

Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, Proverbial Genre

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[Vid. The Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings, my IVP article on Proverbial Genres pp. 528-538]

This is Dr. Ted Hildebrandt in his teaching on the proverb as a literary genre.

Welcome to another session on selected topics in the book of Proverbs. If you want to get a kind of overview of Proverbs, you can go to BiblicaleLearning.org and do The Bible Project. Five minutes does the whole book of Proverbs. Very interesting. In five minutes.

We've also got Knut Heim, who's a leading expert in Proverbs doing 20 lectures, going through and citing some of the background and overview of the book of Proverbs. We've also got Gus Konkell from McMaster University up in Hamilton, Ontario, doing 22 lectures giving a kind of a survey of the book of Proverbs. We've also got, by the way, the whole book of Proverbs done in Hebrew in what's called the Hebrew Bible Speaker – Proverbs.

And then what I've done now, and Daniel Trier has done four lectures on Proverbs in the Christian life. What I'm doing here in this short series of long lectures actually is a series of selected topics where we dive into deep things in the book of Proverbs, background issues, and things like that, that may not be so interesting, but play a role when you're trying to understand what's underneath and the depth of the Proverbs that we have. So today, what I'd like to do is, formerly, we had done a lecture, a lengthy lecture, a two-hour lecture on what a proverb is not.

Today, what we want to examine is: what is a proverb? And so today we're going to be looking at the proverb as a literary genre. Now, the importance of genre. First, let's start with that.

A genre impacts how truth is engaged. A genre impacts how truth is engaged. So, with different genres, you have to read it in a different way. That's called hermeneutics, how you interpret the literature, the text of what you're reading. Hermeneutics. So, for example, if you pick up a recipe book, you read that differently than you do a sci-fi novel, a sci-fi, or a murder mystery.

Murder mystery, when you come to it, you come to it with different expectations. You read it in a different way. You make connections and you interpret it differently. A biography, a historical biography, is different than a sci-fi. An encyclopedia is read differently than a dictionary or a thesaurus. You go to a thesaurus for certain things, you go to a dictionary for others, and you go to an encyclopedia or Wikipedia to gain information of a different sort. And so different genres then, different types of

literature, affect the expectations that you come with and how you interpret those things.

So, for example, you say, well, I take the Bible literally. And so, you jump into something like Jotham's Fable. Now this is a fable in the Bible.

Does the Bible contain fables? Yes, it does. Jotham's Fable in Judges chapter 9. And here you've got this Abimelech trying to become king in the book of Judges, ironically, and he's Gideon's son, and he kills all his brothers except for Jotham. And Jotham goes up on the hill and he starts mocking his brother out using a fable.

And he says the trees of the forest went out to find a king for themselves. And so, they went to the, you know, they go to the cedar tree, cedar tree, will you be our king? And then they go to the olive tree, will you be our king? And then they go to the vine, vine, would you be our king? Boy, what a king that would be. And all these, the cedar tree, the various things to say, no, I won't be your king.

If I'm an olive tree and I become king, who's going to give you the oil to anoint your head with? So finally, they come to the thornbush and they say to the thornbush, thornbush, you'll be our king. And the thornbush comes up and says, I will be your king.

In other words, the least likely and the most annoying thornbush that gouges your legs, he is the one that says to be king. And he's mocking out his brother saying, you are the least likely of all Gideon's sons to become king. And so, he uses a fable with talking trees.

And they say, well, I take the Bible literally. Do trees talk? Do bears sleep in the woods? Do you pull on Superman's cape? Okay. So, in other words, these things, there's a fable there.

And if you don't understand that this is a fable, you're going to have talking trees, but it's a fable. So, in a fable, trees can talk. And its function is sarcasm, to shoot down his brother, who's just killed all his brothers and made himself illegitimately king as the thornbush becomes the king.

Jesus' parables, the 10 bridesmaids, they show up, five are wise, and five are foolish. And they come, the master has gone away for a little bit. And then these guys, the five say to the five that have, please give us some of your oil.

They say, no, you got to go get it. When they go get their own oil, then all of a sudden the master comes and they come in and shut the door and the five are left on the outside. Now question, did that ever really happen? 10 bridesmaids like that? No, no, it's a story.

So, you say, well, is it true? Well, yeah, it's true as a parable, but it's not meant to be that it ever really happened. It's a story that has a point. You need to be ready when the king comes, when the bridegroom, when the wedding goes off.

And so anyway, Matthew 25 with the parable of the 10 bridesmaids. It's a story, it's a parable. And if you don't understand it's a parable, you'll miss the whole point.

So, genre or type of literature affects how it, the genre engages truth and how those truths fit together with the type of genre is different. So, for example, if you go into the book of Revelation chapter 13 and you've got this creature that comes up with the face of a lion, the bear paws emerging from the sea. The question is, in the end times, are we going to actually see such a beast? You say, yes, it's Jurassic Park, come back. No, no, no. You're missing the point. This is an apocalyptic, the book of Revelation, and this is an apocalyptic beast. It's not meant to be taken actually literally. So, you've got to understand you're reading a book that's apocalyptic and therefore you need to understand it as apocalypse, as Dave Mathewson, for example, who did 30 lectures for Biblicalearning.org on the book of Revelation. You need to go through his lectures and see how do you understand the book of Revelation as apocalyptic literature.

So should we say, well, I take the Bible literally again and I do what it says. Well, in Hosea, God tells Hosea to go out and marry a prostitute, Gomer. Are you supposed to go out and marry a prostitute? Go out and do likewise.

No, no, no. It was a one-time thing that was for Hosea, who was a prophet, it was a sign event, a sign miracle, a sign event from God saying, go out and marry Gomer, she's a prostitute. And then moreover, she's going to cheat on you.

Just like Israel has cheated on me as God, you're going to experience that for yourself, Hosea, and you're then to go and love her again. Just like I have loved Israel again, even though Israel has cheated on me. So, it's drawing this parallel between the two.

And again, if you don't understand that, you say, well, God commanded him to go out and marry a prostitute. So, I guess I should go out and marry a prostitute. It's not what it's saying.

So, you've got to be very careful in understanding the Bible that you've got to understand the genre. Now the question we come up here is what is a proverb then? What is the literary genre of the proverb? And this has been hugely discussed. And when you try to quote and define a proverb, there's been all sorts of things written on this, literally thousands and tens of thousands of pages on what is a proverb.

And people try to get down to the nitty gritty and define it and lock it down. And the problem is the proverb is pretty, it's hard to lock down. And so, you kind of need to loosen up your categories.

If you've got OCD, this is not one that you're going to nail down. This is one you got to, you know, give it a little, give it a little room. How is a single, here are some questions then that we ask initially.

How is a single proverb, a single proverb changed when it's stripped out of its original context and put into a collection? It's decontextualized. It was given an original setting. How has it changed when it's taken out of that setting and put in a collection where there's no kind of historical or situational setting, but it's just bam, bam, bam, bam, proverb after proverb? How does a proverb change meaning when it is recontextualized, taken out of the collection, put back into a story, and merged back into a new diverse story? So the proverb is taken out, usually, proverbs are taken when there's a story, a situation that happens, a person does kind of a proverbial saying, that saying then is taken out by Solomon or Hezekiah's men or the sages and put into a collection.

In the collection, it's decontextualized from its original story, but then in the collection, we can take that proverb out and recontextualize it in our situation. And how does that, how do you merge those two back into a diverse story that's different from the one that was original, but yet similar on the other, on the other hand? Do all proverbs move with and invoke the same level of authority? How do proverbs, is a proverb a promise? That's our next question. Is a proverb a promise? Diligent hands make wealth.

Is that always true? How does a proverb connect with truth? We say the belief that we do, and I do believe the Bible is true, but you have to interpret it properly. So how do we interpret a proverb? A proverb is not a promise, is it? How is a proverb different than a promise? And how does a proverb engage the truth? And does it evoke the same level of authority? Are all proverbs invoking the same level of authority? Where does the proverb originate from? Where does it come from? We'll look at various settings, Sitz and Leben, of situations in life that proverbs arise from. What literary forms occur in the biblical text of proverbs? We'll look at kind of what I call these micro-genre things.

We've got the proverb, but then under the proverb, there are these, there are architectural formulas by which the proverbs are constructed. So, for example, we have better than proverbs. We have better than a certain set of Better-Than proverbs. We have admonitions. We have numerical sayings for threesomes and for four if we were in Amos. We have an acrostic in Proverbs 31.

And so, we'll look at these kinds of micro-genres to see how these things then come into the book of proverbs. And there are several of these that are kind of interesting to look at. In Proverbs 10 to 29, there are all these sentence sayings and these sentence sayings are kind of bam, bam, bam, bam, proverb after proverb.

Are they just helter-skelter thrown together? Or can we find bigger units than just a sentence saying? We talked in a previous lecture on pairs, proverb pairs. And so, we'll look at the pairing thing just to review that. And then clusters, we'll look at some things that Knut Heim calls clusters or I call them strings, but clusters are probably better. Knut is right on that. An image is much more powerful. Mini-collections, then there's mini-collections, and then there's whole collections.

And so, we'll look at pairs, clusters, mini collections, and then whole collections that are found in the book of Proverbs. And then how does that affect you, you've got an original proverb that's said by an original author. So, there's an authorial intent from the original author.

How does that mesh with the editors who collected the proverbs into say Proverbs 25 to 29? Hezekiah's men collected those proverbs out of the Solomonic collection. Solomon spoke 3000 proverbs. We've only got, I don't know, 350, 375 proverbs.

So how did they select those? So, the editor has kind of an intent and meaning. And so does the original author. And so, we've got to work with on two levels, at least two levels, the original author, and then the editor of the collection and how, what they're saying when they put their collection together.

And so, we've got several layers of meaning of things that we need to look at. Now let's go down and ask ourselves, and I just want to bring this up. It's from Michael Fox.

Michael Fox has written a two-volume Anchor Bible Commentary, probably one of the best commentaries in the world on Proverbs by Michael Fox from the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin. It's a tremendous commentary. Bruce Waltke, Dr. Bruce Waltke also two volume set. I believe it's from Erdman's. It's a phenomenal best commentary on Proverbs, Fox, Waltke. There's a new guy named Schipper who's a German fellow who's also written one volume on Proverbs 1 to 15, which I would say is up there in this category. Those three are probably my best.

Steinman, Kidner, several other peoples have written commentaries on the book of Proverbs, but those three would probably be my top. Fox, Waltke, and Schipper. But anyway, in Fox's commentary, he lists English terms and these English terms for us are pretty foreign.

And so, I just want to look at just kind of defining these shortly. An adage. What is an adage? An adage is a traditional wise saying used generally accepted and transmitted in oral performance. Look before you leap. Look before you leap. It's generally oral and it's generally accepted as a traditional wise saying. Look before you leap. It's generally accepted. It's used, it's oral, and it's generally accepted. That's called an adage in oral performance.

An admonition. An admonition is a warning against improper behavior. An admonition is a warning against improper behavior, usually given in a negative imperative form. Okay. Don't do this. Don't forget my words or something like that the sage says. And oftentimes when it says don't do something, that's a prohibition.

But it also can be a mandate in a positive sense, trusting the Lord with all your heart. That would be a positive admonition or I'd call it a mandate. So, you've got a prohibition and a mandate both under admonitions with this imperatival command kind of level of things.

An aphorism. What is an aphorism? An aphorism is a concise terse statement of insight. A concise terse statement of insight is called an aphorism. Barking dogs don't bite. Well, sometimes anyway. Barking dogs don't bite. So, a barking dog doesn't bite. That would be an aphorism.

Apothem is a short witty saying, a short witty saying, an observation, or a maxim.

Now a maxim is a kind of a general truth statement, a short general truth statement, giving you a kind of a fundamental principle in a short kind of thing. Haste makes waste. Haste makes waste. That would be a short pithy saying. And by the way, as we go through these, can you see the overlap on these? So, these are not mutually exclusive categories.

We try to define them to separate them so they give meaning to us. But a lot of these kind of overlap each other and interact with each other. So an apothem is a short pithy saying.

An epigram is a brief poem making a single point often with a satirical twist. So, a brief poem making a single point with a twist to it, a satirical twist is called an epigram. A precept.

A precept is a rule of behavior. A lot of times these short rules of behavior are formulated as advice or an evaluation of a situation. So, a rule of behavior is formulated as advice.

And we've got a lot of advice in the book of Proverbs and formulated a precept as a rule of behavior.

A proverb, then, is used for all types of short sayings. A proverb, then, is used for all sorts of short sayings.

And you got to be careful you don't split hairs. If you've got to put everything in a neat, tidy box, that doesn't work with Proverbs. Proverbs itself can, you'll see overlaps with adages, and with aphorisms, with various things.

There's a study or discipline called paremiology. Paremiology comes from the Greek word *paroiomia*. Let me get the accent right. *Paroiomia*. And that basically is the Greek word for proverb. Paremiology is a study of Proverbs. Paremiology is a study of Proverbs. And as I was studying the book of Proverbs for actually most of my life, this paremiology is a field, it's a secular field. These guys are not Christians.

And probably the world leader, not probably, he is the world leader, Wolfgang Mieder from the University of Vermont does German. I think he teaches German, Russian, and I don't know how many other languages he knows, but he has collected Proverbs from all over the world. And they study these proverbs from Africa, from China, Chinese proverbs, Confucius say, from various international contexts.

Even Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Franklin, and his books of proverbs. So, there are proverbs from all over the world, Greek proverbs, and these Wolfgang Mieder and some of these other fellows, Dundas, and others, collect these proverbs and they study them as a literary genre. And they've done immense work on this, tens of thousands of pages.

And it always breaks my heart when I see these biblical scholars who do all this exegesis on Proverbs, but they don't, engage seriously with these paremiologists. And I think there's huge fertility between the interaction between the paremiologists and our book of Proverbs. And that largely this paremiology has been ignored until recently.

And I think Katherine Dell from Cambridge University, some of her students and things are seeing the value there and bringing it in and it's coming along. But we were a long time coming to it. Most of our traditional quote exegetes have just simply ignored paremiology and to their own demise, it seems to me, or not demise, but it just, it could be so much richer had they engaged the people who study this paremiology.

Now, historical and cultural universality of the Proverb genre, historical and cultural universality of the Proverb genre. The Proverbs go way back. They go back to Sumer in 2500 BC.

That was shortly after writing began to be developed. One of the first things we have is proverbs. So, writing begins and proverbial records, Ulster, a guy named Ulster has got two volumes on Sumerian Proverbs.

Sumer, history begins at Sumer, as one person said. And so, Sumer goes way back. I mean, we're talking 3,000, 3,200 BC.

And then what happens is you've got Alster's two volumes of Sumerian Proverbs. So, it goes way back, but it also comes down to modern times. And so, we've got on the internet, these pop-ups that happen that are proverbial and it flourished even in the 21st century.

The one that goes recently, the proverb is a new proverb that had never been said before, but it's a new thing. It's "get woke, go broke." Or another way to say it, more proverbial, probably "go woke, go broke."

And so, this is the modern proverb that's just come up. I know people will hate that because we're supposed to show reverence to the woke, but it's just "go woke, go broke." And so, that's a proverb that's come up and popped up on the internet even to this day.

So, what I'm saying is from Sumerian times to modern times, Proverbs are used and we'll kind of illustrate that as we go through. The Proverbs also are embedded in other types of literature because the proverb "haste makes waste" is a short statement. These Proverbs are able to be embedded in other types of literature, for example, epics. And so, in epics, in poems, in songs, in plays, novels, and modern advertising, and international and regional proverbial collections.

I just got this book on the book of African Proverbs and Their Meanings. And so, this fellow goes through, he's from Africa and he goes to various countries, Ghana, and various places, and he pulls in their proverbs and he pulls 400 of these major proverbs coming from Africa.

In one sense, it's very interesting to look at Proverbs through an African kind of lens, because proverbs are still used in a diverse range, much more diverse than it is in America. So anyway, he's got, so he has some 400 Proverbs here. For example, let me just read some of these are interesting.

"When two elephants fight," "when two elephants fight, the grass suffers." "When two elephants fight, the grass suffers." And you can see, and you know, that's a proverb.

"No matter how long the night, the dawn will break." "No matter how long the night, the dawn will break." Again, it is clearly a proverb.

Another saying that they have is: "if you think you are too small to make a difference" "if you think that you are too small to make a difference, try spending a night with a mosquito." "If you think that you are too small to make a difference, try spending a night with a little mosquito." And any of you have gone camping and you get a mosquito in your tent, you know, that's a problem and it bugs you the whole night.

So those are some Proverbs that have come from, that are live problems now, proverbs now from Africa. This shows the historical and cultural universality of the proverb as a literary genre. There's a human urge to classify, generalize, and codify experience.

We all experience life. And there's a human urge to classify types of behavior, to generalize something from one situation to many, to codify that experience, simplifying the complex nature of reality down into a short thing. Haste makes waste.

The early bird gets the worm. And so, we take a complex situation and boil it down to kind of a simple, generalized, classifying, and codified statement. And that in one sense, reality is very complex.

