

**The Sage and the Seductress
Part II: An Exegetical Study**

**Charles E. McLain, Th.M.
Professor, Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary**

EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS

In an atmosphere of increased openness and acceptance of prostitution, both secular and sacred, and in light of Israel's unbending covenantal obligations and requirements, the wise father counsels his son concerning the seductress as he attempts to prepare him for the road of life. The father's unfaltering warning against the seductive woman is certainly a reflection of Israel's historic faith and not her social attitudes.

Proverbs 2:16-19

Context

Proverbs 2:16-19 forms only one portion of a much broader discourse involving the whole chapter. After the introductory vocative "O my son," the chapter falls into a sixfold division.

The first division presents the protasis of the father's instructions. In this section the father makes a positive presentation of wisdom for his son's active and intense acquisition. The second and third divisions both contain apodoses expressing the non-tangible consequences of acquiring wisdom. The consequential nature of these clauses is indicated by the use of 'az to introduce both.¹ The first result of acquiring wisdom is "intellectual comprehension of fear of the Lord"; while the second result is "moral comprehension."²

The fourth and fifth divisions give the tangible results or purpose of acquiring wisdom. Each section is introduced by a *lamedh* prefixed to an infinitive construct of the verb *nasal* with a second person masculine singular pronominal suffix which is followed by the preposition *min*.

Acquisition of wisdom provides "deliverance from" both "wicked men" and the "foreign woman."

The sixth and final division of this poem is introduced by "so that" and also gives a tangible purpose³ for acquiring wisdom. Unlike the fourth and fifth divisions which contain negative purposes, this division contains a positive purpose -- "so that you might walk in the way of good men."

Analysis

The verses under consideration fall within the fifth division of this poem. They deal with the second of two negative, non-tangible results of acquiring wisdom. Upon closer inspection it is seen that in these verses for the first time in the book of Proverbs the subject of the beguiling woman is introduced into the discussion of wisdom and the education of the son.

Verse 16: Statement. In this verse we find the second statement of benefit from acquired wisdom. "It will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words." The verse is introduced by the use of the preposition *lamedh* prefixed to an infinitive construct indicating purpose or result. The infinitive is on a Hiphil form of the verb *nasal*; which generally has "the sense of deliver or rescue."⁴ However, when the Hiphil infinitive with prefixed *lamedh* is used it more often has the idea of providing "refuge" or "protection from" some occurrence and not deliverance from an enveloping danger.⁵ This protection will be personal as indicated by the second person singular pronominal suffix on the infinitive.

The source of danger from which wisdom provides refuge is described as *'issah zarah* or in the second focusing parallel line of the verse as *nokriyah*. The phrase *'issah zarah* occurs only here and in Proverbs 7:5 and both times with *nokriyah* in the second line. The term *nokriyah* "in the book of Proverbs . . . becomes a technical expression for a prostitute or adulteress."⁶

Much discussion has been generated around the terms used in Proverbs for the beguiling woman. Generally the discussion falls into two categories -- How many women are being described? And how should this term be interpreted? Yee's statement summarizes the discussion.

One finds that the *'issa zara*, or simply *zara*, parallels *nokriya*, literally 'alien woman', in 2.16, 5.20, and 7.5. *Zara* is used alone

with no parallel in 5.3. *Nokriya* parallels 'eset ra', evil woman, in 6.24 and *zona*, harlot, in 23.27. Furthermore, in 6.26 an 'issa *zona*, harlot, is contrasted with an 'eset 'is, a married woman who in this context is unfaithful. Finally, 9.13 depicts an 'eset *kesilut*, a foolish woman, who tries to lure the simple and those without sense away from Wisdom's banquet to her own lascivious one. The question one must ask is whether or not the different descriptions, *nokriya*, 'issa *zona*, 'eset 'is' and 'eset *kesilut* all refer to one figure: the 'issa *zara*. Opinions have been divided over this question.

