Yet this is not truly glorying in ourselves, as we know that all of this comes only through God’s grace. That’s why Paul paraphrased the verse this way: “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD” (1 Corinthians 1:31; see verses 29-30).

To truly live by God’s character requires a spiritual change within us—a circumcision of the heart and not just of the flesh (see Deuteronomy 10:16; Jeremiah 4:4). In fact, Paul later states that mere circumcision of the flesh is counted as *uncircumcision* if it is not accompanied by obedience to God (see Romans 2:23-29). In Jeremiah 9:25-26, God says He will punish Judah along with its uncircumcised national neighbors. In an end-time context, it is of interest to know that the Muslims practice circumcision. Thus most of the men of Egypt, Edom, Ammon and Moab today are circumcised as a matter of their religion. But God looks on them all, including Judah, as uncircumcised because they are uncircumcised in heart. Interestingly, Judah here “is listed as just another nation. In fact, it is not even at the head of the list. The point of this text is similar to the concept of temple inviolability (ch. 7). Just as God would destroy even the temple (7:12-14), so He

would ignore even circumcision when it was merely an outward symbol (see Deut. 10:12-22)” (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on Jeremiah 9:25-26).

## **Proverbs Chapter 9**

### **Chapter Contents**

#### **The invitations of Wisdom. (1-12) The invitations of folly. (13-18)**

Messiah has prepared ordinances to which his people are admitted, and by which nourishment is given here to those that believe in him, as well as mansions in heaven hereafter. The ministers of the gospel go forth to invite the guests. The call is general, and shuts out none that do not shut out themselves. Our Saviour came, not to call the righteous, but sinners; not the wise in their own eyes, who say they see. We must keep from the company and foolish pleasures of the ungodly, or we never can enjoy the pleasures of a holy life. It is vain to seek the company of wicked men in the hope of doing them good; we are far more likely to be corrupted by them. It is not enough to forsake the foolish, we must join those that walk in wisdom. There is no true wisdom but in the way of religion, no true life but in the end of that way. Here is the happiness of those that embrace it. A man cannot be profitable to God; it is for our own good. Observe the shame and ruin of those who slight it. God is not the Author of sin: and Satan can only tempt, he cannot force. Thou shalt bear the loss of that which thou scornest: it will add to thy condemnation.

How diligent the tempter is, to seduce unwary souls into sin! Carnal, sensual pleasure, stupifies conscience, and puts out the sparks of conviction. This tempter has no solid reason to offer; and where she gets dominion in a soul, all knowledge of holy things is lost and forgotten. She is very violent and pressing. We need to seek and pray for true wisdom, for Satan has many ways to withdraw our souls from Messiah. Not only worldly lusts and abandoned seducers prove fatal to the souls of men; but false teachers, with doctrines that flatter pride and give liberty to lusts, destroy thousands. They especially draw off such as have received only partial serious impressions. The depths of Satan are depths of hell; and sin, without remorse, is ruin, ruin without remedy. Solomon shows the hook; those that believe him, will not meddle with the bait. Behold the wretched, empty, unsatisfying, deceitful, and stolen pleasure sin proposes; and may our souls be so desirous of the everlasting enjoyment of Messiah, that on earth we may live to him, daily, by faith, and ere long be with him in glory.

## **Proverbs Chapter 10**

### **First Part of Major Solomonic Collection Mostly Antithetical (Proverbs 10)**

#### **1. Subheading (10:1a)**

The subhead of Solomon’s major collection, containing the attribution, is found in Proverbs 10:1. Of this core section of the book (10:1–22:16), the first part (chapters 10–15) is made up mostly of antithetical proverbs, highlighting the choice between the way of wisdom and the way of folly.