Daniel Treier did a brilliant article on human beings learning about how to deal with our own finitude. We are not infinite. And there are millions of situations. And so, because there are millions of situations, we try to classify them to get it down so we can get a handle on these things. And so, proverbs are one way of doing that, just even the way words are. We have one word that can mean many things.

And part of it is, if we had a word for everything in the world, I'm looking at a shelf load of books here. But if I had to list each book, it would be too much. Now we use books and then that classifies, I don't know, 50, 100 books that I'm looking at right now.

And they're all called books. And so that allows us to put all those different books and different titles and different authors, different time periods, different genres and put them all together. And we'll call that a book.

And so that allows us to generalize. A proverb is like that too. We were in many, many millions of situations and a person then will isolate and kind of consolidate the meaning of that situation and grab a hold of it in a proverb that's usually memorable and short.

And bam, you got the situation. Then that situation then, that proverb applies back out to hundreds of situations. So, it comes from a particular situation.

It's boiled down. And then once you've got it boiled down, you can kind of recontextualize it in a hundred, a thousand different situations. So, proverbs then are also filtered through cultural ideals and values.

The culture affects the proverb. When it's talking about elephants fighting and damaging the grass, well, most of us probably wouldn't use that proverb. We would use that proverb, but we probably would not have originated that proverb because many of you, myself included, have not seen dancing elephants and what it does to grass. But if you're in Africa, where you've got elephants, then you see, whoa, fighting elephants destroys the grass.

However, once they make that proverb, then I can take that situation into America and apply it to politicians or to big guys fighting, the elites fighting and what happens to the people that are under their feet. And so, it can be applied in an American context, even though it originates in Africa.

So, a proverb is a compression of a story. Oftentimes you have a story and that story is then compressed into a proverb. So, there's a connection between a story.

There's oftentimes a story behind the proverb. Kind of like if you've ever done hymns in the church, there's a story behind it, it is well with my soul. And you hear about this fellow, anyways, let's not get into the background of that, but it's just that the hymn has a background to it.

And then when you understand that background, all of a sudden, the hymn takes on a different meaning. Proverbs are very similar. There's a story that lies behind the proverb and then the story is collapsed.

The story is collapsed into a proverb. And so it's interesting that way. The ancient Near Eastern proverbs, we have the Sumerian collection, the Instructions of Shurupak, 2600 to 1800 BC.

That's actually probably before Abraham. I have the early dynastic proverb appearing 800 years later, however. And so Alster points out that these proverbs, were Sumerian proverbs, but then these proverbs appear in other collections 800 years later, long after Sumer is gone.

And so, proverbs have a way of sticking for a long time period. The proverb gets passed down from generation to generation. And so ancient proverbs, here's an example of the kind of what I call polygenesis.

In other words, a proverb that kind of comes out and as it goes down through history, takes different shapes. And it's quoted over and over again. And so, here's an example of something like this polygenesis.

In other words, creation in many situations. The three-ply rope cannot be cut. The three-ply rope cannot be cut in a Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh, the Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh. It's echoed in the Akkadian version. So, the Sumerian version earlier, the Akkadian or Babylonian or Etana, the Legend of Etana has this three-ply rope found as well. But then it's very interesting.

These are like ancient times, Sumer, old Babylonian, Akkadian. And then you get down to the book of Ecclesiastes and you read this, Ecclesiastes 4:12, a rope made of three cords is hard to break. A rope made of three cords is hard to break.

And so, you get this thing and you can see how it kind of morphs and comes down. And all of a sudden, it's found in the book of Ecclesiastes, the same type of thing. So, we're going to see that.

Another example of this kind of universality is "A bitch in her haste gave birth to the blind." "The bitch in her haste gave birth to the blind." That's an Akkadian proverb from 1750 BC.

In a letter that is later echoed in Aristophanes, Greek, Italian, and even into Arabic in Baghdad. We're talking Arabic now in Baghdad, where dog is replaced by a cat. Dog is replaced by a cat. So, in the more recent Arabic proverb, which you can see, I'll read it and you can see the parallel. It says, the cat in her haste, kittens, blind kittens. The cat in her haste, the original was the bitch or dog, female dog in her haste gave birth to the blind. Now in Baghdad area, in modern Arabic, it is said "the cat in her haste gives blind kittens." Although it's interesting in Northern Iraq, they still retain "dog." So, in Southern Iraq, Baghdad area, they use kittens and it's kind of gone over to cats. And in the Northern, it's still dogs. I like the North better. Sorry, just joke.

"When a trustworthy boat is sailing, Utu seeks out a trustworthy landing place for it."
 "When a trustworthy boat is sailing, Utu, [the god of Sumer,] seeks out a trustworthy landing place for it." Notice the god is mentioned in Sumerian proverbs.

"Utu seeks out a trustworthy landing place for it" or quay for it. The god is mentioned in the proverbs. God or Yahweh, the Lord is mentioned in many biblical proverbs as well.

I think 15% of them in the saying are these Yahweh sayings. And several people have said, well, that shows a later development. The earlier sentence proverbs were all secular, no mention of God at all. But then later on, as they developed in their evolutionary theory of theology, and they got more theological, then they put in these Yahweh sayings or they mentioned God in the saying. So, they originally were secular. And then there was this move to these Yahweh sayings.

And that was a later evolution of theological thought. But that's not true. We've got examples here. It's Sumer, which is thousands of years before Solomon even lived. And we've got a saying that Utu here seeks out a trusting landing place for this boat that was built. So, therefore, that theory doesn't work.

And it's really helpful then to go back to ancient Near Eastern proverbs collections, like the Sumerian proverb collection. Sumer, we've got old Babylonian proverbial clusters where the old Babylonian gives and there are clusters and they're copied from the unilingual.

In other words, Sumerian has a list of proverbs. Sumer, the original kind of way back culture has a list of these proverbs in order. And what's interesting then, this list of proverbs gets copied over into Akkadian or Babylonian proverbs later on. And they also have then these bilingual lists where the Sumerian proverb is listed here and the Akkadian proverb is listed here.

And so, there's a parallel between the Sumerian and the Akkadian, you go back and forth, which is really helpful for translators then, translating between Sumerian and Akkadian. So, all we're trying to say is the proverbs made their way from Sumer and down those same proverbs, and even the collection in the same order is found in Akkadian or Babylonian hundreds of years later. And so you get those kinds of things.

Ahikar is an Assyrian sage about 700 BC. Ahikar and then his recorded later proverbs are translated into Arabic, which Arabic, those things are way into the AD period and things like that. They translate this.

So, all we're trying to say is the proverbs were transmitted internationally, across international boundaries between Sumer and Babylon, and they also translated down in time. So Ahikar, a sage 700 BC, you've got Arabic putting it into Arabic in at least 700 AD. So, you've got, it gets transmitted across internationally, but then also across time, long time periods, these proverbs go on.

Let me take a modern example, Robert Frost. Robert Frost's proverb: "good fences make good neighbors." "Good fences make good neighbors."

See the repetition of good there, short saying, "good fences make good neighbors." Now, by the way, can you apply that in many situations? It's not just talking about fences. Now it's talking about boundaries and boundaries come up all over the place.

So, "good fences make good neighbors." It turns out that that was originated from Ezekiel Rogers, the founder of Rowley, Massachusetts, where I live. These lectures are going right now, in my home at 79 Daniels Road, Rowley, Massachusetts.

So, this Ezekiel Rogers that founded Rowley back in the 1640s, 300 years before Frost, Frost quotes that proverb, "good fences make good neighbors" out of Ezekiel Rogers, 1640, 300-year gap there, but he quotes it and it was done from Ezekiel Rogers. Now, this is a proverb of Rowley, Massachusetts. Chaucer who has, "Whosoever that first to milleth come, to mill come, first grindeth." And they say that's Chaucer, that's way back in English.

And that proverb that Chaucer gave then becomes more modern English, first come first served. First one who comes to the mill is the first one that grinds, becomes the proverb, "first come first served." "First come first served" can then apply to thousands of situations.

First come first served. Coca-Cola, by the way, has taken this proverb and twisted it. And this is some of the playfulness of proverbs. Coca-Cola took the proverbs "first come first served" and twisted it into "thirst come, thirst served" for Coca-Cola. Drink a Coke. "First thirst, thirst come, thirst serve," a twisted proverb out of that. So, this is kind of see proverbs kind of migrate internationally.

They go three, 400, 500, 800 years, thousand years over time. And as they go over time, then they get put into new situations. A lot of times they're twisted or humorous or sarcastic or in various ways they are twisted to fit the current language and current situation better.

And so, this is the flexibility of proverbs on that thing. Historical and cultural universality of the proverb genre. Let me just go back to Egypt.

There's a long traditional proverbial instruction that comes out of Egypt. And it's in this parent-child format. In Proverbs it says, listen, my son, to your father's instruction or listen to your mother's instruction.

Do not despise your mother's teaching, that kind of thing. In Egypt, they have that same instructional format. Parent speaking to his child.

The old kingdom goes back to 2600 BC to 2100 BC. That's before Abraham. 2600 BC to 2100 BC, we've got Prince Hardjedef and Kagemeni.

In the middle kingdom, which is 2000 to 1600 BC, we've got Ptahotep. Interesting instruction, the instruction of Ptahotep. In the new kingdom, that's about 1500 to about 1080 BC.

We've got Amenemope, which is actually reflected in the book of Proverbs in chapter 22 and following. Amenemope, an Egyptian instruction, some of those things are echoed or alluded to or quoted in the book of Proverbs itself. Our book of Proverbs.

Ani is another one from that new kingdom. In Ptolemaic times, now this is after Alexander, Ptolemy took over Egypt and we've got the Ankhsheshonq, about 300 BC. So, you've got from 2600 BC to 300 BC down to Ptolemaic time from the old kingdom down to Ptolemaic time.

That's what, 2300 years. This woman Miriam Lichtheim in her Ancient Egyptian literature, she's got three volumes on this ancient Egyptian literature. She has then a list of and the text of all these ancient instructions from the old kingdom all the way down to Ptolemaic times, 300 BC.

So, it's very interesting. Egypt has a slung tradition and it's very interesting that those types of things, wisdom of Egypt is even mentioned in the Bible. So, the adages of classical Greek and Roman, Greek and Roman Proverbs was collected by a guy named Erasmus in 1524.

So, Erasmus, some people, myself, I call him Erasmus the rascal. He did a lot of Greek texts and things like that in 1524. I don't want to get into that, but it's just these adages of Greek and Roman Proverbs. He collected those, Erasmus did in 1524. That's AD.

There are also collections of Chinese Proverbs. Confucius say this, Confucius say that. You'd get a fortune and when you finish up at your Chinese restaurant, they open it up and you open it up and have a fortune in there. A lot of those are proverbial.

So Chinese Proverbs are world renowned. European and Russian collections are also voluminous. Wolfgang Mieder in his Dictionary of American Proverbs, the Dictionary of American Proverbs that Wolfgang Mieder who studies German, Russian, and all these other languages, but then he looked at American Proverbs.

He's got a dictionary of American Proverbs that's 710 pages long. So, in America we have, and a lot of times they're using advertising now. But anyway, he's got a 700, over 700 page book on American Proverbs and he has other books as well in the collections that he's put together from various countries.

The oral proverbial collection is still alive in African culture. So, I've got several books on African Proverbs and it is still the proverbial, in other words, the generation of Proverbs in Africa is still alive. And so, it's very interesting.

I think we could learn a lot from the Africans on how they use Proverbs. Because that is very much alive today in the African continent. The point of all this has been the proverbial form is ancient, universal, and culturally fluid.

It goes from culture to culture and it goes over, it's universal. It goes between cultures and it goes time-wise. They go thousands of years actually, these Proverbs make it down.

So, they're very, that kind of a genre. Now let's work towards a definition of a proverb. Towards the definition of a proverb.

Now let me just say this, there have been hundreds and hundreds of pages written on how to define a proverb and nobody has been able to pull it off. And this definitive that everybody says, that's it, you've got it. So, you've got to allow for some flexibility here.

And so, I'm going to do this kind of a playful way. I'm not a very boxy person. My edges are always very, how should I say, fluid and the edges are always blurry to me, the edges of things.

Whereas other people, some that I live with, everything is boom, boom, it's boxes and it's, things are very cut and dry like that. Cervantes says, Cervantes says, and this is a short proverb. What is a proverb? "A proverb is short sentences drawn from long experience." So do you see here Cervantes himself tries to make a proverb about proverbs. It's kind of interesting. He's a literary guy.

And of course, short sentences drawn from long experience. And so, you get this short, long thing, short sentences drawn from long experience. And you say, and you click and you say, yeah, that's right.

But is that all a proverb is? No, but he's, he's kind of got it there. Short sentences drawn from long experience. You have all these experiences, and boom, you put it down a short sentence as we've talked about before.

Ibn Ezra says there are three characteristics of proverbs. Okay. Three characteristics of proverbs are few words, good sense, and a fine image. Few words, good sense, and a fine image. And you say, do all proverbs, are all proverbs metaphorical? Do they all have an image? The answer is not really. So, the image is plus or minus, could be there or not. But few words that kind of works. Good sense, common sense, wisdom, that works too.

So, Wolfgang Meider, as we said, the world's leading paremiologist, he defines it this way. This is a quote from him in his book *On the Proverb*. Notice how they've all stressed this short, "a short, generally known sentence of the folk." So, he puts it from a folk background. We're going to see it's much more complex than that in the biblical proverbs. A short, generally known sentence. It's generally known.

When you quote a proverb, “haste makes waste,” people click. They know that one. “The early bird gets the worm.” Boom. They know that one. “A stitch in time saves nine.” Boom. They know “different strokes for different folks.” Boom. They know that.

It's this generally known sentence of the folk that contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, or memorable form. So, notice how he says metaphorical, yes, but also fixed and memorable form.

So, he allows for some flexibility away from, you know, saying it's got to have a metaphor form, which is handed down from generation to generation. And so Maeder notices how the proverbs actually passed down from generation to generation. They're known generally.

Haste makes waste. And it's also passed down parent-child. Father says to his son, a mother in Lemuel, Proverbs 31. The mother of King Lemuel says, oh, my son, son of my womb. And then she goes on to tell his son, you know, you're the king, man. Don't drink too much.

Okay. You hurt people when you do that. You're the king. Don't drink. And she goes on like that, but that's Lemuel's mother's teaching in Proverbs 31 verses one and following.

So, Wolfgang Meider says this, let me just read this again. This is, this is pretty comprehensive definition of proverb, what a proverb is. “A short, generally known sentence of the folk, which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form, which is handed down from generation to generation.

There's a human urge to classify, generalize, and codify experience, filtered through one's cultural ideals and values. And so, each culture interprets and understands the proverb in different ways, dancing elephants or fighting elephants or at the grass. And so that comes over from that culture, cultural ideals and values help explain the universality of the proverbial form from a cognitive standpoint.

It's very interesting. Cognitive scientists have studied the use of proverbs in triggering things in people's brains. These sayings are recorded in memorable, compressed formats, memorable and compressed formats that project their pithy ideals into the realm of the virtual.

I'm going to come back to the thing with the virtual. I think that's a very important thing to understand. Ready to function in a host of new situations, says Honik.

Ready to function in a host of new situations. And so Honek comes at it from a cognitive scientific way, saying, how do proverbs work in the brain? Well, the brain wants to classify, generalize, and codify experience. And the brain is also working with culture and the ideals and values of the culture.

And they're looking for the universality of the proverb and stuff. And they compress it then into this memorable format and these pithy ideals into the realm of the virtual. The virtual is that when the proverb goes into the collection, it is sitting there waiting just like a popcorn ready to pop.

The proverb is like a kernel of pop, a popcorn, and you apply some hermeneutical heat to it. Boom, it pops out into another story. So, as it's taken from a story and boiled down into a kernel of corn, and then the heat is applied hermeneutical heat, and boom, it pops up in another story and hundreds of stories, thousands of stories, the proverb can be applied to.

Haste makes waste. It can be applied in a hundred different situations. A proverb may be figurative when it uses metaphors or similes, or plainly literal.

If it's plainly literal, they may call it a maxim. "Apple doesn't fall far from the tree." I've got a son-in-law and my wife and the son-in-law have a playful thing.

Sometimes it's not too playful, but you and I wish actually anyway, okay, there's a long story in there. I don't want to get into conflict. And so, my son-in-law, referring to my daughter, says to my wife, "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree." "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." In other words, my wife just did something that triggered in my son-in-law, he sees the same thing in my daughter. And so, he says "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree." In other words, as your wife and your mother, so the mother, so the daughter. Okay, that'd be another way of saying it. So, the mother, so the daughter, "like mother, like daughter." Okay, maybe that's the way to say it. The same type of thing, "like mother, like daughter." And he usually says it with a little barb to it.

And so that's, I don't recommend that. But "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree." That's a metaphorical expression. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. It's a metaphor, an apple and a tree. Well, is it really talking about an apple and a tree? No, it's really talking about something else.

To make that literal, or kind of more of a maxim, "like mother, like daughter." Now it's clear, "like mother, like daughter." Now, by the way, can you twist that? Yeah, you could say, "like father, like son."

Okay. And so, this apple off the tree. And so, you can see how the play is between a metaphorical expression of a proverb and a non-metaphorical expression of a proverb.