For several reasons, I prefer to think of one woman, the 'issa *zara* who is described variously, rather than presuming different women. In the first place, . . . different women share a cluster of descriptions that would warrant positing one woman. Second, associated with Wisdom herself are various attributes which seem to take on their own character. . . . In this case, one would not think of different personifications, Knowledge, Discretion, and Understanding, besides Wisdom. Rather, these attributes form a poetic cluster that points to one figure, namely Wisdom. Similarly, the alien, harlotrous, evil, adulterous and foolish woman all refer to one figure embodied in the 'issa *zara* who stand over and against Wisdom. Thirdly, the macrostructure of Proverbs 1-9 would support a unity of attributes focused on the 'issa *zara*.⁷

The source of the danger about which the father warns and from which wisdom gives refuge is the beguiling woman variously described.

The instrumentality of danger from which wisdom provides refuge is "seductive words." The root *halak* is primarily used "of smooth speech or flattery, i.e. words which were smoother than butter and like oil . . . this use of the tongue is always condemned . . . It is characteristic of the seductive woman who is to be avoided (Prov 2:16; 7:5)."⁸ It becomes apparent that the father's emphasis that the son fill his ear with the father's words (v. 1) and with what proceeds from the Lord's mouth (v. 6) is designed to leave no room or attention for the seductress's words.

Verse 17: Description. The seductress is describes by two negative characteristics. First, she has "left the partner of her youth." Cohen identifies this person as "her husband whom she had married in girlhood, marriage taking place in the Orient at an early age."⁹ Later references in Proverbs include the fact that the seductress is married.¹⁰ Her action is described as leaving (*'azab*), which basically means to leave but also carries the connotation of abandonment or departure.¹¹ It is the same

term used to describe Israel's "prostitution" with idols (Jonah 2:8; Deut. 29:24; 1 Kings 19:10, 14) as well as literal adultery (Hosea 4:10). The motif occurs here of this individual act of prostitution. Secondly, she is described as having "ignored the covenant (*berith 'eloheha*) she made before God." This is variously interpreted as her marriage covenant¹² and as her being part of Israel's covenantal standing before God.¹³ The phrase "covenant before God" (*berith 'eloheha*) is a difficult phrase to interpret. The two terms occur together only in this passage. Every other occurrence of the term *'eloheha* is in the context of foreign gods.¹⁴ In light of usage, the suffix *-eha* should be taken as possessive and not as a locative *He*. This refers to covenantal standing within the nation of Israel. The prostitute is described as one who has no regard for intimate human relations (husband-wife) or for ultimate spiritual relations (individual-God).

Verses 18-19: Motivation. This division concludes with a statement of the reason why this danger should be avoided. Again the motivation is twofold: first, because of the destination to which her way leads; and second, because of the duration of the stay her guests experience.

Verse 18 speaks of the destination. The figures of speech in this description seem mixed. The seductress's structure ("house") leads to a realm ("death")¹⁵; while her "paths" are associated with the inhabitants of death's realm ("spirits"). One would expect inhabitants to be associated with a structure and realm (i.e., destination) to be associated with a path. The terms "house" (*bayit*) and "paths" (*ma'gelot*) are affiliated with the seductress in Proverbs.¹⁶ The seductress's destination is also characterized in Proverbs as "death" (*mawet*) and its inhabitants as "spirits" (*repha'im*).¹⁷

Verse 19 speaks of the duration. Once the beguiled have checked into the house of the prostitute they do not return to the paths of life.¹⁸ Residence in the harlot's house is permanent. They will never "return from the gates of Sheol to resume their normal life. . . . immorality cuts life short."¹⁹

Summary

The father's instructions are preventive and not corrective.²⁰ They are designed to keep the son from the influence of the seductress and not to rescue him from her. The seductress is presented as only one of several dangerous persons traveling the road of life; however, she is singled out

for special attention. The dangerous devices of the woman are centered in her words. The attitude and course of the prostitute regard neither intimate personal or ultimate spiritual relationships. The way and residence of the prostitute are synonymous with death.