## 2. *A Diligent Son and a Lazy Son (10:1b-5)*

“TYPE: THEMATIC, INCLUSIO....Verses 1b-5 form a collection marked off by the inclusio [a section that begins and ends similarly] of ‘wise son / foolish son’ (v. 1) and ‘wise son / disgraceful son’ (v. 5). The theme of the collection is that a family will thrive if the children are diligent in their work but collapse if they are lazy or resort to crime” (NAC).

It is interesting, after the nine-chapter prologue presented as a father’s counsel to his son to choose wisdom over folly, that the first compact saying in Solomon’s major collection concerns the impact a son’s decisions in this regard has on his parents. Actually, “son” here can be understood as “child,” whether son or daughter. “The tense of the verbs suggests that *time after time* a wise child gladdens parents, and *time after time* a foolish child brings distress to parents” (Nelson Study Bible, note on 10:1).

Verse 2 is very similar to 11:4. Righteousness delivering from death should be viewed in light of the whole of scriptural revelation. This is generally applicable to life in the here and now, in that wise choices promote physical longevity (see also 3:2; 10:27; 12:28)—but of course, as noted previously, the verse should not be read as a rule or promise that righteous people won’t die or won’t die prematurely. God may decide to allow His faithful followers to die at a relatively young age. Yeshua Messiah, after all, died at 33. Yet in an ultimate sense, the verse, and others like it, can be understood to speak of deliverance from the second death—and thus the inheritance of eternal life.

In Proverbs 10:5, laziness characterized by oversleeping when there is work to be done is shameful (compare 6:9-11; 19:15; 20:13). Our time is our life. We must make good use of it.

## 3. *The Mouth of the Wicked (10:6-11)*

“TYPE: INCLUSIO, PARALLEL....Verses 6 and 11 form an inclusio as indicated by the repetition of the line, ‘But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence’ [NIV]. Within this inclusio vv. 7-10 are arranged in parallel (A B A B); v. 7 and v. 9 parallel each other (the fate of the righteous versus the fate of the wicked), and v. 8 and v. 10 parallel each other (both contain the line ‘a chattering fool comes to ruin’ [NIV]). The repetition of two lines in this section, both of which concern the mouth of the wicked, points to the major emphasis of the collection” (NAC).

Adding to the poetic parallelism, the Hebrew verb for “will fall” (verses 8, 10) or “comes to ruin” (NIV) comes from the same root as the verb translated “will rot” in verse 7 (Nelson, note on verse 8).

The one who “winks with the eye” in verse 10 denotes a person acting slyly with a hidden agenda. Thus two wrongs are contrasted here—rather than a right and a wrong as in most proverbs of this section. The silent deceiver is able to succeed in his schemes for a time while a chattering fool will get nowhere. This signals no approval of the deceiver—marking only the fact that he at least knows to choose his words carefully (compare 12:23). Eventually, as other passages show, he will meet judgment as well.

## 4. *Seven-Proverb Collection (10:12-18)*

“TYPE: INCLUSIO WITH TWO-PROVERB PAIRS.... Verses 12 and 18 form an inclusio...and vv. 13-14 and 15-16 are proverbial pair; catchwords are also used [“destruction” (“ruin” or “terror”) in verses 14-15 and “to life” in verses 16-17]. Themes include wealth and poverty, wisdom and folly, and contentiousness” (NAC).

The apostle Peter essentially quoted from Proverbs 10:12 in 1 Peter 4:8. Some have taken “love covers all [or a multitude of] sins” to mean that showing love to others covers one’s own sins before God. Yet in context, the clear meaning is that love is shown to others *by* covering *their* sins—that is, burying their past mistakes and not bringing them up, either to them (generating strife) or to others. Proverbs 11:13 speaks of not airing secrets (which include private past mistakes) as an act of faithfulness. Implicit in covering sins is

forgiving them, as God does in Psalm 32:1. Of course, in the sense used there, only He can *completely* cover sins.