Apple doesn't fall far from a tree, like mother, like daughter, like father, like son, like this, like that. Okay, so, we're working with the definition of a proverb. Usually, it is poetically enhanced through such techniques as rhyme, alliteration, ellipsis, you know, you drop a word out, and the reader then is to supply that word in ellipsis, paronomasia, repetition, parallelism, which aid in making it memorable and quotable.

Proverbs are memorable and quotable. And they kind of take the story and boom, down into a short, memorizable type of thing there. The architectural structure of the genre is like, they have these architectural structures, a proverb is recognized for these architectural structures. So, we say, like X, like Y, like father, like son, like mother, like daughter, like employer, like employee, like president, like people. Don't say that one. Okay.

But anyway, it's this like X, like Y. Note the repetition. Sound enhancement, assonance, consonance, alliteration, paronomasia rhyme. Take, for example, "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." "A bird in the hand is worth two in the tree." It doesn't work. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the tree." Yeah, but you say birds live in the tree. No, but that kind of misses it. How much better is it? "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

Now all of a sudden you can remember that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." Okay. "A stitch in time saves nine." Time, nine. You've got a little rhyme there. And so a stitch in time saves nine.

Now, what situations can a stitch in time saves nine? We're talking about, say somebody that's stitching up their clothes and they say a stitch in time saves, you know, having to do nine of them later on. A stitch in time saves nine. It's from sewing.

But yet we realize that this is a stitch in time saves nine applies in a hundred situations, thousands of situations. And so, but notice a stitch in time saves nine. You've got this rhyme going on that makes it memorable.

Cognitive scientists have noticed the link between the proverb interpretation and the properly functioning right hemisphere of the brain. So, in other words, they've actually got tests that are tests of proverbs to see how well people can interpret them. And then they evaluate whether a person's brain is functioning properly, particularly the right hemisphere, the right hemisphere, that was left.

Okay. The right hemisphere of the brain. Okay.

And so, they, there's so cognitive science has actually explored some of the potential of proverbs so that in other words, our brains are wired to trigger on proverbs. And so that's a kind of a cool thing cognitively behind this whole thing. Now the virtual percent potential of collected proverbs.

Virtual potential of collected proverbs. A proverb is created when there is a situation from which a pattern is observed, generalized, distilled, inductively, deductively, or analogically into a single poetically crafted statement. The story or scenario, the story or scenario or situation collapses into this proverb then, and the proverb captures it.

The crafted saying is then quoted, detached from its original situation, and placed into a collection. In the collection then the proverb is virtual. Now some of the people who've studied proverbs say that a proverb put in a collection is dead.

I don't think so. Proverbs placed in a collection is virtual. It's taken out of its original setting that it collapsed that story down to that kernel of the proverb, "haste makes waste," it's put into a collection.

And from that collection then it can go out to a thousand different situations. Modern and ancient, it can travel down through time, it can go across international borders. It has potential, and this potential is ready to break forth. It's virtual. It's kind of like virtual reality. And it's just waiting to be popped back out into a situation or story in modern times.

Some conclude that proverbs taken out of their original situations and detached into sterile collections are dead. However, once detached and decontextualized into a collection, the collected proverbs become much more flexible and gain multi-semantic possibilities, and poly-situational adaptability. In other words, you can take "haste makes waste," and you can do it in a hundred different situations where haste makes waste.

So, a person doesn't study for an exam, and they're just thinking, I'm just going to whip through this thing and knock out the exam. Haste makes waste. A person's working on something, and they're supposed to, haste makes waste.

Let me say, I've been working on making bread, how to make bread, and things like that. Haste makes waste. So, you don't allow it to rise.

Rising bread takes time. And so, you've got to let it rise overnight. But if you grab it after an hour or two, you get a little rise, but haste makes waste.

You just blew the good bread possibilities. And so, "haste makes waste." So, haste makes waste in so many different situations, that you can apply it.

And so, it's virtual, and it has poly-situ, once it's in the collection, it can spring forth into many situations then, poly-situational adaptability. Its potential is virtual in the collection and realized when it's reattached, recontextualized, or in computer science, they tell an object that is, you define this object and the object has its properties. And then you instantiate that object in an actual program.

So, you define the object and you give it properties, et cetera, et cetera. And then you instantiate that in a particular, particular part of your program. Once you've got it defined, that's kind of like what a proverb is.

You got the proverb, haste makes waste. And now you, you instantiate it. You actually put it into life and you say, haste makes waste.

And so, you're trying to go really fast because you wanted to get to a place and things like that. And you started speeding. And then all of a sudden you see these red lights and the policeman pulls you over, "haste makes waste." Okay. So, you end up now missing what you're trying to get to in a hurry because now you've got a ticket and now you've got to pay your insurance for the rest of your life. Okay.

So, "haste makes waste." Okay. Or, is it "taste makes waist"? Whoa. We don't want to get into that one, but you see how I twisted the proverb. "Haste makes waste" to "taste makes waist." Okay. Don't do that. Okay. But I'm just, I'm sorry. It just popped into my head. Weird stuff with these proverbs. What I'm saying is proverbs can be playful.

And that was my attempt there. Proverbs are detachable units then designed for converting conversational reattachment in new situations. The importance of usage is seen in clusters of like proverbs.

Okay. So, this is now we're, we're switching over to the topic of the proverbial usage. How are proverbs then taken in the collection? How are they actually used? They originated, and the story was collapsed down into short sentences.

Now it's taken, put in a collection. How is it actually used? How do you use a proverb? The importance is seen in clusters and strings of like proverbs in Proverbs chapter 26:7 and 9. The book of Proverbs talks about how to use a proverb properly and improperly.

Okay. How proverbs are used is talked about in Proverbs chapter 26:6-7 and 9. "Like a lame man's leg that hangs limp is a proverb in the mouth of a fool."

Now proverbs are supposed to be wise sayings that are transmitted and stuff. And now what he's saying is, like a lame person's leg that hangs limp is a proverb in the mouth of a fool. And so, you get this image.

Remember how these people all talked about the metaphorical image of this lame person with a leg coming out of a fool's mouth that uses a proverb. Can a fool, can a fool quote a proverb? Yes. Yes.

And this says a lame person's leg that hangs limp is a proverb in the mouth of a fool. In other words, the character of the person that uses it may determine the outcome of what that proverb is. A fool can quote a proverb that doesn't make him wise.

Okay. And so, there's a danger then of just saying, well, the proverb means, and then whoever quotes it. No, no.

The character of the person, a foolish person is like taking a proverb then is like a lame leg that hangs limp. Okay. And then in verse nine of chapter 26, verse nine, it says, like a thorn bush brandished in a drunkard's hand.

So, you got this drunk, he's got this thorn bush with all the needles sticking out and he's brandishing, he's swinging it and stuff like that. Okay. So, like a thorn bush brandished in a drunkard's hand is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

So, can fools use proverbs? Yes, they can. But while the proverb will come across as having some sort of wisdom, when it's used that proverb can actually do great damage because it's used by a fool. So, proverbs can be used in all sorts of different ways. And a fool can use proverb. It's like a lame leg or a drunk thrashing people with needles and thorns. Okay.

So, proverbs actually talks about the use of proverbs. One must weigh the impact of a saying on the listener. And this can be quite diverse.

For example, Proverbs 10.1b, "a foolish son is a grief to a mother." 'A foolish son is a grief to his mother.' Said to another parent.

So, two parents are talking and the mother then quotes this to the other parent says, "a foolish son is a grief to his mother." And the other parent knows that because they've got kids too. And they know the power of children to be able to impact and hurt their parents.

Now in our culture, it's all the parents hurting the children. And that is tremendous in our culture. And it's something that really needs to be talked about abuse, et cetera, et cetera.

Okay. However, does the parent have the, does a child have the ability to hurt the parent? Yes. And so, parent to parent can talk about that.

And it means one thing there. And so, the one parent can comfort the other parent saying "a foolish son is a grief to his mother." And one parent is comforting the other parent with that.

What if a sibling quotes that? So, you've got one sibling talking to another child and says you know, a foolish son is a grief to his mother. That sibling may be warning the other sibling, don't do what you're planning on doing because you're going to hurt mom. And so, when it's parent to parent, it's comfort. When it's sibling to sibling, it may be a warning to that sibling. It could be spoken from a mother to a child. A foolish son is a grief to his mother.

A mother could be speaking to the child saying, giving the child guidance, giving the child guidance, and saying, don't do that. You're going to hurt your mother. Okay.

And so, a father, for example, may say that to a child so that the child realized I don't want to hurt mom. And so therefore I won't do that. So, all I'm saying is there, we've got three situations, parent to parent, comfort, sibling to sibling, a warning, parent to child, guidance.

So, the same proverb functions in three different ways, depending on how it's used. So, this is kind of the polysemantic. In other words, you can't just say this proverb means this.

It means that in so many different situations, and it means different things. And it's trying to do speech acts. Its action in speech is doing three different things.

In those three different examples I gave you, it may be used for consolation, encouragement, rebuke, warning, and even humor, and even humor, depending on who the one speaking is and to whom it is spoken when it is re-contextualized. So now, definition of a proverb from a structural standpoint, and a lot of the proverbs we get, Dundes uses this, topic and comment, topic and comment. And the topic and comment Dundes takes in a binary way, putting a plus and a minus, or a minus and plus, or a minus minus.

So that you have a topic that's talked about and a comment that's made about the topic. And that can be positive-positive, negative-negative, positive-negative, negative-positive, and those variations. And so, it actually helps them then to analyze this topic comment, helps us analyze the proverbs and break it up.

What's the topic? What's the comment? What's positive? Is it negative? And that kind of does it. So, for example, Proverbs 14:15. Proverbs says, "A simple person" is a topic, a simple person, topic, positive or negative, simple person, negative.

A simple person, comment, "believes anything," negative. A simple person, topic, comment, believes anything. Both of those are negative.

"A simple person believes anything." So it's topic, negative, comment, negative. TC, topic, comment, negative, negative.

And so that's just a beginning way to analyze the proverbs. And you can go into deep structure-type things after that. So, a simple person believes anything.

It's easy to imagine recontextualizing the same proverb in a wide range of speech act contexts, utilizing it to expose. A simple person believes anything to expose somebody. To humiliate a person, a simple person believes anything. You could humiliate a person. You could rebuke them. You could mock them. You could warn them. You could guide them. You can encourage them.

You could evaluate and you could say a foolish person, a simple person believes anything. If I were jousting with my brother, for example, who's a major jester, and my brother and Terry, I could say something like that as a matter of humor and things to cause reflection and to instruct others.

Now, if a proverb is metaphorical, its common non-metaphorical meaning must be deduced. In other words, if the proverb is metaphorical in a lot of image, then you've got to deduce that it's non-metaphorical meaning. And let me just show this of a poly-situational virtuality of a proverb that needs to be recontextualized. "Don't cry over spilled milk." "Don't cry over spilled milk." What does that mean? "Don't cry over spilled milk." Well, if you've ever had little kids, you know, "don't cry over spilled milk."

Okay. So what does that really mean? Is it really talking about milk? First of all, you say, well, I take the Bible literally. It's talking about milk and crying. Is it really talking about spilling milk? No, it's not really talking about that. Okay. That's just the metaphor.

How do you get at what it really means? Well, it may mean something like this. One should not waste time worrying about things that cannot be undone or changed. No sense crying over spilled milk. Don't cry over spilled milk. Don't time worrying about things you can't that are already happened that can't be undone or changed. Don't, don't cry over spilled milk.

Now there's context in which that could be said to encourage. So, a soccer coach, they just lost the game. And he says to his team, don't cry over spilled milk. He's trying to encourage his team because they just lost the game. They're feeling down. He comes in, don't cry over spilled milk. There's don't waste your time. I'm thinking about the game we just lost. We have another game next week. We got to get up for that. Don't cry over spilled milk. Get on with it. Get up and get going. So, the coach encourages, uses this proverb, don't cry over spilled milk to encourage his players.

A friend may taunt another friend who just lost a round of Scrabble. So, they're playing Scrabble. And in our family, these games that we have, a lot of Risk games, Monopoly. We've got our own set of rules for Monopoly that gets almost like a stock market bidding thing. And Scrabble, these are war contexts in the family. Okay. And so, a person in this fam, our family that plays, this gets really competitive. We've got our families and a number of adult kids, it's kind of ironic because I'm not very competitive myself, but my children are really competitive in these games. And so, okay. So, then there's, my wife who just won the Scrabble game and she turns and says, don't cry over spilled milk. And she's taunting then other people as she's saying, I won. Don't cry over spilled milk. And there's a taunt there. Actually, my wife is too kind. She would not do that, but some of my children would. So anyways, the taunt, you can use this, don't cry over spilled milk to taunt a friend who just lost.

Okay. Or a rebuke, a boss to an employee who is inactive and indolent. In other words, the employee is just sitting there and, and just feeling down and I just blew it and I made a mistake and all this is terrible. And the boss is saying, man, you got to get up and get going here. And so, the boss says to the employee, don't cry over spilled milk. In other words, get back engaged, man. Don't sit there indolent and inactive. Get after it. Okay. You made a mistake. Yes. Acknowledge it and get on with it. Okay. Justification. Don't cry over spilled milk.

A person gets hurt, but shakes it off and says, don't cry over spilled milk. And so, the person says, well, you just lost. What are you doing? And the guy's getting up and he's going down the road again. And the guy says, don't cry over spilled milk. I'm getting after it. And he uses it for justification.

So, the same proverb can be used to encourage, to taunt, to rebuke, and to justify oneself, to justify one's behavior. And so do you see that the proverb is then when it pops back into story, it can apply into hundreds of different stories in hundreds of different ways. One is encouragement. One's rebuke. One is justification. One's encouraged.

And that was just kind of off the top of my head. It can be used in more ways than that. Now I've said a couple of times already that culture impacts how a proverb is understood and actually how a proverb is generated, the genesis of the proverb.

Let me just show you how culture impacts how a proverb is understood. It's very interesting. In Scotland, we've got a proverb that says "A rolling stone gathers no moss."

In Scotland, when they say a rolling stone gathers no moss, what that means is it indicates the need to keep up and to keep modern, keep up with what's going on today, lest undesirable moss grows on you and reveals your lack of mental virality. In other words, that you're mentally sharp. In other words, you checked out, man.

You don't know how to use your cell phone. You don't know how to use your laptop. You don't know how to use AI or newer techniques of database stuff. And so therefore, you've got to get with the program. "A rolling stone gathers no moss. And moss is bad."

So, you want to be the rolling stone. You want to be the rolling stone because if you just sit around and don't learn anything new, moss is going to grow on you. You don't want that moss all over you. So, you want to be a rolling stone in Scotland. A rolling stone is good. Moss is bad.

The only thing is that if you change cultures and go down into England, in England, a rolling stone gathers no moss means that if things are continually in flux, no moss that you want to grow will have sufficient stability to thrive. Okay, do you see the difference there? "A rolling stone is rolling and moss is good." And therefore, you want moss to grow. But if you're always changing things up, you won't have the ability to produce this moss which shows the stability and beautiful moss growing on the side of a building there. It shows its age and its strength. And so, in Scotland, moss is bad. So, you want to keep rolling. In England, you want to keep rolling. If you keep rolling negative, if you keep rolling negative, no moss that is positive will grow.

Two totally different meanings go in these directions. One's in Scotland and one's in England. It's the same proverb, the same exact words.

Do your exegesis of the words. O, what does moss mean? What does rolling stone mean? And you do an exegesis in a word study in Strong's Concordance or whatever, in Logos or Accordance. And you look up rolling stone, you do your word studies.

Question, you just missed it because this is cultural. It's cultural and the culture impacts whether the rolling stone is good or bad, depending on whether you want moss or don't want moss. And so, when you don't want moss, you better keep rolling. When you do want moss, you better stop rolling and let moss have its time to flourish. So, culture impacts how you interpret a proverb. And so therefore, when you do exegesis in these types of things, you can't just do word studies.

You've got to look at the culture because culture changes totally the meaning of the proverb. Culture impacts how proverbs are interpreted. Often, they are transmitted internationally.

Ahikar wrote Assyria, written in Assyria, 700 BC or thereabouts. Ahikar is quoted in the Jewish book of Tobit. So here you've got Ahikar. We said it actually goes into Arabic later on, but in the Jewish book of Tobit, it's cited. And so we get the same thing in Proverbs chapter 22 with the Amenemope out of Egypt. And it's echoed or alluded to in the book of Proverbs chapter 22.

By the way, 1 Kings 4:30 in 1 Kings, the historical section talking about Solomon making the temple, taking over for David and his child Rehoboam, and the problems that he would have because of massive problems there. But in 1 Kings 4:30, it says, so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed all the wisdom of the people of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. Now notice how it compares Solomon's wisdom with the wisdom of those from the East.

It's not saying, oh no, the people from the East are all idolaters, and their wisdom is totally washed up. No, it's not saying that. It's saying the people of the East have wisdom.

Solomon surpasses, the wisdom of the East, which would be Mesopotamia, Mesopotamian wisdom, but he also surpasses it. It mentions explicitly the wisdom of Egypt, the wisdom of Egypt. Remember Solomon, by the way, who was one of his first major wives that he married was a princess from Egypt, the daughter of Pharaoh.