Proverbs 5:1-23

Structure

The admonitions contained in this chapter divide it into three sections: vv. 1-6; 7-14; and 15-23. The first two sections have a complementary relationship while the third section gives a practical application of the first two sections.

Analysis

Section #1: vv. 1-6. This section contains three elements: admonitions, motivation, and results.

Verse 1: Admonition. Like all the other instructions dealing with the seductress these admonitions are introduced by the vocative, "O my son." The focal point of these positive admonitions is the "ear." The father advises his son to "give attention" and to "turn his ear" to wisdom (*hokmah*) and understanding (*tebunah*).

Verse 2-3: Motivation. These verses supply the reason or purpose behind the father's advice. The first motivation (v. 2) involves personal enablement. Attainment of wisdom enables its recipient to guard²¹ the fruits of wisdom described here as discretion and knowledge. The second motivation (v. 3) involves the seductiveness of the adulteress. The focus of her allurements is contained in her words ("lips" and "speech") which are characterized by their appealing taste (like "honey")²² and texture (like "oil"). Once again it becomes clear that the father is attempting to fill his son's ears with wisdom, in order that they might not be filled with seduction.

Verses 4-6: Results. In these three verses the father reveals the results of failing to heed his advice. The first danger involves her propositional words [declaration] (v. 4). Unlike the facade of sweetness in her speech; "in the end" experience with the adulteress leaves a taste as "bitter as gall."²³ Unlike the facade of smoothness in her pitch; "in the end" experience with the adulteress is as cutting "as a double-edged sword."²⁴ The second danger involves her end [destination] (v. 5). Her

each and every step lead unfalteringly ("straight") to death and Sheol. She knows no other destination. The third danger involves her considerations [determination] (v. 6). The adulteress is an unthinking person; "she gives no thought to the way of life . . . but she knows it not." The "way of life" is completely outside the scope of her considerations. The father uses the verb *palas* to describe this lack; significantly this verb is used five other times in Scripture of which three deal with the positive need for or exercise of discernment in reference to one's path.²⁵ She is also described as failing to recognize the reality of her own paths. She does not sense²⁶ that her paths are crooked.²⁷ She is thoughtless; spiritual considerations are beyond her abilities and aspirations.

Section #2: vv. 7-14. This section also contains three elements: admonition, motivation, and results.

Verses 7-8: Admonition. The admonition as the others is introduced with a vocative; however, on this occasion the addressee is pluralized, "O my sons"²⁸ and introduced by "Now then" (*we'attah*).²⁹ The admonitions in this section are both positive and negative and, while initially reflecting the admonitions of verse one concerning the ear, focus on the walk of the son. This emphasis no doubt results from the description of the adulteress's danger in verses 5-6.

Verse seven contains a positive exhortation to "listen" to the father reflecting verse one. Following this is a negative command which acts as a transition from the "ear" to the "walk" of the son. The father warns, "Do not turn aside from what I say." The idea of "turn aside" is appropriate to either concept (walk or sayings). The reference to "what I say" points to the ear. In verse 8 both the positive and negative commands focus on the son's walk. He is to choose a path that is far³⁰ from that which the adulteress travels. Likewise, he is never to allow his path to take him "near the door of her house" for it is a place of great danger (2:18-19, 9:18).

Verses 9-10: Motivation. As is his custom the father gives reasons for his admonitions. In this section he supplies two motivations for giving heed to one's walk. Both reasons are introduced by *pen* followed by a prefixed verb form.³¹ The first motivation is that failure to heed wisdom opens you up to being robbed of the "prime" of life. You will be vulnerable to the loss of both "your strength" and "your years" to "cruel" ones. The second motivation is that failure to heed wisdom opens your posterity up to being robbed of your provision. The product of "your toil" will become the portion of others.