Proverbs 10:18 has caused some confusion. It is usually understood as synonymous parallel. In that case, however, all the proverbs of this section are in antithetical or contrasting forms except this one. It should be noted that the “and” here could be rendered “but,” so that this proverb would be contrasting as well. In that case, as with 10:10, two negatives would be contrasted. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* takes this view, saying in its note on verse 18: ” In this comparison two errors are given, the second being climactic: hypocrisy is bad enough, slander is worse. At least in the first one—the ‘lying lips’—one keeps hatred to himself.”

## 5. *On the Tongue, Personal Security, and Laziness (10:19-32)*

“This section is a chiasmus [i.e., concentric arrangement] made up of four separate collections with a single proverb standing at the center as a somewhat humorous ‘bridge.’ The structure is:

- “THREE-PROVERB COLLECTION. *Type: Thematic, with One Proverb Pair (10:19-21)*....The use of the tongue is the theme of this collection, and each verse is merismatic [or antithetical in form]. Verses 20-21 closely parallel each other and can be regarded as a proverb pair. Verse 19 then is an ironic heading to vv. 20-21: Although the wise person gives sound advice, wisdom is found more in those who are silent than in those who are verbose!...
- “FOUR-PROVERB COLLECTION. *Type: Thematic Parallel (10:22-25)*... Only through righteousness and wisdom can one attain real security in life. The righteous can have wealth without the trouble that often goes with it (sycophants, legal problems), whereas the wicked will ultimately be brought down by the disaster they fear (vv. 22,24). And while the wicked find great amusement in their crimes, they will not withstand a real calamity when it comes (vv. 23,25). Verse 25 may be behind Matt 7:24-27....
- “SINGLE PROVERB. *Type: Tricolon (10:26)*” (NAC). The comparison here involves things that are unpleasant and irritating.
- “FOUR-PROVERB COLLECTION. *Type: Thematic Parallel (10:27-30)*. The four proverbs of this collection all deal with the theme of long life for the righteous and destruction for the wicked. In addition, the proverbs are in an *A-B-A-B* pattern. This pattern is found in vv. 27 and 29, which are parallel with each other linked by the motif of *the Lord*, while vv. 28 and 30 are linked by the motif of *the righteous*. All four verses are linked by the motif of the fate of the *wicked...and those who do evil*” (NAC).

As with Proverbs 10:2, verse 27 about righteous living prolonging life and wickedness shortening it should be understood as: (1) a general principle of physical life, all else being equal (recognizing that circumstances in God’s purview sometimes allow the opposite to occur in this world); and (2) in the context of eternal life for the righteous versus eternal death for the wicked, which is the most important context to bear in mind.

Next observe the similarity of language in 10:28 and 11:7 nearby.

- “TWO-PROVERB COLLECTION. *Type: Thematic, Parallel (10:31-32)*....The theme of this pair is the use of the tongue. The cola are in an *A-B-A-B* pattern, but note the inclusio using ‘mouth’ in v. 31a and v. 32b” (NAC).

## Acts 7:23-60

Let us not be discouraged at the slowness of the fulfilling of God’s promises. Suffering times often are growing times with the Assembly. God is preparing for his people’s deliverance, when their day is darkest,



and their distress deepest. Moses was exceeding fair, "fair toward God;" it is the beauty of holiness which is in God's sight of great price. He was wonderfully preserved in his infancy; for God will take special care of those of whom he designs to make special use. And did he thus protect the child Moses? Much more will he secure the interests of his holy child Yeshua, from the enemies who are gathered together against him. They persecuted Stephen for disputing in defence of Messiah and his gospel: in opposition to these they set up Moses and his law. They may understand, if they do not wilfully shut their eyes against the light, that God will, by this Yeshua, deliver them out of a worse slavery than that of Egypt. Although men prolong their own miseries, yet the Lord will take care of his servants, and effect his own designs of mercy.