Solomon marries her. Do you think that she was trained in the wisdom of Egypt? And then comes up to talk to Solomon. So, Proverbs are international.

Even 1 Kings 4:30 features the international between Mesopotamia and Egypt and features how Solomon's wisdom is greater than those. And he spoke 3000 Proverbs giving wisdom. We've only got 300 and something of those. So even the Bible acknowledges that.

Now this usage then, proverbial usage, I wanted to call instantiation where a proverb is taken from a collection and put back into a situation. We actually call that instantiation or it is recontextualized into a new context.

The authority is moved from a single author to the wider community. So, "haste makes waste" or "a wise son brings joy to a father" is made by an individual. It then goes out to the community and the community then repeats it over generations and between cultures.

And it has lasting stickiness to it that it sticks to it. The same proverb is used in two different contexts. This is interesting in first Samuel chapter 10, verse 11 and following.

Saul, King Saul, remember King Saul is going to be made king. He's going to be anointed king in first Samuel 10:11. And it says, the spirit rushes on King Saul and incredulously asks, then Saul starts acting like a prophet like it's crazy. He starts prophesying. And so, he's going to be made king. And so, the spirit comes on the king.

He is anointed with oil and he becomes the king. And as he becomes the king, he does these prophetic things. And it says, "is Saul among the prophets?" The people are incredulous.

And they say, whoa, this is Saul and he's being made king, but he's acting like a prophet. Is Saul among the prophets? And the people are incredulous. They say that is Saul among the prophets.

It's very interesting when you go down to 1 Samuel 19:24. In 1 Samuel 19:24, Saul is murderously pursuing David to Ramah. And then he too stripped off his clothes.

And he too prophesied before Samuel and lay naked all day and night, all that night. And thus, it is said, "Is Saul among the prophets?" The spirit is coming on Saul and he's lying on the floor naked and basically the spirit stops Saul dead in his tracks from pursuing murderously David, King David, trying to kill David because David's going to be the next king or whatever. And so, the spirit stops him and he goes down like that.

And they say, is Saul among the prophets? That's a rebuke of Saul. The spirit actually rebukes Saul, but the same proverb is quoted. Once it's quoted that the people are incredulous, is Saul among the prophets? He's going to be king.

Is he also among the prophets? The people are incredulous. And the other one, the spirit stops him, is Saul among the prophets? This means he just got rebuked. He's down on the floor naked.

And anyway, and so he can't pursue and kill David. So same proverb popped out into two situations. The same proverb popped out into two situations with two different meanings and then how it functions there.

So, this poly-nature of the proverb. Proverb usage continued here. Proverbs also function emphatically.

A proverb is being used for social or emotive purposes rather than communicating information. So, proverb often evokes emotions to establish and maintain or restore

social relationships, to reinforce solidarity within the community. So different strokes for different folks.

And that was in my generation, that was a proverb that kind of typified. Today, they've got it down to one word. It's "whatever."

But in my day it was "different strokes for different folks." At least it had a little proverbial flavor to it. And this is then embraced by the culture of the year that I grew up in, "different strokes for different folks."

And so, the community embraces it and then it's passed down. Proverbs 1:17, "how useless to spread the net and full view of all the birds" is a concluding argument in Proverbs 1. It comes down through the story of Madam Wisdom warning her son. And it comes down and says, my son, don't be like one of these birds. How useless to spread the net and full view of all the birds. In other words, I'm telling you this, wake up like a bird. The guy's coming with a net. He sees a net and the bird flies away. So, when these guys come to seduce you into violence or whatever nasty thing, wicked thing they're doing, and you see that net coming for you, fly out of there.

How useless to spread the net. So that this bird metaphor and proverb is used to warn the young person to get out of there. And so, the proverb is easily identified.

There is a shift from the literal description of hoodlums shedding innocent blood to a proverbial metaphor with the image of a bird and a snare. So, as it comes down, a bird and a snare, the proverb, all these hoodlums trying to seduce the young man to engage and join their group, their gang. So then please join our gang and look at all the money you'll get and stuff.

And the proverbial sage father is saying, no, don't do that, man. It's like a bird that's got a net. They're coming for you, man.

They're going to snare you. Another place that says it's like an arrow ready to pierce your heart. In other words, you're like a deer waiting for the arrow to pierce its heart. Get out of there. Don't let them take the shot. Move.

Get out. Here's a proverb used to close an argument. So, in chapter one of Proverbs, it's an instructional saying there.

It's a lecture from the father to the son, but how does the father close his argument? He closes his argument with this proverb. He's got an instruction, a lecture, he's giving his son. He closes that lecture with this proverb.

Don't be like the bird. The net's coming. The bird is smart enough to fly away.

You should be like that. And so, it's very interesting in African Proverbs. Guess what they use? They use proverbs to conclude an argument in a legal case.

So oftentimes the guy will argue his case in a legal setting and he'll close. And how does he clinch the argument? He uses a proverb. Why? Because everybody agrees that haste makes waste.

So, if you can quote a proverb, everybody, in that community agrees on that. And if you can cite the proverb at the end, you just clinched your case because it's accepted by everybody and it has authority. It has strength and stuff.

So, in a legal context, very interesting. The African Proverbs function that way. Very similar to what the sage is using in Proverbs 1.17 to conclude his arguments.

Now, Proverbs in a collection that are polyvalent, as we saw, and decontextualized. They're pulled out of their context, and put in this virtual collection so that they can be used in hundreds of different settings. The genre's impact on the text is to be understood.

You've got to understand the genre you're dealing with. Elijah goes out and remember Elijah was on top of Mount Carmel and the prophets of Baal, these 400 or so prophets of Baal come up there and he says, okay, the God that answers by fire, that's the real God. So, the prophets of Baal started dancing around this altar hoping that Baal, who was a lightning bolt chucker God, was the problem with Jehovah or Yahweh. He didn't really specialize in anything. Baal was a lightning bolt chucker. He rode the clouds. And so therefore he gives the rain and the hail and the lightning bolts. And so he specialized in that.

But Jehovah, he kind of doesn't do that. He kind of does everything. And so, Elijah comes to these prophets of Baal and he says, yell louder, man. They're dancing around, cutting themselves and stuff like cutting themselves. And that sounds familiar in modern culture. But anyway, and cutting themselves. And he says, yell louder. "Surely he is a God." Now is Elijah saying surely Baal is a God? No, that's called sarcasm. And if you don't pick up the sarcasm, sarcasm flips it to mean the exact opposite of what he just said.

If you miss the you're going to think, was Elijah a Baal worshipper? Eli-Yah, Elijah. El is my Yahweh, Yahweh is my God, even in his name. And so, he comes to the prophet, these other prophets, he yells, yell louder.

Maybe he's sleeping or maybe he's on the pot. Poor Baal is on the pot up there. He can't shine the lightning bolt.

And what's doing, Elijah's doing there is he's mocking these people. It's sarcasm. You can't take that literally.

And so, you've got to understand the genre that you're working with. And when you're working with proverbs, then you've got to understand how proverbs moved from those collections in the book of Proverbs back out into real situations and things.

Proverbs are not meant to be dogmatized or absolutized into universal propositional truth. I say, well, the Bible is true. Let me just read this again. Proverbs are not meant to be dogmatized or absolutized into universal propositional truth.

That's the mistake that Job's friends made. Take a proverb and universalize it in all situations. No, a proverb does not apply in all situations.

You have to be wise to know how to understand that. Otherwise, you're a fool brandishing a proverb like a thornbush and you're going to hurt people. Book of Proverbs also, Proverbs 26:4 and 5 we just talked about in a previous lecture, answer not a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.

Okay. Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him. Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him.

So, you shouldn't answer fool, right? What's the next proverb say? Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes. So those two proverbs, boom, they almost like quote, contradict each other. And what it's saying is you can't absolutize, you can't universalize a proverb.

One says to answer a fool according to his folly. One says do not answer a fool. You can't universalize that.

You can't dogmatize that. So, you've got to be very careful with proverbs. How is the authority of a proverb to be understood? How is the authority of a proverb to be understood? And that's the question that we're addressing right now.

What is the authority of a proverb? Proverbs 10.4 says this, poverty comes from a lazy hand. Poverty comes from a lazy hand, but a diligent hand makes wealth. A diligent hand makes wealth.

Is this a promise from God? Poverty comes from a lazy hand, but diligent hand makes wealth. I'm going to have a diligent hand and God's promised me wealth. You work hard to get rich.

So, what this proverb says, can you think of counterexamples? Can you think of people who work really hard and aren't getting rich? I could give you the names of some right now. Working really much harder than I work and they're not getting rich. And I do know other people who are stinking lazy.

They're lazy people and yet they're sitting in the lap of luxury. Lazy people and yet they're prospering economically in other ways. So, this proverb clearly is not a promise.

And so, you got to separate that. The book of Proverbs indicates that while working hard leads to profit, evil companions or greed may actually destroy the person's efforts. So, a person can work hard and build up something, but an evil person can come and destroy what a person's worked for, for half their life in a matter of seconds.

And so, there are proverbs, let me just, a proverb is kind of like a vector in physics. A vector says, okay, the proverb is just like a short vector says, okay, work hard, get rich. Now question, that's simplistic.

Is life more complex than that? Yes, it is. But that one vector, work hard, get rich, that's an important value to learn. And that's an important vector.

Now, does that describe all of life? No, it describes this one component of life. There may be an evil person that comes in and destroys all your wealth. And so evil persons do violence and destroy stuff.

And so, there's another vector that sends it down like this. And there's another vector like this. And so, what I'm saying is suggesting is that you learn the whole book of Proverbs, because many of the proverbs will come to act and be invoked or become reality or recontextualized in one particular situation.

So, one situation may have many proverbial things coming together there. So, a proverb is not a promise. A proverb is not meant to be dogmatized or absolutized into universal propositional truth.

“Train up a child in the way he shall go, when he's old, he'll not depart from it.” Is that a guarantee a promise from God? Proverbs 22:6. “Train up a child in the way he shall go, when he's old, he'll not depart from that.” Question, do you know parents that have trained up their children in the way they should go? And the children say, I'm out of here, 18 years old, or now they are 30 years old and I'm out of here. And they take off and they reject everything that their parents ever taught them. I've known situations like that. So have you.

I've also known people who have come from abusive homes where there's great abuse, sexual trafficking, and other things where the person has turned it around and turned it into good. The parents trained them in evil, but the person made choices and turned it around. So, the proverb, "train up a child in the way he'll go, when he's old and not depart from it."

When I was younger, I was a father and it scared the daylights out of me. Being a father scared the daylights out of me. It's one of the reasons why I studied the book of Proverbs. I wanted to be a good father. I didn't quite make it, but anyway, I studied the book of Proverbs about what it meant to be a good father.

And in high school, as kids grow up through high school, there's a kind of breaking apart that happens in adolescence. Now in high school, you know, you get to seventh, eighth, ninth grade, 10th grade, and kids then, they flex their wings. And sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad.

And I was really devastated as a father that I had to realize that I was a failure. I really blew it. I really blew it. And it hurt really badly. And I looked at Proverbs, the book of Proverbs, and I was studying all this stuff on how to be a good father. I had three shelf loads of academic books on how to do fathering. Fathering, by the way, in our culture has been really destroyed.

You had the basic clash between the government and the father and the government basically destroyed fathering and much of our culture, especially in black communities and other communities. It really has been destroyed, the whole notion of fathering. And so, I studied that, and then I had to realize my own failure as a father. And then train up a child in the way he'll go when they're old enough to depart from it.

So, then I looked at that and I say, okay, I really must have messed up here because, and so, and then I went over to Isaiah 1:2, where God says, the perfect father, God says, I was your father. I gave you the best commandments of the world and you rebelled against me. God, the perfect father had rebellious children. God, the perfect father had his children, the Israelites, rebel against him over and over and over. If you don't believe that, read the book of Numbers over and over and over.

If you don't believe that, go into Exodus and go to chapters 20 and following, actually chapters 15 and following, and see God gave them all these miracles and all these things and they rebelled against him over and over. And ultimately God's children do what to his own son, his own son. He sends all these messengers, my servants, the prophets, they go and warn the people, turn back to God. And then finally he says, I'll send my son. What do they do with the son? They grab the son and kill him. Okay.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, when he's old and not depart from it,” God was the perfect father. He trained his children, gave them his law, gave them his word, and gave them his Son. And they rebelled against him and actually ended up killing his Son. So, therefore, Proverbs are not promises. And you have got to realize that.

A proverb gives you one vector on reality. There are many vectors that apply in situations. And so, you get life is more complex than a single proverb and things.

So, it's dealing with complex reality.

Now, authority of proverbial authority, I've divided it into five categories. Now these are somewhat arbitrary. I made these up. I'm sorry. I made these up as I read through the book of Proverbs and tried to digest it. The Proverbs come with certain levels of authority at you. And so, I noticed that there were about five.

Now I'm not saying that's the perfect number would be seven, of course, but I missed it. I've got five. And other people may, Steinmann, I think in his excellent commentary, divides it up another way or whatever. But these are just things that came to my head as I reflected on the book of Proverbs.

The first category, these are levels of authority. Do all Proverbs come with tremendous authority? You've got to do this. No. So let me just give an example.

Number one, a universal mandate. I want to call this plus-plus, a universal mandate. This is always true. You should do this always.

Proverbs 3:5, many of you will know this verse, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” When is that true? “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge him and he will direct your paths.”

That's a universal mandate. You say, Hildebrand, you just told us not to universalize these. No, that is a universal mandate. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding.” Always do that. That's a universal mandate, plus-plus. Universal mandate, that's number one. That has very strong universality to it.

Now, let me move it down a level. This is number two, an ideal confirming exhortation. Proverbs chapter 10:4, “a slack hand causes poverty.” “A diligent hand makes rich.” That's generally true. “A lazy hand makes poor, a diligent hand makes rich.” That's generally true. It's not always true. It's generally true. So, it's not always true. There are counterexamples to that.

Therefore, I want to say this is an ideal confirming exhortation. In other words, he's trying to tell us, be diligent. Don't be lazy. You be lazy, you'll be poor. You be diligent, you'll be rich. Now granted, there are other factors in life, but that's the general vector of that one vector. So go for it. That's an ideal confirming exhortation. That's number two.

Number three, I like to quote the old song. This is a proverb "that's just the way it is." This is a simple, non-moral observation. In other words, the sage is looking at the situation. He's making a non-moral, simple, non-moral observation. It's an observation of life. That's just the way it is. It may not be right. It may be wrong. That's just the way it is. It's not telling you, you need to do this. It's just saying, this is the way it is.

You better click that one in your mind. You recognize it when you see it, but that's just the way it is. It's a simple, non-moral observation.

Proverbs 14:10. Proverbs 14.10, "the heart knows its own bitterness and no stranger shares its joy." "The heart knows its own bitterness and no stranger shares its joy." He's not saying, do this. He's saying, that's just the way it is. A heart knows its own bitterness. Each heart knows its own bitterness and no stranger shares its joy.

Another proverb that would be in this, just the way it is, "The rich have many friends, but the poor guy can't find a friend." "The rich have many friends." (Prov 14:20) Now, is he saying, well, that's a good thing? No, he's not saying good thing or bad thing. He's saying, that's just the way it is, man. It's the way it is.

So, some proverbs are not authoritatively telling you to do this or don't do this. They're saying, that's just the way it is. So that's number three. That's just the way it is. So you've got one that says, do this all the time. Trust the Lord with all your heart. You've got another ideal confirming, work hard, get rich, be lazy, be poor. And then you've got just the way it is. Each heart knows its own bitterness and no one else can share its joy.

Then on the negative side, number four, you've got an ideal disconfirming warning. An ideal disconfirming warning. "Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets." This is generally true. "Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets." You don't want your secrets. You talk to a slanderer, they're going to spread your secrets. So, this is saying this is generally true. Now it's possible if the slanderer is your really good friend, that they may not spread the slander and things like that.

So, there are other factors that may come in to play. So, this is an ideal, this is a negative, one negative, an ideal disconfirming warning. Proverbs 11:13.

And then the fifth one is absolute prohibition. So it went from universal mandate, trust in the Lord, to absolute prohibition saying this is always wrong. Don't do this. It's an absolute prohibition. I'll use Proverbs 6:16 and following for this. "There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him. Haughty eyes." Don't do that. You should not be proud and arrogant. A lying tongue. You don't lie. You tell the truth always. These are negative absolute prohibitions. A lying tongue, a hand that sheds innocent blood. That's what those hoodlums are trying to get the young man to do, to engage in violence, the gang, to not shed innocent blood. The heart that devises wicked plans, the feet that run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers. You don't want to be that kind of person. Six things the Lord hates, seven, don't do this.

These are universal absolute prohibitions. And so, you went from positive, positive mandate down to ideal confirming exhortation to do this. You've got, that's just the way it is.

Then you've got a negative. Don't do this. Not wise.

And then the absolute prohibition, never do this. And so those different levels of authority that are placed on each of the Proverbs, and you've got to sort through that. Now, I just, like I told you, I just made up those five categories, but all I'm trying to say is that when you read Proverbs, it's not, and I said this, the authority of a Proverb is not uniform and flat.