The first phrase of verse 10 is interesting. The actors are described as *zarim*, the masculine plural form of the root which is often used in Proverbs to refer to the adulteress. The action is described by the verb *saba'*, "the usual sense of this verb is 'to be satisfied by nourishment.'"³² The caution is "Lest strangers feast on your wealth." The motif of eating and drinking is frequently used in Proverbs both of the adulteress's appeal and of engagement in her solicitation.³³

The reasons for heeding admonitions to wisdom are both immediate and lasting; both personal and familial.

Verses 11-14: Results. In this section the father reveals results of failing to heed his admonitions. These results fall into the categories of eventual realities and eventual realizations. First, in verse 11, an eventual reality is indicated. In the end the person who forsakes wisdom's path to walk with the harlot will look back on life with a groan.³⁴ In reflection both his "flesh and body" will be "spent." The idea of "spent" (*kala*) is to be consumed, finished. "The basic idea of this root is 'to bring a process to completion. . . . On the negative side something which is 'used up, vanished, spent, consumed' is also finished."³⁵ Walking in the path of the adulteress brings personal, physical ruin.³⁶

The second result is contained in verses 12-14. This involves an eventual realization expressed in a first person testimonial. The cause for the realization is described in verses 12 and 13. Having perceived the reality of one's physical decay, one consequentially comes to a realization. The cause is simply the rejection of wisdom. The act of rejection is variously described as "hated," "spurned," "would not obey," and "(would not) listen." The object of the rejection (wisdom) is described both as to its content ("disciple" and "correction") and to its source ("teachers" and "instructors"). The cause involved a personal, active choice. The consequence of this rejection is described in verse 14. The personal (and perhaps private) rejection of wisdom produces public consequences.³⁷ Life without wisdom leads one "to the brink of ruin."³⁸

Section #3: vv. 15-23. This section concludes the father's advice with practical applications of the truths he has just expounded. The structure of this section begins, as the others, with admonition. Following the admonition are two sets of rhetorical questions (one verse each) and their answers (three verses each).

Verse 15: Admonition. The concluding admonition is positive in nature, the son is instructed to "Drink!" In his conclusion the father directs his son to find fulfillment for his sexual thirst in his own wife. The

admonition uses the figure of drinking, with sexual satisfaction depicted by "water" and "running water," and the wife symbolized by "cistern" and "well."³⁹ One's thirst is to be fully satisfied from one's own well.⁴⁰

Verse 16: First Rhetorical Question. The nature of the figure switches at this point. Whereas in verse 15 the wife had been the source of "water"; in verse 16 the husband is portrayed as possessing the source of water.⁴¹ The question is whether these waters should flow "in the street . . . in the public squares?" It is in these locations that the adulteress is found (7:12 - both terms used).⁴²

Verses 17-19: First Answers. The answers to the question of verse 16 revolve around the wife and involve a positive continuing result. Verse 17 reveals that the "flowing waters" are to be strictly kept private. They are not to be "shared with strangers."⁴³ Verse 18 gives the positive reflection of verse 17; instead of being shared with others, one's fountain is to be blessed with his own wife. Verse 19 focuses on the description of verse 18. The entreaty "to rejoice in the wife of your youth" is specified in two ways. First, in the physical realm the husband is to be satisfied⁴⁴ at all times by the physical attributes of his wife. Second, in the psychological⁴⁵ realm the husband is to be captivated by the wife's love. Instead of allowing "waters to flow" in public the husband is to be staggered⁴⁶ by the love of his wife. Full and complete satisfaction is to be found at home, with one's own wife.

Verse 20: Second Rhetorical Question. The father's piercing questions now turn the application to focus on the adulteress -- the other possibility in the son's choice. If one answers the first question incorrectly he must then ask himself this second question. The structure of this question forms a chiasm with the last two lines of verse 19: "breasts"- "captivated" : "captivated"- "bosom". Therefore, the father asks, "Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife?" This is basically one question with the second line bringing the first line into crisper focus. Unlike verse 16 which questions the desirability of an act, this questions the motivation for the act -- "Why?" The verb *shaga* is identical to the verb of verse 19. However, the second line more fully describes it as "embracing" (*habak*)⁴⁷ which carries the connotation of love-making (Song of S. 2:6, 8:3).