Men deceive themselves, if they think God cannot do what he sees to be good any where; he can bring his people into a wilderness, and there speak comfortably to them. He appeared to Moses in a flame of fire, yet the bush was not consumed; which represented the state of Israel in Egypt, where, though they were in the fire of affliction, yet they were not consumed. It may also be looked upon as a type of Messiah's taking upon him the nature of man, and the union between the Divine and human nature. The death of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, cannot break the covenant relation between God and them. Our Saviour by this proves the future state, Matthew 22:31. Abraham is dead, yet God is still his God, therefore Abraham is still alive. Now, this is that life and immortality which are brought to light by the gospel. Stephen here shows that Moses was an eminent type of Messiah, as he was Israel's deliverer. God has compassion for the troubles of his Assembly, and the groans of his persecuted people; and their deliverance takes rise from his pity. And that deliverance was typical of what Messiah did, when, for us men, and for our salvation, he came down from heaven. This Yeshua, whom they now refused, as their fathers did Moses, even this same has God advanced to be a Prince and Saviour. It does not at all take from the just honour of Moses to say, that he was but an instrument, and that he is infinitely outshone by Yeshua. In asserting that Yeshua should change the customs of the ceremonial law. Stephen was so far from blaspheming Moses, that really he honoured him, by showing how the prophecy of Moses was come to pass, which was so clear. God who gave them those customs by his servant Moses, might, no doubt, change the custom by his Son Yeshua. But Israel thrust Moses from them, and would have returned to their bondage; so men in general will not obey Yeshua, because they love this present evil world, and rejoice in their own works and devices. Stephen upbraids the Yehudim with the idolatry of their fathers, to which God gave them up as a punishment for their early forsaking him. It was no dishonour, but an honour to God, that the tabernacle gave way to the temple; so it is now, that the earthly temple gives way to the spiritual one; and so it will be when, at last, the spiritual shall give way to the eternal one. The whole world is God's temple, in which he is every where present, and fills it with his glory; what occasion has he then for a temple to manifest himself in? And these things show his eternal power and Rulership. But as heaven is his throne, and the earth his footstool, so none of our services can profit Him who made all things. Next to the human nature of Messiah, the broken and spiritual heart is his most valued temple.

Stephen was going on, it seems, to show that the temple and the temple service must come to an end, and it would be the glory of both to give way to the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth; but he perceived they would not bear it. Therefore he broke off, and by the Spirit of wisdom, courage, and power, sharply rebuked his persecutors. When plain arguments and truths provoke the opposers of the gospel, they should be shown their guilt and danger. They, like their fathers, were stubborn and wilful. There is that in our sinful hearts, which always resists the Set Apart Spirit, a flesh that lusts against the Spirit, and wars against his motions; but in the hearts of God's elect, when the fulness of time comes, this resistance is overcome. The gospel was offered now, not by angels, but from the Set Apart Spirit; yet they did not embrace it, for they were resolved not to comply with God, either in his law or in his gospel. Their guilt stung them to the heart, and they sought relief in murdering their reprover, instead of sorrow and supplication for mercy.

Nothing is so comfortable to dying saints, or so encouraging to suffering saints, as to see Yeshua at the right hand of God: blessed be God, by faith we may see him there. Stephen offered up two short prayers in his dying moments. Our Messiah Yeshua is Elohim, to whom we are to seek, and in whom we are to trust and comfort ourselves, living and dying. And if this has been our care while we live, it will be our comfort when we die. Here is a prayer for his persecutors. Though the sin was very great, yet if they would lay it to their hearts, God would not lay it to their charge. Stephen died as much in a hurry as ever any man did, yet, when he died, the words used are, he fell asleep; he applied himself to his dying work with as much composure as if he had been going to sleep. He shall awake again in the morning of the resurrection, to be received into the presence of the Lord, where is fulness of joy, and to share the pleasures that are at his right hand, for evermore.

On the seventh Day of Unleavened Bread these are the additional Torah readings.

- Ex 13:17 – 15:27
- Num 28:19-25
- Hos 11
- Rev 15:1-4
- 1 Corin 10:1-14