The authority of a Proverb is not uniform and flat but variegated and contoured depending on the usage in the context in which it's being used. And so, you'd be careful. The authority of Proverbs is not flat and uniform. It's variegated, it's contoured, and it depends on the situation and stuff. And you've got to be smart enough. That's what wisdom is needed for.

You've got to be wise enough to know when and how to understand this Proverb interfaces with the situation that's being used for. The wise interpreter must avoid universalizing and dogmatizing proverbial sayings. Proverbial usage must be taken into account, which may not have anything to do with the authoritative and authoritative proposition.

Perhaps the Proverbs is cited simply for pointed humor. And so, some of the Proverbs are meant to be humorous, such as the sluggard. They've got a sluggard guy and the guy is too lazy to bring the food back to his mouth. And so, it's kind of a parody. It's a mocking of the sluggard. It's meant to be humorous.

So, don't get, what is the propositional truth of this saying? That's not the point. It's meant for humor. And you've got another one in Proverbs 23, that was in Proverbs 19:24. But in Proverbs 23:34, it talks about the drunkard and it describes a drunkard

as one who hangs onto a mast and the mast of the boat is going back and forth. And the drunkard is kind of weaving back and forth and back and forth. It's trying to describe in a parody, a kind of satirical way. You drink too much, you're going to walk like this, man. And they even do that till this day. Walk the line when you're pulled over for a DUI. Drunk driving under the influence.

And so, if a person's drunk, they can't walk a straight line. And so, this proverb here says, you're like a guy holding onto a mast of the ship, a sail-swinging ship that's floundering all over the place. So sometimes Proverbs are meant for humor.

So, you got to back off from this propositional truth thing and just say, it's meant to be funny. Are we allowed to be humorous? Hmm. Okay. Yes, Proverbs says so.

Orality, what is the relationship of orality to proverbial statements? The oral nature of Proverbs should not be overlooked in their creation, transmission, and use.

Proverbs are oftentimes passed down orally. It's no accident that the theme of speech and oral communication is central, both in Egyptian wisdom literature, as well as Israelite Proverbs. Proverbs 12:18. There is one whose rash words are like a sword thrust. The words hurt people. Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me. That's baloney. Words can hurt plenty. So that proverb doesn't work really, but it works sometimes.

Sticks and stones. There is one whose rash words are like a sword thrust, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. The tongue of the wise brings healing. That's the kind of tongue you want. The one that speaks and heals others. Proverbs 12:18.

So, this notion of speech, oralness, it's all through the book of Proverbs. Oral implications are found in the oft-repeated phrase, "listen, my son, to your father's instruction, heed your mother's teaching." Okay. And so oftentimes, listen, my son, it's oral. It's oral. Listen, listen, my son to your father's instruction.

Mieder notes that one can go so far as to say that there is a story behind every modern proverb. We've kind of talked about that. A proverb is a capture, a summarized story.

Modern proverbs with variation. "Don't change horses in midstream." "Don't change horses in midstream." "Don't swap horses while crossing a stream." So those two proverbs are very similar. And basically what you have is in this oral transmission, the proverb oftentimes changes.

And so, this orality allows for this kind of fluidity of the proverb to change. Orality may help explain the variations of duplicate proverbs, of which there are many.

A guy named Snell, wrote a brilliant book, when I was younger, I didn't appreciate. But as I've aged, this book is phenomenal. Twice Told Proverbs. Twice Told Proverbs by Snell. Knut Heim has also wrote a book on Poetic Imagination that's just wonderful and takes these duplicate proverbs and goes through the whole book of proverbs. Knut Heim's book is probably 600 pages. It's a brilliant book.

And here, for example, let me just show you Proverbs 14:12 equals Proverbs 16:25. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." Many of us have memorized that verse. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is death." And it's repeated then in Proverbs 14:12, and 16:25.

There are also proverbs with whole verse repetition with one word switched. Whole proverb is given, repeated, but with a word switched. Proverbs 19: 5 and Proverbs 19: 9. "A witness of lies will not be declared innocent and a testifier of falsehoods would not escape." Proverbs 19: 9, just four verses down. "A witness of lies will not be declared innocent." This translation, sometimes the ESV really bothers me in its woodenness of its translation. This is an example of that. This is not very proverbial. They've kind of destroyed the proverbial moment, if you will. I'm sorry.

But anyway, "a witness of lies will not be declared innocent and a testifier of falsehoods will perish." So, you'll notice in the first one, that they're exactly the same, except a testifier of falsehoods will not escape versus a testifier of falsehood will perish. So, in one, the guy "will not escape," but in the other one "will perish."

So, it's the same, but the one word is switched on that. So same proverb, one word switched.

There's a thrice-told proverb with modifications. So, this proverb is told three times in the book of Proverbs with modifications. So, you can see the orality allows for this flexibility type of thing. It says, "a wise son," chapter 10:1, chapter 10:1 of Proverbs, "A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother."

If you go over to chapter 15:20, same type of proverb. It says, "a wise son makes a glad father," same thing. "A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish man despises his mother." So you see the B part of that proverb, a wise, a foolish man despises his mother, not a foolish son is a grief to his mother.

And then in Proverbs 17:25, this is a thrice told proverb. It says, "a foolish son is a grief to his father and a bitterness to her who bore him." So here it's a grief and bitterness, both are negative on that one. But you can see that Proverbs 17:25 is related to 10:1, a wise son brings joy to a father, a foolish son is a grief to a mother. And now it says, "a foolish son is a grief to his father and a bitterness to her who bore him."

So that's a thrice-told proverb, but you can see the variations that the Proverbs had. And that's kind of standard with Proverbs throughout all cultures, all languages, where there'll be these duplicate Proverbs that have these variations to them. Largely the orality accounts for that.

Often variations are introduced in whole verse repetitions and with one-word variation. We looked at that. There are also ones with two word variations, Proverbs 10:1 and 15:20 and three-word variations, Proverbs chapter 10:2, 11:4, 15:13, and 17:22. So, in each of these cases, the proverb is repeated.

One-word change, two-word change, three words change, and numerous collections, modern collections cite the same proverb with multiple variations. Sometimes the Proverbs are purposely twisted and Mieder has a whole book on Twisted Proverbs that's just brilliant, like all his books are on proverbs. He's like I said, he's the world leading expert on paremiology.

So sometimes they're twisted, but there's a playfulness about proverbs. I think people sometimes should chill out and just say, hey, this is, you know, so spare the rod and spoil the child. Have you ever hear that one? Oh, we don't say that one anymore. Okay. It's illegal. We should cancel that one.

Spare the rod and spare the child. Okay. "Spare the rod and spoil the child" becomes "Spoil the rod and spare the child." "Spoil the rod." So, they flip the two words, spoil the rod, and spare the child.

Here's another one. 'Early to bed, early to rise, and you will be healthy, wealthy, and wise.' I like that one. I'm a morning person. "Early to bed, early to rise, and you become healthy, wealthy, and wise." Well, that proverb, there's a shift to it. It says this, "Early to bed, early to rise, and your girl goes out with other guys." Let me do that again. "Early to bed, early to rise, and your girl goes out with other guys." You say, oops, there's some truth to that too.

So anyway, it's kind of a playful twisting of Proverbs. I always think that "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." When I was in seminary, I was separated from my wife. She was up in Buffalo, New York. I was down in Philadelphia. You're going to seminary. "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." It's hard to study for your classes when you're thinking about your girlfriend. So, we ended up getting married and the rest is history.

But anyway, 49 years, best years of my life. The only thing I know is that "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." Or is it "Absence makes the heart to wander"? Hmm. "Out of sight, out of mind"? Hmm. Okay. And so, you can see how that a proverb can be played back in kind of a playful variation.

Now, the Hebrew word for proverb is the word mashal. And the term is used in the Proverbs of Solomon, the mashalim, the proverb of Solomon in Proverbs 1:1. I think it's also used in 10:1, etc. It often means likeness or similitude, but there's quite divergent variances on this word mashal.

The word that's translated "proverb" can actually mean many, many more things than just proverb. So, this word mashal in Hebrew can actually be said of popular sayings in Jeremiah 23:28, popular sayings. It can be used as a literary aphorism in Proverbs chapter 10:1 to 22:16. Those are aphorisms, short sentences, and it's used to describe those.

In Isaiah 14:4, mashal is used for a taunt song, a taunt song. Habakkuk chapter two, verses six through eight, a byword, a word that goes out. It's known by everybody and usually in shameful context.

Deuteronomy chapter 28, verse 37, mashal is used for a byword. And in Ezekiel 17.1 to 10, it's used for an allegory. Are there allegories in the Bible? Yes, there are.

In Ezekiel 17.1 to 10, an allegory and it's described as a mashal. So mashal is the Hebrew term for allegory, in other words, you can't take one word in Hebrew and say it means one word in English. Mashal always means proverb. No, mashal in Hebrew, there are several things that can mean a byword, a taunt. It can mean an aphorism. It can mean an allegory. And so, this one word can take on many meanings and stuff. Mashal calls for one to reflect and make connections. So, in all of these, you're having a mashal statement that's basically calling on the person to make connections with the current situation.

Proverbs often use sound. Sound techniques are often used in proverbs as in English. As in English, practice makes perfect. You see the two Ps? "Practice makes perfect." Two Ps. "Forgive and forget." "Forgive and forget" with the two Fs there. "A stitch in time saves nine." As we said, that was a rhyme. "A stitch in time, saves nine." The rhyme there. "Haste makes waste." "Haste makes waste" or "taste makes waist." That's my twisting of the proverbial sentence.

Here's a normal sentence. God created humans and people make money. God created humans and people make money. Now that's crafted into this proverb. God made man, man made money. God made man, man made money.

Do you hear that ma ma ma ma ma ma sound? God made man, man made money. The repetition of the mmm sound. This also happens in Hebrew, by the way, not just in English.

Proverbs chapter 10:9a, it says, one who walks honestly, walks securely. The one who walks honestly, walks securely. Let me read that again.

The one who walks honestly, walks securely. Cholek betom, yelek betak. The cholek and the yelek are the same word, walks.

Okay. Cholek, yelek, and you can hear the similarities. Betam, securely or honestly, with betak, securely.

So, both have a bt, bt, the second word, and the fourth word, bt, bt. Betam, betak. holek, yelek, holek, yelek, first word and third word, second word and fourth word. Betam, betak. Okay. So, the sound, you can hear it. Holek, betam, yelek, betak. Okay. Note the symmetrical endings of the bt and the ek endings on the end of that.

It's no surprise that those who edited Proverbs also use sound to link things together. Proverbs chapter 11:9 to 11, 11:9 to 11, they all begin with a b, which means by or with, which is the same thing, but with the word an in front of it. U means an in that context.

So, you've got chapter 11:9, 9 b, 10 b, 11 b, all six lines there, all the way down. And so, it begins and so that links then Proverbs 11:9 to 11 are linked by sound.

On to the next one. Parallelism. We've noticed before that Proverbs come in parallelism. Mark Sneed notes that most Proverbs outside the book of Proverbs are one-line sayings. Judges chapter 8, verse 21, 1 Samuel 24:13, et cetera. Carol Fontaine's book, Traditional Sayings of the Old Testament, and Sneed's article in Dell's recent brilliant book, Biblical Wisdom Literature on page 85. The single line outside the book of Proverbs are just single line. Inside the Proverbs, you get "A wise son brings joy to father, foolish son is a grief to mother." There are two lines.

Poetically, they have the bi-colon, bi, two-colon lines, two lines. So "wise son brings joy to father, a foolish son is a grief to his mother." But outside the book of Proverbs, they're only one line.

"As a man, so is his strength." So, sentential proverbs in the book of Proverbs that we're looking at are going to be mostly two-line Proverbs, not one single one-line proverb. So proverbial sentences then are built into parallelism because Proverbs is a poetic book.

And so, when you go into the book of Proverbs, you'll notice even in English, they've got it line by line. It's not written in paragraphs as the historical narratives. If you flop over to the book of Genesis, you see paragraph, paragraph, paragraph.

In Proverbs and Psalms and your poetic books, it's line by line. Poetry is line, line driven. Then historical narratives are paragraph-driven.

And so, you can see that just quick, easy, even in modern English, easy come, easy go. Do you see the parallelism there? Easy come, easy go. There's a parallelism there.

But in Hebrew, the traditional loath method, and I know Kugel's work and et cetera, et cetera, I've done a lot of work in Hebrew poetry. So I'm just making this simple. And I'm obviously oversimplifying this, but synonymous, what they call synonymous parallelism.

This means two lines going in the same direction, ABC, ABC, ABC, ABC. And they're both going in the same direction. This is called synonymous parallelism.

Proverbs chapter 16, verse 28, a perverse person, a perverse person, subject, verb, stirs up dissension, object. A gossip, subject, separates, verb, close friends. So a perverse person stirs up dissension and a gossip separates close friends, basically saying the same thing, going in the same direction.

And so how the lines relate this. And it's, I realize when you say synonymous, and this is one of the great critiques of Lowth's work, is that when you say synonymous, it doesn't mean this equals that. Okay.

A synonym has both likes and similarities and dissimilarities. And so, whenever you say, you've got a synonymous parallelism, you say, how is it synonymous? How is it alike? But then you've got to also ask, how is it different? How does the second line take it beyond the first line? And so, you say, basically, how is it similar? How is it different? So, you can use an X, a Y, and X axis. How is it similar? And how is it different? And you go down each A, B, C, and you ask, how is it similar? How is it different? How is it similar? How is it different? How is it similar? How is it different? How is it similar? How is it different? And you can do an analysis then that way.

I'm sorry, getting off on this stuff. We could go into that for hours. Antithetic parallelism. So synonymous parallelism, two lines, heading in the same direction, ABC, ABC.

Antithetic parallelism is when the lines go the opposite ways. "A wise son brings joy to a father," Proverbs 10.1. "A foolish son is a grief to his mother."

It tells you kind of the antithesis. So, a wise son is parallel to a foolish son, brings joy, brings grief to a father and mother. Now those aren't opposites like that. They're actually complementary. So, when you go to do the antithesis, yeah, the father and mother are different, but that's not the point. The point is it's complementary, the parents.

And so, it divides up the parents, father, and mother in a complementary way. That's antithetic parallelism. When two lines go like this, a wise son brings joy, a foolish son brings grief.

Now, an emblematic proverb or an emblematic parallelism is when it uses a metaphor or simile. So, you've got, "in the light of the king's face is life and his favor is like a cloud of spring rain." "His favor is like a cloud of spring rain."

Again, I don't like the translation here, but anyway, emblematic is then this metaphorical use, ABC, ABC, but it's ABC and ABC of the second line then takes it into this metaphor of a cloud, "like a cloud with spring rain." That would be a simile, "like a cloud with spring rain."

Synthetic proverb means ABC DEF. In other words, synthetic parallelism means there are two lines there, but the ABC is not, it goes ABC DEF. In other words, it takes you on that way. So, for example, Proverbs chapter 16:7, "When a person's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes live at peace his enemies."

So, you've got ABC, A, person's ways, B are pleasing, C, to the Lord, and then D, he makes, E, live at peace, F, his enemies. So that's called synthetic. When synthetic, there are two lines where they don't really parallel. They're not antithetic, they're not synonymous, and they're not metaphorical. They call it synthetic. It's a way of punting basically.

So, okay. Now, a lot of times in these parallel lines, and I just bring this up just to push the poetry a little bit. In Proverbs 14:19, there's what's called verb gapping.

So oftentimes the first line will give you the whole statement and the second line will gap out the verb, assuming that you as the listener or the reader will supply the verb in. So the verb is dropped out or one of the units is dropped out. So, you've got ABC, A, C, and the B is dropped out.

And then usually what happens when one element is dropped out, another element will be expanded to make the lines the same length. So that'll be ABC, ABC, ABC, the B will be dropped out, but then the C will be enhanced longer. So, the A, C will be more expansive.

So, for example, Proverbs 14:19, "The evil bows down before the good." So evil is the subject, bows down is the verb, the object is before the good. The second line is "the wicked at the gates of the righteous." "At the gates of the righteous," what? They bow down. So, the "bows down" is not said in the second line. It's an ellipsis. It's dropped out. It's gapped. They call it gapping.

And they gapped out that unit. But then notice that the last element, the object, “at the gates of the righteous,” the other one said before the good, short and sweet. This one says “at the gates of the righteous,” it's expanded so that the lines are the same length—you could call that compensation.

But the verb is dropped out and the verb is to be supplied by the interpreter. So those are called verb gapping. It happens a lot. That's why I kind of raise it here is because it happens so often. Syntactic parallelism. Syntactic parallelism.

People hate syntax, but it helps here in Hebrew poetry. So, you hear SVO, subject, verb, object. SVO, subject, verb, object. And sometimes it goes SVOM, subject, verb, object, and modifier. So, in Proverbs 10:12, it says “hatred,” subject, verb, “stirs up,” object, “dissension.” “But love,” subject, “covers,” verb, “all wrongs,” object. So, it's “Hatred, stirs up, dissension,” SVO. And the second line, “but love covers all wrongs,” SVO. What's interesting in this one is, and this sounds really good in English, “hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers all wrongs.” It's beautiful antithetic poetry. “Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers all wrongs.”