Verses 21-23: Second Answer. The focus of the father's answer to the second rhetorical question is on negative, ultimate results. In choosing to embrace the adulteress and to come under her influence, the son needs to be cognizant of three truths. First, verse 21, man's life is an open book

before Yahweh. Each and every path⁴⁸ of man lies before Yahweh's eyes. Based on His immediate, personal knowledge of man's ways and doings, Yahweh makes His examination (*mepalles*).⁴⁹ Nothing escapes God's eye or God's judgment. The second truth to be remembered in answering the father's question(s) is that sin is entangling. Sin is a spiritual spider's web from which none escape by their own power. To describe the power of sin on its perpetrator the father first uses a term (*lakad*)⁵⁰ associated with both hunting and warfare. Sin is not the prey, but the hunter and conqueror. The second term the father uses, "hold fast" (*tamak*) has the idea of grasping securely, of seizing.⁵¹ The one who chooses the adulteress finds himself bound⁵² by cords. He does not choose freedom but captivity. The third truth that the father wishes the son to understand is that wrong choices ultimately result in death. He who chooses the wrong answer to the father's question(s) "will die for lack of discipline." The "lack" (*be'en*) is not due to the absence of discipline.⁵³ The content of discipline is readily available through the father's words (5:1-2, 7-8). The lack here parallels verses 12-14, it is a lack of assimilating discipline into one's own character and actions/choices. The result of this failure to assimilate wisdom is that he is "led astray by his own great folly." The greatness of his willing naivete is the instrument that produces his being "led astray." The verb "led astray" (*shaga*) is the same root found in verses 19-20 to describe the intoxication of a man with a woman's love. In this verse the basic sense of swerve has the meaning of deceive, wander from a set path. Wandering, swerving, deviating from the path of Wisdom and from the father's instruction has only one consequence -- death. When the father asks, "Is it worth it?"; the son can only answer, "No! Not at all!"

Summary

The subject of the beguiling woman is worthy of multiple warnings -- the danger is great. The father's emphasis on filling the ears of his son with wisdom has a twofold import: to place wisdom in the channel that will lead to the heart and subsequently to assimilation; and to occupy the youth's ears so that the seductive words of the beguiling woman will not find reception there. For matters of admonition the youth's ears and ways are equally important.

The dangers of the beguiling woman involve her words (declaration); her end (destination); and her considerations (determination); all are absent of life and spiritual content. Consequently her words and ways

(including their destination - her house) are to be avoided at all costs. Her dangers are both immediate and lasting; both individual and familial. Once the wrong choice has been made and the adulteress and her ways are chosen, it is too late physically and socially. The father portrays that choosing of the beguiling woman as irreversible.

The content of the prostitute's solicitation can be fully (and appropriately) satisfied with one's own wife. What is advertised in the streets can be fully and perfectly found at home. The choice of the beguiling woman is an entrapping sin. It binds, holds, and exposes to judgment. God's judgment of wrong choices is individual, immediate and accurate.

Proverbs 6:20-35

Structure

This poem begins with admonition (vv. 20-22) and motivation (vv. 23-24). Following is a secondary admonition (v. 25) and motivation (v. 26) which complement the opening verses. This dual beginning is followed by rhetorical questions (vv. 27-28) and application (v. 29); then an indicative statement (vv. 30-31) and application (vv. 32-35).

