

# Proverbs: Prosperity Variants and Poetry on Genocide

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**Session 12**

Sponsored by Biblicalelearning.org by Ted Hildebrandt

## Keywords

Proverbs, wealth, prosperity, genocide, security, righteousness, bystander, martyrdom

## Abstract

In this lecture, Dr. Knut Heim explores two distinct biblical themes in the book of Proverbs: the ironical revision of economic proverbs on wealth and the moral obligation to intervene against genocide. By comparing Proverbs 10:15 and 18:11, Heim demonstrates how subtle literary shifts subvert traditional views of material prosperity, exposing riches as a delusional form of security when divorced from trust in God. He then examines Proverbs 24:10–12, drawing parallels to historical atrocities like the Holocaust to argue that believers are divinely required to rescue victims of systemic violence rather than remain passive bystanders. Ultimately, the lecture redefines Christian martyrdom as a courageous, love-driven witness that opposes injustice regardless of personal cost.

## Outline

### I. Introduction

#### A. Overview of Lecture 12 Core Topics

1. Ironical engagement in variant repetitions of prosperity proverbs
2. Biblical poetry on genocide and moral intervention in Proverbs 24

#### B. Context and Sponsorship Statement

1. Lecture series by Dr. Knut Heim on the book of Proverbs
2. Sponsored by Biblicalelearning.org by Ted Hildebrandt

### II. Irony and Prosperity Variants: Proverbs 10:15 and 18:11

#### A. Comparative Textual Analysis of the Proverbial Variants

1. Proverbs 10:15 – Wealth as a Fortified City
  - a. Antithetic parallelism and chiasmic structure
  - b. Conventional economic expectation of wealth as protection and poverty as ruin
2. Proverbs 18:11 – Wealth like a Secure Wall "in His Fantasy"
  - a. Synonymous parallelism expanding the metaphor into a simile
  - b. The punch word "in his fantasy" reversing universal assumptions about wealth

#### B. The Function of Literary Variation and Irony

1. Subversion of Proverbs 10:15 by the later variant in Proverbs 18:11
2. Exposure of material wealth as an illusory, delusional source of safety

### **C. Contextual Placement within Proverbial Clusters**

1. Proverbs 10:12–18 Cluster
  - a. Pairing of 10:15 and 10:16
  - b. Wealth recontextualized as a reward for righteousness rather than self-sufficient power
  - c. Poverty understood as the consequence/wages of sin rather than economic chance
2. Proverbs 18:10–15 Cluster
  - a. Pairing of 18:10 (Name of the Lord as a strong tower) and 18:11 (Wealth as imaginary security)
  - b. Spatial dynamic from citadel/strong tower to outer city wall
  - c. Contrast between genuine divine protection and human self-reliance
3. Proverbs 18:12 Reinforcement
  - a. Link between self-reliance, pride, and ultimate destruction
  - b. Hebrew wordplay on height/safety and pride

## **III. Poetry on Genocide: Proverbs 24:10–12**

### **A. Exegesis of Proverbs 24:10–12**

1. Description of Extreme Crisis and Violence
  - a. Victims dragged off to death and staggering to slaughter
  - b. Depiction of sustained persecution, torture, and systemic murder
2. Refutation of Bystander Excuses
  - a. Excuse of inaction due to limited strength or self-preservation
  - b. Excuse of claimed ignorance ("look, we did not know this")
3. Divine Scrutiny and Judgment
  - a. God weighs the human heart and knows true motives
  - b. God repays every person according to their deeds and failures to act

### **B. Historical Parallels and Ethical Application**

1. Lessons from Holocaust History
  - a. German Christian inaction and misuse of Romans 13 during World War II
  - b. Psychological convenience of willful ignorance during systemic atrocities
2. The Moral Imperative of Intervention
  - a. Rejection of neutral bystander status in crises of genocide
  - b. High personal risk, danger, and sacrifice involved in standing for the vulnerable

### **C. Redefining Christian Martyrdom**

1. Distinction from Destructive Concepts of Martyrdom
  - a. Rejection of self-destruction or violence against others
2. Martyrdom as Active, Courageous Witness
  - a. Testifying to God's love by rescuing those being exploited and executed

- b. Faithful obedience and love in action, even at the cost of health or life
- 3. Pastoral Call to Action
  - a. Appeal to Jewish and Christian believers to seize opportunities to protect human life

#### **IV. Conclusion**

##### **A. The Depth of Proverbial Wisdom**

- 1. Moving beyond superficial or banal readings of biblical proverbs
- 2. The role of imaginative interpretation in recognizing poetic depth

##### **B. Integrated Ethical Vision**

- 1. True security found in God rather than material riches
- 2. Faithfulness requiring active defense of the oppressed and vulnerable