It's interesting in Hebrew, that's not the order. In Hebrew, the order is SVO, OVS. SVO, OVS. So, it's ABC, CBA. The order is flipped in the second line, making it a chiasmic structure. And I think, and before we talked about chiasm, it's ABBA. If you connect the A, two A's, and connect the two B's, it makes an X. In English, we call it a Chi [X], in Greek, or chi, some people it's more chi, chi, chiasm. Okay. So, chiasm is ABBA. The second line in the order is flipped. And so, we have a chiasmic structure here, and that's just kind of a cool thing they do in Hebrew with the chiasmic structure.

Okay. Now, proverbial figures of speech, proverbial figures of speech. I don't kind of like that. These figures of speech are not frivolous things that you sprinkle on the proverb to kind of make it more memorable, to make it more fancy. And so, you have these figures of speech that just hype it up into this metaphorical kind of thing.

I don't like the way to think like that. I like more the way that cognitive scientists today would do with cognitive linguistics, whereas our brains are wired to think metaphorically and to think metonymy and metaphor, metonymy and metaphor, those two things. There's been a huge study of metaphor and metonymy in modern cognitive linguistics that can help us immensely understand the metaphors and the metonymy in scripture based on cognitive science.

And it's been really helpful to me. But we'll talk anyways, we'll just, this is a real boiled down and you need to look at the cognitive linguistic people, what they're doing. It's rich and it's deep and it's good.

Now, metonymy, what is a metonymy? When one word or phrase is used for another, substituted for another. So, for example, Proverbs 27:24b, says, “And a crown is not secure for all generations,” “and a crown is not secure for all generations.” Are we really talking about a crown? Or is the crown a metonymy for the king? And a crown or “the king is not secure for all generations.”

So, the crown is a substitute word that's substituted in for the word king. Crown stands for king. That's called a metonymy.

We would do this in English, we'd say the bench decided. The bench in a judicial case, say in a courtroom, the bench decided. Well, that means the judge decided, but we call the judge the bench.

The bench is what he sits on and stuff like that. Or the White House decided. The White House decided.

And so, “the White House decided” really means the president decided or today, probably his counsel around him decided and then they tell him what to say, hoping he will say what they said. But anyway, the White House decided means, you know, the people in charge, the president decided. So that's called a metonymy. One word substituted for another.

I will try to maintain in another lecture that the fear of God is a metonymy. The name of God, referencing the name of God, “the name” is actually a metonymy for God himself.

So, metonymy is a huge thing today in cognitive linguistics and really worth being studied. I know we've done a lot with metaphor and there are new ways of looking at metaphor. There are some really neat ways of looking at metaphors by Fred Putnam, a friend of mine. Anyway, he's done a lot with metaphorical ways of looking at metaphors in the Bible. And it's really, really rich and really opens horizons. It needs to be studied.

Similes. Similes are comparisons between two diverse realms using “like” or “as.” Comparison between two realms, different realms, using like or as to kind of map one on the other. Proverbs 12:18 says this, “Reckless words pierce like a sword.” “Reckless words pierce like a sword.” “Like a sword,” a sword pierces and hurts people. So, the words pierce like a sword. And so, “like a sword” would be a simile. And so that would be a simile that's used in the Proverbs.

Metaphors. Metaphors are comparison between two realms that don't use the word like or as. So, for example, in Proverbs 18:10, we've got “The name of the Lord is a strong tower.” Then you ask, well, how is the name of the Lord like a strong tower?

What does a strong tower represent? Security and protection and a whole bunch of other things.

And then you can relate it to other types of security type things like how is the name of the Lord is a strong tower, but the name of the Lord is a rock too. Or, you know, you can get this rock imagery too of the same security and protection. So how is rock related to a strong fortress or strong tower? And so, metaphors, metaphors are this comparison.

The name of the Lord is like, is a strong tower. And so those metaphors, similes, metonymy, hyperbole. Hyperbole is an overstatement that helps the proverb focus attention. "All is fair in love and war." Does that really mean all? Always mean all? Whenever you see the word all, you have got to ask some questions. Does it really mean all? "All Jerusalem went out to see John the Baptist." Is that really true? All Jerusalem, everybody in Jerusalem went out to see John the Baptist? No, it's a hyperbole. It's an overstatement for emphasis. There was a crippled guy in John 5 who didn't get away from the pool of Bethesda. He didn't walk all the way down there and get baptized by John the Baptist down by the Jordan from Jerusalem. So, hyperbole is an overstatement for emphasis. And so, you have got to be really careful when the Bible speaks hyperbolically, like if your eye sins, gouge it out. Are you really going to do that? Or Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, that's a hyperbole. It's an overstatement for emphasis. It doesn't mean you gouge out your eye because then you'd have to gouge out your other eye. Actually, then your heart's corrupt too. You'd have to cut out your heart. There'd be nothing left of you.

So anyway, a hyperbole is an overstatement for emphasis. "So when eating with the king, put a knife to your throat if you're given to gluttony." [Prov. 23:2] Now, does this mean actually you should put a knife to your throat when you eat with the king? No, he's just telling you, hey, when you eat before the king, show proper manners. Don't get into gluttony and chow down when you're before the king because he's going to see that and he's going to say, hey, man, that guy's a glutton. So put a knife to your throat. It's a hyperbole. It's an overstatement for emphasis.

Now a synecdoche. Now a synecdoche is actually a type of metonymy. So, you have metonymy as a big category. A synecdoche is one type of metonymy. And that's something like "all hands on deck." When you say "all hands on deck," you don't mean all hands put your hands on your deck. What you mean is "all hands" represents all people. Basically, all the sailors engage at this point. All hands on deck means everybody should engage at this point. All hands stands for the people who use hands. So, the tongue in Proverbs 17.7, "The tongue of the righteous is choice silver." The tongue of the righteous. Now is it saying just his tongue? Yeah, silver tongue. Sounds like a guy with a silver tongue.

One of the church fathers was named Silver Tongue. The tongue of the righteous is choice silver. Silver is a metaphor and the tongue of the righteous is talking about the whole righteous person and his speech.

Personification. Personification is another figure of speech that's used big time in Proverbs 1-9 where wisdom is personified. The idea of wisdom, hokmah, is actually personified into a person called Madam Wisdom.

And so, the woman tries to warn the young man about Madam Folly who's going to try to seduce him. And then wisdom is personified as a woman who's warning. So, wisdom calls out in the streets, Proverbs chapter 1 verse 20. She laughs, Proverbs 1:26. She has built her house. She, wisdom, has built her house in chapter 9 of Proverbs. So, wisdom is portrayed as a woman who builds her house, who laughs, who offers herself and calls in the streets. And it's called personification. Proverbs 1-9 will have much to say on the personification of wisdom.

Now, proverbial themes and vocabulary. A proverb is defined, we said short witty sentences. What are the themes that are usually talked about in wisdom? Besides sound patterning and parallelism and heightened use of figures of speech, the biblical proverbial genre is also marked by certain themes and vocabulary that mark it out its conceptual space. So, themes and vocabulary will mark out its conceptual space. Whybray has a wonderful list of wisdom vocabulary. I'll just list some here. He's got many, many more. Lacking sense point to wisdom context. Fool, when it's mentioned fool, you kind of get that you're in wisdom territory. Counsel, simple or simpleton, a mocker, discerning, clever, discipline, the way is a huge theme, when you see the way, you're in wisdom territory. Knowledge, discernment, blessed, and various forms of wisdom, hokmah, to name a few.

I've also noticed that the noun phrase, the noun phrase, the NP, X of Y of the Y, the head of the righteous, the mouth of the wicked. So, the X of the Y, that phrase is also very typical in Proverbs, Proverbs 10:6, the head of the righteous, Proverbs 10:6. So, when you get that, the mouth of the wicked, the head of the righteous, you say, hmm, wisdom, kind of way of thinking.

There's often the heavy use of antithetical word pairs. So, there are word pairs that are antithetical, antithesis, antonyms, not synonyms, but antonyms. And so, you have the wise and the foolish. And when you see wise and foolish, boom, triggers wisdom context. That's wisdom terminology. I may be in wisdom literature here. Wise and foolish, righteous and wicked. When you see righteous, wicked, righteous, wicked, righteous, wicked, the problem with some of the translations, including the NLT that I worked on, is they don't translate righteous, righteous all the time. So, it's not righteous, wicked. A lot of times it translates for *sadiq*, righteous. They translate it as godly, godly, and wicked. And I'm not sure then the contrast that actually breaks down the contrast. And I wish we could have been, anyway, it's a long story there.

But anyway, the righteous and the wicked, the diligent and the sluggard, and the diligent. And those two, again, antithetical things, the sluggard and the diligent. The diligent works hard, the sluggard who's lazy.

So those antithetics, wise/foolish, righteous/wicked, diligent/lazy, or sluggard. When you see those kinds of antitheses come up, you say, hmm, proverbial territory here. Major themes that are covered in Proverbs, the righteous and the wicked is a major theme. The wise and the foolish is a major theme. Diligent and the sluggard is a major theme. Rich and poor, is a major theme.

Topics of friendship. Book of Proverbs talks a lot about friends. Speech, speech, is talked a lot about. Seducing and virtuous women, seducing and virtuous women are talked a lot about in Proverbs. Life and death, life and death. Family is talked about there. Yahweh and the king, Yahweh, and the king are common in Proverbs. So, these are major themes. There's a guy, Derek Kidner, who years ago wrote an IVP, InterVarsity Press, little book, Commentary on Proverbs, he did a wonderful job of isolating some of these major themes. It's a good treatment, Derek Kidner's book on Proverbs, short and sweet.

Topics not found in Proverbs. We did a whole lecture on what is not found in Proverbs. We did what a proverb is not, and now we're doing what a proverb is. So, a proverb is not found. You don't have the temple mentioned, no priesthood mentioned, no prophets mentioned, no redemptive history, great salvation acts, no feasts of Israel, no exodus, these are major themes that are echoed all through the Old Testament. They are never found in Proverbs.

The covenant itself, covenant is not found in Proverbs. No condemnation of idolatry. Idolatry is condemned from one, I mean, actually from Genesis three all the way through and the prophets rail on this.

I mean, for chapter after chapter after chapter in Isaiah and Jeremiah, idolatry is condemned, roundly condemned all over the place in Scripture, Psalms included. Idolatry is condemned, yet it's never mentioned, not a word in Proverbs. Choice of personal names, personal names are not found in Proverbs except in titles.

Place names are not found except in titles and place names, people's names, and also people group names, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Gergesites, Jebusites, none of the ites and tites, Philistines, even Philistines, which are all over the place are not mentioned once. Any of the ites and tites are mentioned once in the book of Proverbs. So Proverbs is different.

The topics are different. The way of discussing it is different. And we noted that in that other lecture that we were in.

Now, there are eight deep structure classifications that I'd just like to run through. We developed this on the basis of motive and we did it in another lecture, but I just want to run through quickly here. This is the underlying, we've talked about the surface structure, the surface structure, the grammar, SVO, subject, verb, object, subject, verb, object.

And we've talked about modifications of that. We've talked about some of the semantic words, words, sound, sound and sense, and how the sound, halak, betom, yalak, betak, and how the sound actually echoes, "haste makes waste," and God made men, men made money, kind of the MMMM sound. And so sound.

And now what I want to look is look at the deep structure underneath the grammar and the words themselves going up, you know, wise and foolish, wicked and righteous, sluggish, and underneath that, the structure of these Proverbs. And so I divided it up into topic and comment, and then basically looked at character-consequence. And I examined Proverbs 10 to 15, which are the sentence sayings there.

And I found that there were this character-consequence, there are 152 of those. And I give you some of the references there in Proverbs chapter 10:2b, but the righteousness, "but righteousness delivers from death," character-consequence, but righteousness delivers from death, character-consequence death, but righteousness delivers from death. So that's character-consequence.

There are 152 of those. So, it's very prominent, character-consequence, major, major underlying structure in the book of Proverbs, character-consequence.

Character-act. Proverbs 10:14a, the wise layup knowledge, character, the wise person, what does he do? He lays up knowledge. So wise layup knowledge, character, and then action.

Character-evaluation, number three, character-evaluation, Proverbs chapter 10:20a, "the tongue of the righteous is choice silver," character, the tongue of the righteous. Remember the tongue of the righteous, that noun phrase kind of thing, tells you it's Proverbs and wisdom. The tongue of the righteous is choice silver. Choice silver is using a metaphor to tell you it's a value. So, you have character-evaluation.

So, we have character-consequence, major, character-act 70 times. and character-evaluation 16 times in that section of Proverbs.

You have act-consequence 63 times, Proverbs chapter 10:17a, whoever heeds instruction, act, is on the path to life, consequence. Whoever heeds instruction, that's the act, is on the path to life.

So, act consequence is done 63 times. I think the study that I did on motivation in Proverbs 10 to 15, what I showed was contrary to Koch and some of these other people that say act-consequence is the major underlying structure of the book of Proverbs, act-consequence, 63 times. However, I was able to show that over 150 times it was what? Character-consequence.

So, the real issue in Proverbs is not act-consequence, which is big, but character-consequence is even bigger. So, when you talk about act consequence, always remember, hey, think of the back of your head, character consequence is bigger and see if the proverb fits that. Item consequence, from the fruit of his mouth, a man eats what is good.

Item-consequence from the fruit of his mouth. Item evaluation, a rich man's wealth, Proverbs 10:15, is a strong city. Item-evaluation.

And then the last two, act-evaluation, "whoever loves discipline, loves knowledge." Act, whoever loves discipline, Proverbs 12: 1, loves knowledge.

And then this one is the eighth one is kind of an interesting one, appearance and reality. This appearance and reality, "One pretends to be rich yet has nothing, pretends to be rich yet has nothing." Another pretends to be poor yet has great wealth, Proverbs chapter 13:7. So, this appearance versus reality. So, the wise man is trying to say, things are not always as they seem. Things are not always as they seem.

So, act-consequence, 62 times, Koch, Van Rad, and others, act-consequence is big, but I suggest to you that character-consequence is 152 times, is almost double what act-consequence is, is an underlying structure for the book of Proverbs and what a proverb is.

Now, proverbial *sitz im leben* or the situation in life, the setting from which proverbs arise. What are the setting, settings, plural? There are three settings that are proposed from which the proverbs arise. One is schools and teachers. One is schools and teachers. Two is family or clan, parents, family or clan or parents. That's number two. And then number three is the royal court and the scribes, royal court and the scribes and courtiers.

So those are the three settings from which the Proverbs in the book of Proverbs arise. Schools, family and clan, and royal court and the scribes. Now schools, let me just hit these quickly.

This is called *sitz im leben*. If you're ever in technical literature, the situation in life, situation in life, there's a situation from which they originated, a situation from which they arose.

Schools. The first explicit mention of schools in Israel is in Ben Sirach 51:23, Ben Sirach 51: 23. And Ben Sirach comes in at about 180 BC, but 180 BC, that's what, 150 years or so after Alexander the Great. So, this is Ben Sirach, is one of the books of the Apocrypha, but it's the first to mention schools in Israel so that we don't have mention of it earlier.

We argue for this, the Proverbs coming from schools, largely based on Egypt and Mesopotamia parallels. Mesopotamia had schools, and so did Egypt. Now Israel is kind of the land between. And so, they projected if Mesopotamia had schools, Egypt had schools, probably Israel had schools too, but it's a conjecture. The didactic intent of Proverbs fits a school setting. So that's another way they argue for schools.

In other words, we don't have mention of schools early in Israel's history. Ben Sirach is the earliest mention, but schools in Mesopotamia and Egypt, and then also the didactic intent of Proverbs fit a school setting. Proverbs chapter 5:13, "I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my instructors." So here, in Proverbs 5:13, he mentions his teachers and his instructors. And so, a teacher and an instructor seem to be in a school setting. And so that's a didactic intent of Proverbs 5.13. The father that's talked about, listen to my son, to your father's instruction, Proverbs 3.1, 4.1, whatever.

A father speaking, the father may be in loco of a school teacher. And so he may call himself a father, but he's really the teacher. And he may take that term father, but he's really a teacher.

And so that's another thing that would suggest schools. So, schools suggested, hotly debated when school started in Israel. And I don't want to get into all that big debate.

Family and clan origins. A lot of the African Proverbs arise in a clan kind of tribal setting or a family setting and things like that. There is the frequent mention of father and mother, father and mother and son.

Proverbs 4:1, 3, 4, here are sons of father's instruction and be attentive that you may gain insight. When I was a son with my father, tender and only one in the sight of my mother. So, he's talking about the tender, early age of being instructed by his father and mother.

So, it seems to be a family setting that it comes from. He taught me and said, let your heart hold fast to my words and keep my commandments and live. Now my commandments, he's saying, he's not saying the commandments of Moses, you know, Mitzvot, referring to Moses' commandments.

He says, my commandments. So, the father here, when he uses the word commandments, is talking about what he taught his kid. Proverbs 31:1, is an oracle, his mother, Lemuel's mother, taught him, O son of my womb. And we can just see a mother talking, O son of my womb, Lemuel, my son, my son, is talking to King Lemuel. An oracle taught him by his mother. And so that seems to be, again, a family background, even though a royal family.