Analysis

Verses 20-22: Primary Admonition. As with all of the father's instructions to his son this instruction begins with the vocative "O my son." Two features set this admonition apart from the other instructions to the son concerning the adulteress. First, in this admonition the "mother" is included as a source of instruction. The statement of the admonition begins in verse 20 with an all inclusive admonition containing positive and negative imperatives. The source of the admonition is both the father and the mother, and the contents include both "commands" and "teaching." The son is exhorted to guard⁵⁴ and not to reject⁵⁵ the parent's instruction, corporately and individually, which is composed of both admonition ("commands" *miswa*) and instruction ("teaching" *tora*).⁵⁶ The imperatives of the admonition continue into verse 21. The youth is exhorted to make internal and external utilization of his parent's instructions. The admonitions and instruction are to be bound⁵⁷ forever to his heart and displayed⁵⁸ about his neck. Second, this admonition is unique in that it is followed by three temporal clauses containing promises

of benefit (v. 22). The son is advised that whether active ("when you walk") or inactive ("when you sleep") that acquired wisdom⁵⁹ will provide appropriate benefit (guidance and watch care). These benefits will be interactive with him. During his consciousness "they will speak" with him. The benefits of acquired wisdom are experienced consciously and unconsciously, around the clock. They are not limited by realm, time, or consciousness.

Verses 23-24: Primary Motivation. The first half of the motivation is introduced in verse 23 with *ki*. The reasons behind the necessity of the admonition are expressed metaphorically. First, they illumine and secondly they enliven. The positive elements of admonition and instruction are described as a "lamp" (*nar*) and a "light" (*'or*).⁶⁰ Both items are important for a youth seeking to find the proper way along the road of life. The negative element of "corrective"⁶¹ discipline is described as "the way to life." The second half of the motivation is introduced in verse 24 with a *lamedh* prefixed to an infinitive. Wisdom's provision of illumination and enlivenment will enable the youth to avoid the adulteress and her allurement. The verb used with this *lamedh* of purpose is *shamar* which has the basic idea of exercising great care over; thus guarding, taking care of, preserving.⁶² Acquired and exercised wisdom will keep from both the adulteress and her alluring speech.⁶³ This verse reflects the emphasis to the son concerning his ear ("smooth tongue") and his walk ("keep from").

Verse 25: Secondary Admonition. This admonition is designated as secondary for two reasons. First, it is much more specific than that contained in verses 20-22. Second, it serves to complement the motivation given in verse 24. The antecedent of the third feminine pronominal elements of verse 25 are located in verse 24. Whereas verse 24 deals with avoidance of the adulteress's words and way, verse 25 deals with her physical allurement. The admonition of verse 25 is expressed by two negatives. First, the youth is not to lust⁶⁴ after what his eyes behold -- her beauty.⁶⁵ At the same time he is not to be captivated⁶⁶ by means of her eyes.⁶⁷

Verse 26: Secondary Motivation. This secondary motivation clause is also introduced by *ki*. The reason behind the warning about the adulteress's physical allurement centers on the victimization of her john. First, she views him as a meal, something to be consumed exclusively for personal benefit. Second, she acts like an animal -- she preys⁶⁸ on those who come to her. The man who chooses to go to the adulteress will pay

for it with more than his silver. Her ultimate price is his "precious life" (*nepshesh yekara*).⁶⁹ The father's wisdom is, "Do not be 'ravished' by her beauty, because like a hungry beast she will 'ravish' your very life."

Verses 27-28: Rhetorical Questions. The father poses a set of questions to focus and stimulate the son's thinking. However, unlike 5:16 where the symbol of water was used to picture pleasure in a relationship, the father here uses the figure of fire. The questions concentrate on the truth that fire inflicts pain and damage at the point and time of contact. First the father asks, "It isn't possible to scoop fire into your lap without your cloths being burned, is it?" The question is stated for a universal application by using *'ish* indefinitely⁷⁰ -- "It isn't possible for anyone . . . is it?" The location of the contact is described as "his lap" (*behego*), the same term used in the rhetorical question in 5:20, "Why embrace the bosom (*heq*) of another man's wife?" To embrace a woman other than one's own wife is not to experience blessings and satisfaction (5:16-19) but to experience 'burning' ruin (6:27-28). Second the father asks, "It isn't possible to walk bare foot through red hot coals without burning your feet, is it?" Again the application is intended to be universal as indicated by the indefinite use of *'ish*. The choice of the wrong path not only leads to a dooming destination as the father pointed out previously (2:18-19; 5:5-6, 8-10), but also detriment along each step of the way.

Verse 29: Rhetorical Application. The design of the rhetorical questions was not to illicit information but to direct the son's attention to universal truth. In verse 29 the father directs his application back⁷¹ to the adulteress. The application, like the questions, remains indefinite due to the absence of a stated subject with the participle; however, the application is individualized by use of the article with the participle (*habo*). The application is definitely to sexual relations with the adulteress as indicated by the verbs *bo*⁷² and *naga*.⁷³ To cohabit with an adulteress is to be guilty before the law.⁷⁴

Verses 30-31: Indicative Statement. The father shifts from rhetorical questions to indicative statements to reinforce his instruction and application. In verses 30-31 the father turns from the motif of fire and its incumbent results to crime (theft) and its inherent punishment. Again the statement is made as a universal principle, unlimited in its application. The use of the definite article on *ganab* does not denote one specific thief, but anyone of that class.⁷⁵ Thus the truth is twofold: first, anyone who is forced to steal due to hunger may not be held in contempt.⁷⁶ Second, though not held in contempt, he is still guilty of a crime. If caught he will

be held to the provisions of the law and be fined in an amount seven times greater than the value of what he stole.⁷⁷ Extenuating circumstances may cause the public to understand the cause of the crime, but extenuating circumstances will never alter the guilt and punishment due for the crime.

Verses 32-35: Indicative Application. In verse 32 the application is made concerning the one who would visit the adulteress. The verse should be understood to begin with a comparative idea⁷⁸ and translated "even so" -- "As the thief . . . even so the adulterer . . ." Again the application is universal (participle used without a stated subject) and individual (as indicated by the singular pronominal suffix - *napsho*, and following verses). The act of adultery reveals an inner void ("lacks judgment" - *hasar leb*) and is self-destructive.

In verses 33-35 the father catalogs the punitive results of adultery. In verse 33 they are identified as "blows," "disgrace," and "shame" referring to both physical and social effects.⁷⁹ The one who "visits" the seductress will suffer "blows"⁸⁰ to his body. He will also suffer blows to his social standing and self-esteem ("disgrace" [*qalon*]⁸¹ and "shame" [*herpa*]⁸²). The social consequences will have long lasting effects -- "will never be wiped away."⁸³

In verses 34-35 the cause behind the physical and social effects and their enduring nature is explained. The source of the adulterer's sorrow is, in this case, the adulteress's husband.⁸⁴ The husband's reaction to his wife's actions is described in verse 34a as "jealous⁸⁵ rage."⁸⁶ The husband's response to the adulterer is further described in verses 34b-35. He will respond with merciless revenge.⁸⁷ His jealousy and wrath will not be diluted or terminated by any amount of money. This husband obviously is not privy or party to his wife's adulterous actions. When her acts become known he seeks not money (which she also may or may not have sought) but revenge.

Summary

The admonitions to the son in this poem come from both father and mother. Their content is positive and negative being expressed not only as commands but also as teaching. The variety with which admonition is expressed is further expanded by means of rhetorical questions and indicative statements. The son is charged to internalize and externalize the application of his instruction which will minister to him consciously and unconsciously. The motivation behind the parental instruction

includes illumination and enlivenment. Along with these positive motivations is the negative element of corrective discipline.

The initial admonitions and motivation are followed by a more closely defined set of admonitions and motivations. The son is not to lust (internal) after or be captivated by (external) the seductress. The reason is that she is like an animal that seeks prey only for its own needs and benefit.

The liability of failing to heed the parent's advice is universally applicable. Its content involves guilt before the law and jeopardy of harm from the woman's husband.

Proverbs 7:1-27

Structure

This poem falls into three sections. The first section includes admonition (vv. 1-4) and corresponding motivation (v. 5). The second section involves a narrative vignette (vv. 6-23) composed of three acts. The third section concludes the poem with admonition (vv. 24-25) and motivation (vv. 26-27).