The folk background may be seen in Proverbs 10:5, "He who gathers in the summer is a prudent son. He who sleeps in the harvest is a son who brings shame." And so, this is, you know, sleeping during the harvest and working during the harvest seems to come from a folklore kind of background.

And also, by the way, it's not just harvesting these crops, but there seems to be also an urban context too, where it talks frequently in the book of Proverbs about the city, city gates, et cetera, and the king, the city gates and the kings, in Proverbs 16, and many other places. The king is mentioned and the city is mentioned frequently as well. Even the lords of the strong tower would put it in an urban kind of context.

So, it's not just strictly this, and you can't divide two, wham, bam, this is folk, this is out, these guys are a bunch of farmers, these are urban city dwellers. It wasn't quite that way. And so, you can't make a bifurcation like that. But anyway, family and clan origins, yes.

The court and scribe, now there's been a ton of work on this courtiers or the scribes and the king and the scribes and the king and the royal court in Proverbs. King Solomon is mentioned, in Proverbs chapter one, you know, the Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel.

Okay, Proverbs 10:1, these are the Proverbs of Solomon, okay. Even Proverbs 25:1, "These are the Proverbs of Solomon copied out and edited by the men of Hezekiah." And so, Hezekiah is the king and he's got a collection of Solomonic Proverbs and his scribes, the men of Hezekiah are copying them out, so make chapters 25 to 29.

That's where they come from. So, it's set in a kind of a King Solomon, King Hezekiah, King Lemuel, it's in 31. It's set in this royal setting and King Hezekiah, as we mentioned, King Lemuel in chapter 31.

Sages, these are the Proverbs of the sages, chapter 22:17, chapter 24:23 and chapter 30:1, the sages are mentioned. The presence of the king is in so many Proverbs, chapter 16:10 to 16, king, king, king, king, king. How to act before a king. Malkow sees Proverbs 28, 29, he calls it "A Manual for monarchs," a manual for monarchs or a manual for the king or kings. So, you want to be a good king? Look at these Proverbs, they help you be a good king. Manual for monarchs, in chapters 28 and 29.

Many studies on wisdom scribes by a guy named Leo Perdue has done volumes and really excellent work. Leo Perdue studied under Crenshaw, who's kind of the grandfather of the wisdom literature study at Vanderbilt University years ago. Things have seemed to shift in modern times. This is just my personal opinion, but he was from Vanderbilt with Crenshaw and his students, Kovacs and Perdue. I'm glad some of these other guys have all studied under Crenshaw on wisdom literature. It's kind of shifted now over to Cambridge University with Katherine Dell and her students now are putting out some really interesting stuff as well. And Knut Heim, whom I taped at Denver Seminary is also doing some really interesting things as well.

So modernly right now, excuse me, parallels from Egypt and Mesopotamia. Scribes are involved in Egyptian wisdom literature and Mesopotamian wisdom literature. And the problem is you have got to be careful. Golka and Westermann have demonstrated from African parallels that a proverb on harvesting the land could easily be written in the royal court. That's important information.

So, a proverb that talks about a son reaping and harvesting could also be said in the royal court. And they've studied African proverbs. And so even some of the royalty talks about harvesting now, because again, this is kind of a dimorphic culture where you've got the urban and the more rural that's combined in one.

And there's not a big separation between the two. And so, Westermann and Golka note that. So, you've got to be really careful about saying just because the imagery is using kind of a rural farming kind of imagery doesn't necessarily mean that it didn't originate in the king's court.

Now, big shift. Sorry, this is taking so long, but we're now into proverbial forms. What are the forms of proverbs? We've talked about surface structure, poetry, sound, and sense, and various things where the proverbs arose from, schools, and the royal court or in the family.

We've seen the deep structure categories of consequence, character consequence, act consequence. Now we want to look at what are the actual microforms or call these micro-genre things, small units that are used in proverbs. They're recorded in historical settings like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord, Genesis 10.9. As we said in the old days, there was a unilinear, there was one like, excuse me, like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord.

So, one-liner. In proverbs, they're all two lines, they're bi-colon, and oftentimes they're antithetic parallelism. And so, then people said, well, then they went from the one line, and then over time they developed into poetic two lines.

That's too simplistic. You can't go from the singular one line to two line, say there's an evolution there. That's too simplistic.

It doesn't fit the ancient Near Eastern collectional patterns and stuff. Within the book of Proverbs, there are clearly two types of literary forms. Now these are the big types.

There are instructions in Proverbs 1-9. There are instructions in these instructions in Proverbs chapters 1-9 and then also over in chapters 22-24 and then chapter 31 verses 1-9. So largely it's Proverbs 1-9 are these 10 instructions.

There are also instructions found in chapters 22-24. And then the sentence sayings. The sentence sayings are found in Proverbs 10-22 and 25-29.

Proverbs 10-22 and then 25-29 are these sentence sayings. "A wise son brings joy to a father, foolish son is a grief to his mother." Sentence sayings.

So then the book of Proverbs is broken up into these instructions, 10 instructions, chapters 1-9, the sentence sayings later on chapters 10 and following, with 22-24 being kind of embedded in there. Now some of the proverbial forms. The word proverb, as we said, *mashal*.

Mashal can be used, as we said before, to tag different genres. So, it can be used as a popular saying, it can be used as a literary aphorism, it can be used as a taunt song, it can be used as a byword, allegory, and actually the one I added here was the prophetic oracles of Balaam are called *mashalim*. Their numbers are 23-7.

Prophetic oracles of Balaam are also put under this term *mashal*, which is translated proverbs there. Now proverbial forms, instructions. So, this is our first proverbial microform, instructions.

Instructions begin like this, Proverbs chapters 1-9, 10 instructions, Proverbs 22-24. So those are largely the two sections, Proverbs 1-9. When you start reading Proverbs, it's these longer lectures or instructions. "Listen, my son, to your father's instruction. Do not deny your mother's teaching," that kind of thing. "Listen, my son, to your father's instructions."

Fox divides the instructions in Proverbs 1-9 into 10 father-son lectures. Chapter 1 verses 8-19, chapter 2, 1-22, chapter 3, 1-12, et cetera, et cetera. You can see the numbers there.

In between these instructions and this father as the instruction's child, these 10 father-son lectures are five interludes. So, the boom, boom, boom interludes between them. And this is Proverbs 1:20-33 and chapter 3:30, chapter 6:1-19, et cetera.

And chapter 8, whole chapter there, chapter 9, whole chapter there kind of thing. These are called interludes. And so, he has these 10 father-son instructions.

“Listen, my son, to your father's instructions” with these interludes, five interludes sprinkled in between chapters in chapters 1-9. Now the form of the instructions, what is the form? First, you have a call. Number one, you have “a call to hear.”

“Listen, my son, to your father's instruction.” Listen, my son is in chapter 2:1, chapter 3:1, 4:1, and 5:1. That's how they start. “Listen, my son,” shema, hear, hear my son, it a call to hear or listen.

So, the call to hear is followed by an exhortation. Listen and do not forsake your mother's teaching. For example, chapter 1:8, chapter 2:1b through 5, chapter 3.1, chapter 4.1, chapter 5.3. These exhortations, listen, my son, listen, my son, do not forsake, is an exhortation.

Then there's usually an explicit motivation. So, in the instruction, it's followed by a call to hear, exhortation, and then a motivation. The motivation is usually, as we said, when we did the motive clauses, was usually a ki “for” or “because.” “For they will be a garland for your head.” Proverbs chapter 1.9, chapter 2.6, 3.2, and 5.3. There's an explicit motivation for or because they will give you life and wealth, that kind of thing.

Now, number four, there's a lesson proper. And so in Proverbs chapter 1:10 to 16, the proverbial sage-father gives a lesson. And then usually it's concluded, number five, it's concluded. And the conclusion may often be a proverb.

So, he concludes by trying to seal the deal by putting in a sentence proverb to seal the deal and to say, yeah, see that even the proverb knows it. How useless to spread the net in full view of the birds. So, get out of there. Don't be, be smarter than a bird. When you see them coming with a net, these hoodlums are trying to get you to do violence. Get out of there. Even a, even a dumb bird flies away when it sees somebody coming after him with a net. So it uses the proverb, even a bird flies away when the net comes after him. So that's in the form of the instructions.

There are 10 lectures divided up into three subsets. There's the call to apprenticeship and several of the instructions are a call to apprenticeship, a call to remember and obey, chapter three, chapter four. The warning against illicit sexual relations, and this is pretty big in Proverbs, Proverbs five, chapter six, verses 20 to 35 and chapter seven.

So, chapters five and seven and the end of chapter six all talk about the warning about illicit sexual relations and it's pretty explicit and things like that. And these are the 10 instructions. The interludes are addresses given by Madam Wisdom extolling her instruction.

So, Madam Wisdom is personified here. Wisdom is going to speak. She is a woman and she is going to speak and she's going to extol her instruction.

Notice the woman is giving instruction in wisdom. Is it good to let women speak? Yeah, here, this is Madam Wisdom and she's extolling her instruction in Proverbs chapters 10 or one verses 20 to 20, 33 that avert her virtues in chapters 9 and 31. And by the way, let me just do this while I'm here and I'm thinking about it.

It's very interesting to me. The book of Proverbs begins with Madam Wisdom speaking in chapter one, where she goes out and calls all the people, to please come in. Madam Wisdom, I offer myself freely, but you've got to turn, and leave your simple ways.

It begins with Madam Wisdom and then Proverbs chapter 31, I believe ends with Madam Wisdom. And if you read Proverbs chapter 31, I think that's a description of how Madam Wisdom, what it's like to be married to Madam Wisdom, how she will serve you. And so, in some senses, I think Proverbs 31 is not about a real woman, but is about Madam Wisdom, this personification of Wisdom so that Proverbs begins with Madam Wisdom and it ends with Madam Wisdom.

This is what it's like to kind of date Madam Wisdom. And this is what it's like to be married to Madam Wisdom and how she will serve you. But by the way, there are not too many people who agree with me on that. So put that, you know, I'm saying put a question mark by that one. That may just be one of my weird things, but I do think that's a kind of beginning and end, Madam Wisdom and Madam Wisdom being married to her, Proverbs 31, the virtuous woman of the VW. Okay.

Now Proverbs real sentence instructions. We just did those, Proverbs 1-9. Now I want to talk about admonitions.

An admonition is usually an imperative. It's a command. It's like "guard your heart for out of it comes the things of life." Proverbs 4:23, guard your heart. Admonitions are found both in Mesopotamian and in Egyptian wisdom literature. The highest concentration of admonitions is found in Proverbs 1-9 and Proverbs 22-24.

Did you get the connection? Proverbs 1-9, 22-24, the same thing as we saw in the instructions, but the admonitions are also heavy in those sections. The admonitions architectonic formula is a call to listen and a condition, if you do this, and then imperative, do this or don't do this. Okay.

Do this or don't do this. And then there's a motivation, key, because, and then a summary instruction. And so, these admonitions then come up and they're admonishing.

They're either warning or prohibiting, maybe that's the way to say it, prohibiting activity, a prohibition or a mandate, do this or don't do this. And they're usually an imperative type of thing. For example, Proverbs 3-5 that we all know, "trust in the Lord with all your heart." That's the imperative. It's a mandate. Do this, mandated, "trust in the Lord with all your heart."

And then why? What's the motivation? He will make your path straight. That's the motive. So, you have a command, trust in the Lord with all your heart. What's the motive? Because "he will make your path straight." So that's an admonition. The admonition can either be positive, a mandate, trust in the Lord, or can be a negative prohibition.

My son, do not hang around with hoodlums who are trying to rip off people in Proverbs 1 -- Prohibitions. Prohibitions are in the same form, but in the negative. Proverbs 3:11, "Do not despise the Lord's discipline."

So, there would be a negative. Do not despise the Lord's discipline. Why? Because the Lord disciplines those he loves.

There you've got, do not despise the Lord's discipline, negative, just a kind of imperative thing because explaining the motive there. So, there's a string of admonitions actually in Proverbs 23:3-14. So, there's a string of these and how they all tie together. Do not despise his delicacies. Do not toil to acquire wealth. Do not eat bread of a stingy man. Do not speak in the hearing of a fool. Do not move the ancient landmark. Do not withhold discipline from a child.

So, it's do not, do not, do not. Those are prohibitions, prohibiting things. And it's put in this admonitional type format, Proverbs 23:3-14, kind of linking them together.

Now here's another one that's kind of fun. It's called a numerical saying. So, this is another micro-genre thing inside Proverbs, the big Proverbs.

This is a micro, one of the forms that wisdom takes. It's called a numerical saying. And let me just have some fun with this one. I think they're largely, the numerical sayings are largely found in Proverbs 30. Proverbs 30, you have a bunch of these. Three things are too amazing for me [cf. 6:16].

You see the number there? "Three things are too amazing for me. Four, I do not understand. The way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a woman."

You can see it's using all these kinds of natural things. And then the punchline comes in number four. For three things are amazing, four I do not understand.

For three and for four, that kind of thing. And then the way of a man with a woman. The pattern is there are X and X plus one.

So, there are three and then there are four, and that kind of thing. Examples are largely found in Proverbs 30, but also in chapter 6, verses 16 to 19, 26, et cetera. Amos 1 and 2 is a prophet that uses this for three sins against Damascus and for four, I'm going to come up and wipe out Damascus. And for three sins and for four, Edom them because you did this. For three sins and for four, Moab because you did this. And so, Amos uses the three plus four as a structure to kind of use in his prophetic things as well.

So, what I'm saying is these are not just wisdom, not just Proverbs. The micro-genre was used over in Amos 1 and 2 very effectively there in the prophetic sayings. Numerical sayings are drawn from nature, from society, ethics, and even theology and Job. So that's the numerical sayings.

Now there are also better-than sayings and better than sayings kind of, we've got things, the righteous and the wicked, the sluggard and the diligent, the wise and the foolish. It's kind of a binary setup.

The better-than Proverbs kind of blur that a little bit, better a poor person who walks in his integrity than one who is crooked in speech and is a fool. Proverbs 19:1. Bryce and Ogden have done two articles on this better than saying, and they're kind of great articles. The modern form would be better late than never, better late than never.

Amenemope, by the way, in Egyptian wisdom literature, it also has better than Proverbs. Better is bread with a happy heart than wealth with vexation. Sounds like some Proverbs, right? Better is bread with a happy heart than wealth with vexation.

So better X than Y is often extended then into this better is A plus X than B plus Y. And so, it often takes this fourfold thing with two each. Better A plus X than B plus Y. So, for example, in Proverbs 16:8, you get this "Better a little with righteousness than great wealth without justice." So better A plus X than B with Y. "So better is a little with righteousness than great wealth without justice."

And there's Proverbs 12:9, 17:1, 19:1, and 21:9. Often there's a paired phenomenon. We went through that in Proverbs pair and these better-than sayings. Usually, they're separated, but in Proverbs 15:16, and 17, there's two better-than Proverbs back-to-back.

There's a variation then, remember how we talked about twisting Proverbs and variations? There are no good Proverbs. There's better than Proverbs. There are no good Proverbs.

And those are found in chapters 17.26 and 18.5. The this-is-not-good kind of proverb. So that's a form of a twisting of the better than sayings.

There are comparative sayings. This is another branch is comparative sayings. These are used like or as an analogical comparison of one realm with the other. In Sumer, the Proverbs of Sumer, we've got "like a dog who had no place to sleep." He's like a dog that has no place to sleep. Like a city in Proverbs itself, Proverbs 25:28, "like a city with broken-down walls is a person who lacks self-control." "Like snow in summer or rain in harvest, so honor is not fitting for a fool." "Like a sparrow and it's flitting, like a swallow and it's flying, a curse that is causeless does not alight," Proverbs 26:1 and 2, et cetera. There's a high concentration of simile comparative clusters in Proverbs 25 and 26. So Proverbs chapters 25 and 26, you have a lot of these like-Proverbs on these clusters, Proverbs 25 verses 28 to 26.2, which kind of shows 25:28 goes to 26.2 shows you that probably the chapter division there between chapters 25 and 26 is probably in the wrong place.

And we said in other times we've talked, the chapter divisions were added in the 1200s or 1300s AD. So, the chapter divisions are not inspired of God. Those were added by a bishop.

Dr. MacRae always used to say the bishop was riding his horse and sometimes he went forward and sometimes he went backward. So, you have always got to ask when you come to a chapter division, should these chapters be put together? Is there a Janus there where you look forward, look backward? What are the connections there? So, we see in 25:28 to 26.2, the chapter division is probably put in the wrong place, but that we'll leave for later discussions.

The abomination saying, an abomination saying, here you get the way of the wicked is an abomination or the Lord detests. So that's the way I think the ESV translates it. The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, Proverbs 15:9, or the Lord detests this. Some proposed incorrectly that Proverbs that mentioned Yahweh or the Lord were later additions inserted into an early, more secular proverb collection.

In other words, McKane, when he wrote his commentary, it's not really accepted now, it's been debunked, but largely he had a secular, the sentence sayings were secular, and then they basically evolved up into this great theological stuff. So that's where the Yahweh sayings or the abomination sayings, abomination to the Lord, were added later then as it evolved from the secular to the sacred. That distinction has now been disproved both by the Sumerian proverbs that I was just looking at this morning and also by the Egyptian, et cetera, et cetera, where it has the gods are mentioned in all the earliest proverb sets.

To the contrary, some of the earliest Sumerian collections also have this form, which references the deities. Deaths are not cleared, and are an abomination to Utu. Alster mentions as a Sumerian, very early proverb, deaths are not cleared. They are an abomination to Utu, the god of the Sumer. There also, a false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but in an accurate weight is his delight, Proverbs 11:1.

Antithetic parallelism, the abomination, is an abomination to the Lord, and this is his delight. Usually in an antithetic parallelism, this one thing is an abomination to the Lord, but this is his delight.

So, it says a false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but an accurate way is his delight. And so, the abomination and delight are paralleled in antithetic parallelism. Here's one that most of you know, and that's a beatitude.

A beatitude is a proverb that begins with the word blessed, ashere, or baruk. There are a couple of words for blessed in Hebrew, and I don't want to get into the translational differences there. But beatitude, or a macarism as they call it, begins when I say beatitude, almost everybody thinks of the Sermon on the Mount in Beatitudes there. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the poor in spirit. And so, you get the blessed are the pure in heart and blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness in Proverbs.

That's in Matthew 5, the Sermon on the Mount. Also, by the way, it's found in Psalms. How does Psalm begin? Psalm 1 is considered a wisdom Psalm.

There are big debates on all these things with what is wisdom, wisdom Psalms. But "Blessed is the person who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, stand in the way of sinners, and sit in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord."

Blessed is the person. So that begins with Psalm 1:1 begins with this "blessed is the person" or "blessed is one." It appears in Egyptian instructions as well.

And Proverbs 8:32, verse 34, chapter 29:18, Proverbs 18:14 states, "Blessed is the one who always fears the Lord." There it is. Proverbs 28:14, "Blessed is the one who fears the Lord, always fears the Lord." And so that's called a beatitude or a macarism is another name for that.

Now, Yahweh sayings, these are sayings that mention the Lord's name. We translate Lord with a capital L, capital R, capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D, and they're all capitalized.

It's a stand-in Adonai for the word Yahweh, which is the most sacred name of God. Yahweh notes 375 sayings, which are interesting Solomon's name. If you take Solomon's name, there are 300, it means 375.

They didn't have a separate number system and an alphabet. So, their alphabet they used for numbers. And if you take Solomon's name, it's 375. There are 375 Proverbs. Of those 375, 55 or 15% are Yahweh sayings. 15% are Yahweh sayings.

Proverbs chapters 15 and 16 have a high concentration of these Yahweh sayings in Proverbs chapters 15 and 16. The section 15:33 to 16:9 is a concentrated collection of Yahweh sayings, which is followed then in 16:10 to 15 by a series of King sayings, Malak sayings, King sayings. So, you've got a series of Yahweh sayings followed by a series of King sayings.

And that again reflects the kind of the courtier, the sage, the royal court origin of some of these King Solomon kind of Proverbs. Inclusio begins and ends the book with the fear of the Lord. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Chapter 1:7 and Proverbs chapter 31:30, the fear of the Lord. It's a woman who fears the Lord. So, it begins and ends with the fear of the Lord.

And so, there are a lot of the fear of the Lord would be one of those Yahweh sayings. Yahweh Sayings on a collectional level, Heim notes this in Proverbs 21:1 to 32. A Yahweh-sayings in verses 1 to 3. B is diligence in verse 5. C is the nagging wife in verse 9. C prime is nagging wife in verse 19. Then laziness in verse 25, as opposed to diligence back up in the B there. And then it closes out with Yahweh sayings in verse 30 to 31. So Heim sees Proverbs chapter 21 as kind of a mini-collection and that is an interesting idea.

And I think Heim has got it right as always or usually with him. He does his homework. Now, contrary Proverbs, Proverbs that are kind of contrary to one another in Sumerian times.

And by the way, some of these are paradoxical. Some of them I think are done for humor's sake. And so, in Sumerian times it says "from 3,600 oxen, there is no dung." Really? Did Bill Gates get after him to take all that methane away? No, this is in Sumerian times. It says "from 3,600 oxen, there is no dung."

Modern Proverbs are like this. Absent makes the heart grow fonder or is it out of sight, out of mind? Maybe it's a twisted proverb. Absent makes the heart to wander. Proverb duels.

I had one of these with my daughter. I said this before. My daughter, there's night people and there's morning people, right? And I tried when I first got married, I tried to my wife as a night person.

I tried to change her into being a morning person because the early worm gets the worm after all. And I realized after many years, actually, it took me many, many years. I'm a little bit slow learner on this stuff. And so, I realized finally she's a night person. She does her best work between midnight and 2 a.m. I do my best work from basically 5.30 to about 9 in the morning. Okay.

And so, I was trying to get my daughter to get out of bed because we had to run into school and stuff like that and taking her. So, I quoted that to her. "The early bird gets the worm." "The early bird gets the worm." And what did she come back with? Without blatant an eye, my daughters, both daughters and my children actually smarter than I am as their parent, but she just came back without even blinking an eye almost. I said, "the early bird gets the worm." She says, yeah, dad, "but the second mouse gets the cheese."

Think about that. "The early bird gets the worm." And then she contradicted that by saying, yes, "but the second mouse gets the cheese." I don't know where she got that. I didn't teach her that. But anyway, she just came up and did bam like that. And she got me.

We notice that in Proverbs chapter 26:4 and 5. "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself." Next verse, "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes." So, it breaks the bands. These contradictory or paradoxical Proverbs break the band of trying to universalize and dogmatize Proverbs. You can't do that.

You can't isolate them and universalize them like that. It's more poly-situational and they're used in different settings. But go back and look at that video I did on Proverbs chapters 26:4 and 5 to answer a fool or not to answer a fool.

But some of these things are meant to be playful and there's this kind of bantering, a wisdom contest between the sages kind of thing, if you will. So now compositional units, the Septuagint or the Septuagint or the LXX reorders the collections. And so, for example, in Proverbs chapter 30 verses one to 14 is actually after Proverbs 24, 22.

So, Proverbs 30, which is down here in the Septuagint, Greek Septuagint, a Greek translation made, I don't want to get into the debates of this thing, but as I say, 200 BC. So about 200 BC, they took the Hebrew text and translated it in Alexandria into Greek. And okay, there's a whole lot of stories there we know. Anyway, so they took chapter 30 and brought it back. So, it's after chapter 24:22. And they took chapter 30 verses 15 to chapter 31:9 and placed that after chapter 24:34.

And so, what happens is chapter 30 goes back and then chapter 31 goes back and they're both out of place from the way we would do in our Hebrew text. So, some

people think that the canon wasn't actually fixed by that point of the Septuagint and things got shifted around. Proverbs 25:1 mentions the editorial work of the men of Hezekiah copying out the Proverbs of Solomon.

So, Solomon's Proverbs, big collection, Hezekiah's men go out and take it and edit it. So, you now have both the author of a proverb and what does a proverb mean from the author, but you also have the editors and what did the editors mean when they put it in the collection and how they connected it to other Proverbs? So, you actually have two levels of meaning, then the authorial meaning, the editorial meaning, and then you've got the meaning when you use it in various contexts and its use can be all diverse as we already said.

Now another unit or type of mini-genre could be the proverb pairs. I did a whole lecture on proverb pairs and you can see in chapter 15:1-2 where it has this subject being a noun phrase, a verb, and then an object being a noun, all of them in a row. All four lines have the same syntactic structure, SVO, SVO, SVO, SVO there.

Proverbs 13:21-22, sinners disaster pursues, but the righteous are rewarded with the good thing. A good man, Tov, leaves an inheritance, but laid up for the righteous is the wealth of the sinner. So, you see then in chapter 13:21-22, it begins with sinners and it ends with sinner. This word hatim begins and ends the proverb and in the middle, the two words that are back-to-back are Tov, good thing in the first one, and good man, person in the second proverb. So Tov in the middle and then sinners on the outside. So, it's A B B A, a chiasmic structure there, but it's also got this enveloping or what they call an inclusio where the beginning and end are exactly the same word.

What are the chances of that happening just by throwing them together? No thanks. Proverbs 26:4 and 5, "Answer a fool according to his folly." In the next verse, "Do not answer a fool according to his folly." It's a clear pair, Proverbs 26:4 and 5. I just flipped those by the way.

The link, theme link Proverbs 12:18 and 19 are both linked through the theme of speech. And yet while it mentions speech, and it mentions many words about speech, none of them are shared catchwords, but the topic is the same.

So, metaphor and simile, Proverbs 14:26 and 27, in the fear of the Lord, one has strong confidence and his children will have a refuge. Next verse, the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life that one may turn away from the sneers of death. And so, it's fear of God, fear of the Lord, fear of the Lord, two of fear of Lords in a row. That's really rare. And, but yet it's found. And so those are paired units. So, there are proverb pairs. So, when you're, as you're reading through, you look at it for these pairs and then see how they interact with one another and it helps hermeneutically. It gives you another perspective.

What is the context of the proverb in the collection? Well, apparently the pairs interacted with one another as well, the two Proverbs. So, in Proverbs chapter 10 - 29, there are 595 verses of those 595, 124 were paired. That's about 21% of chapters 10 to 29 in those sentence sayings, about 21% are this paired phenomenon where two Proverbs interact with each other. And so, I'm just saying proverb pairs.

Proverb acrostic. What's an acrostic? Well, I'll show you acrostic, but Proverbs 31, the virtuous woman or the VW, the virtuous woman, she's got her 22 lines. Each one begins with the next letter of the alphabet. So, it's a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j. It goes down the alphabet, the Hebrew alphabet, and each line begins with the next verse. Now you can't see that in English. You can't see that in English. Do you lose things in translation? Yes. That's why you should learn Hebrew. You lose things, especially in poetry, especially in acrostic. However, there is a way to do it.

And I'll show you the Hebrew text of Psalm 119. Psalm 119 is this big honking Psalm about God's word. And it's eight verses on the a, eight verses on the b, eight verses on the c. And so, you'll notice if you go into many of your modern translations, that'll say, you know, these are the aleph verses. These are the beth verses. These are the gimel verses. And it'll go through the whole alphabet. That's why Psalm 119 is so long is because it's eight verses, eight verses, eight verses through all the letters of the alphabet. So here you can just see this and you can see as here begins in as here again. But you see that I put in yellow here, the aleph, aleph, aleph, aleph. And you go down to verse eight, you see, they all begin with aleph. What is the chances that just happened? No, no, this is poetry. And he's purposely doing that.

Then you see in verse nine, it starts out with the beth, the b sections and then you've got b, b, b, b, b, b coming down for eight verses. And then you've got the gimel g, g, g, g, g, g coming down. And so that's how that acrostic is developed there.

But it's done in Proverbs 31 for the virtuous woman. And so, as we said, the virtuous woman I'm suggesting is Madame Wisdom from chapters one and on in the beginning of that too. So, this is in one sense, the acrostic or the going through the alphabet is the A to Z on the virtuous woman. The A to Z, it means completeness. It means perfection. It means exhaustiveness. I've given you the A to Z, I've given you everything.

And there's a mnemonic, there's a pedagogical thing too, because you can remember it. This is the A line, B line, C line. So if you're memorizing this, you can remember by the first letter of that. Lamentations, by the way, is also structured with this. Lamentations is a book about the fall of Jerusalem. It's really kind of a lament and bad thing. And basically, I think what the alphabet doing in the acrostic in Lamentations is trying to say, while chaos is destroying Jerusalem, Jerusalem is being destroyed. Everything is upheaval.

The temple is gone. Where's God? In the middle of his temple being knocked down. Everything's chaos. Yet that acrostic comes through. There's still order. There's still order.

And so, I think there's order amidst the overwhelming chaos in the book of Lamentations. But anyways, the virtuous woman, Proverbs 31, I think it's verse 10 and following, it's an acrostic to the virtuous woman uses the acrostic form.

Strings or clusters is our next form, strings or clusters. I call it strings. Knut Heim calls it clusters. He's probably right. He has a better metaphor there. Many proverbial sayings in Proverbs 10 to 29 are not thrown together. Some people suggest they're just thrown together haphazardly, willy-nilly.

Now they seem to be coming in these clusters or these groups. And so, Knut Heim isolates those clusters and does a really good job in his dissertation that's been published. Chapter 10:6 through 11, the delimitation inclusion "but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked" is in chapter 10:6. And then chapter 10:11b, it ends up, "but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked." So, it's an actual quote between the two showing the beginning and end of that string or that cluster.

And so, Waltke also sees this in chapter 20:8 through 11. The king's justice in verse eight is A, B is universal human depravity in Verse 9, the Lord's justice again is A' in verse 10 and then B' human depravity from youth in verse 11. So, verses 8 through 11 with this A, B, A', B' structure that Waltke develops there.

Now, take a step back, take a step back, the collectional units. Now these are the big ones that are actually given titles in the book of Proverbs. Chapters 1:1 to 9:17, the instructions featuring Madam Wisdom and Madam Folly. So chapters 1 to 9, Madam Wisdom, Madam Following, duking it out, going back and forth. Those are the instructions. Remember the 10 instructions and the five interludes then those lengthy lectures that a father's giving to his son, his mother's teaching. That's chapters 1 to 9. That's the instruction section. Then chapters 10:1 through 22:16 are the sentence sayings of Solomon. These are the Proverbs of Solomon chapters 10 through 22. Then 22 to 24 are the sayings of the wise, the saying of the wise, and you can hear the scribal kind of thing there. Then chapter 24:23 to 34 are more sayings of the wise. And the sayings of the wise, that's where a lot of people see parallels to Amenemope down in Egypt. There are the Instructions of Amenemope and there are strong parallels. The 30 sayings of Amenemope are echoed in those Proverbs in chapters 22 to 24.

Now, chapter 25 to 29 is more Proverbs of Solomon collected by the men of Hezekiah. So, you see the editorial work is explicitly mentioned there. Proverbs chapter 30:1 to 33 are the sayings of Agur. We don't know who the guy is, but then you notice the foreign thing. Remember I told you the international thing and you

can see the international flavor in some of the Proverbs here. Proverbs 31:1 to 31 are the sayings of Lemuel, which his mother taught him.

Then chapter 31, the sayings of King Lemuel that his mother taught him. So, these sub-collections, and there are other sub-collections. Ray Van Leuwen, for example, isolated Proverbs 25 to 27 as a sub-collection.

Good move. Malchow demonstrates that Proverbs 28 and 29 again, sub-collection, which he labeled a Manual for Future Monarchs. Heim also sees, as we said before, Proverbs 21 as a sub-collection.

So, several of these people have suggested sub-collections, interesting to think about.

Now I want to kind of wrap things up here. It's gone quite long, but Proverbs, what is the Proverbs? We've looked at that.

Proverbs deny helplessness by encouraging human development, by making responsible choices that matter and have real consequences moving from egocentrism of the eye to the communal meal with Madam Wisdom as she offers her instruction. The second point, the continuing international power of Proverbs. They go international and they go through time from Sumer all the way down to modern and recent times.

The book of Proverbs is powerful. It goes international. It's kind of timeless, omni-temporal, and it's found in books and songs and poems and all sorts of things. One exercise that I used to have my students do is to take the they say of a proverb and turn it, it into a condensed story. So, it's a condensed story down to a proverb." A wise son is a joy to his father." So, you take that proverb and you pump it back up into a full story. So, I had them take then a story and write a story on the proverb. Then from the say, "a wise son is a joy to a father," they say that's been passed down from generation, hundreds of years over multiple cultures, they say and make it into an I say in a story that you apply it to modern life. Then we did some things, a couple of examples of that up on the web on YouTube and at BiblicaleLearning.org, where the proverb then is taken from a proverb and pumped back into a story.

And it was fun doing that. I think it's a good exercise for kids to take a proverb and then write a story off the proverb, to take the proverb kernel and pop it back into a full story. And it manifests the timelessness and the power of the proverbs.

While many see proverbs as trivial and used merely for parody and satire as if from a former age of naivete and innocence up to the postmodern complexity and cynicism, yet our culture is desperate for the need for the formulation of wisdom. So we may

trivialize these proverbs, but in our culture, common sense is a rarity. And these proverbs can really help us there.

Proverbs raise one's vision to the fear of the Lord. At the same time calls one to responsible action and planning one's own way with humble realization that there is a providential hand guiding, caring for, and ultimately determining the final outcomes. Proverbs 16:9. Thus, the proverb calls for a total engagement in the carpe diem choices of the moment, but set within the context of a they, and the thou, establishing the they and the thou, they and thou, God, and establishing the context for the significance and meaning and the choices made by each individual I. So, the I is put in a context of a they and thou.

And what happens in our culture is we want the big I in our narcissistic way of looking at things and delete the they and delete the thou, God. And the meaning of the choices is made by each individual I. The wit of one and the wisdom of many. A proverb, the wit of one and the wisdom of many.

It's a proverb. The fear of the Lord is the beginning or first principle of wisdom. And that is what we seek.

Thank you. This is Dr. Ted Hildebrandt and his teaching on the proverb as a literary genre.