Analysis

Verses 1-4: Admonition. As with all fatherly instruction to the son in the first nine chapters, this poem begins with an admonition prefaced by the vocative, "O my son!" The content of the admonition is expressed positively. The elements of the admonition involve the ear, heart, and practice. The son is first exhorted to "hear" the "words" of his father (v. 1a). He is to receive the oral instructions and admonitions through his ear gate. Then the son is counseled to allow those instructions to be stored in the heart; i.e., "store up my commands within you" (v. 1b). In verse 2 the focus is on practice. The son is admonished to "keep," that is, observe, practice⁸⁸ the father's "commands" and "teachings."⁸⁹ The result of this practice is life -- "observe . . . so that you might live."⁹⁰ The method of this practice is described by the simile "like the apple (pupil) of your eye." The practice of the father's instruction is to be with great care and sensitivity.

In verses 3-4 the father describes the intimacy which the son is to have with acquired wisdom. The son is first to "bind" them to his fingers; perhaps suggesting a continuous practice of this instruction. He is then to

engrave them upon his heart; perhaps suggesting memorization and goading for the conscience.⁹¹ The instruction is to be before his eyes (where it can be seen) and on his mind. Finally the son is to establish a family relationship with wisdom. He is instructed to call her "My sister"⁹² and to name⁹³ her "Kinsman."⁹⁴

Verse 5: Motivation. Verse 6 contains the reason for these instructions. An intimate relationship with wisdom will protect the youth from the adulteress and her allurements. The purpose for the father's instruction is to guard (*shamar*) his son from the adulteress and her smooth, suave words. The father seeks to preserve his son from the ways and words of the adulteress.

Verses 6-23: Narrative Vignette. To reinforce his instruction the father now relates a story of seduction to his son. The father takes his son, if only in story form, into the red light district to "experience"⁹⁵ an encounter with the seductress and its consequences.

Verse 6 serves to set the stage for the following tale. From the safety of his own home (*beti*) and of screened windows (*'eshnabi*) the father looked out⁹⁶ upon the scene which he continues to describe. Unnoticed the father observes the action unfold and recounts the tale.

(1) **The first act.** Verses 7-9 contain the first act of the tale. In verse 7 the first character is introduced and described. The father spots (*ra'a*) a single youth in the crowd. From observation of his manner and behavior the father comes to understand (*bin*) that he is naive, inexperienced, unlearned.⁹⁷ Verse 8 reveals his course. His direction and manner appear deliberate. He travels down⁹⁸ the street to "her corner." His progress is viewed as intentional, contemplated.⁹⁹ He walks confidently on the road that leads to her doorstep. He walks oblivious to the dangers that lurk about, to the dangers that are so readily evident to the wise. Verse 9 adds both to the physical and psychological setting of the tale. Physically the time of day is described as evening (*'ereb*) and night time (*layela*). The lighting condition is described as twilight (*neshep*) and darkness (*'apela*). Psychologically it is a time and condition that enhance (and encourage) lurking and allurements. It is a time of danger. At a time when wise people were at home (v. 6),¹⁰⁰ this youth is out walking the streets.

(2) **The second act.** Verses 10-20 contain the second act. In the first scene, verses 10-12, the second character is introduced and described. As the naive youth walks along the harlot's street, he encounters the adulteress herself.¹⁰¹ The meeting is not by chance on the part of the adulteress.¹⁰²

Where the naive walk, the adulteress stalks. Though the adulteress has only been described as a woman (*'isha*) up to this point, the wise father can perceive both her attire and aims. She wears the garments¹⁰³ of a harlot (*zonah*). Her intent is craft, beguilement.¹⁰⁴ Though hidden from the naive youth, her intent is obvious to the wise father. Her description follows (vv. 11-12). She is loud and boisterous.¹⁰⁵ She is stubborn.¹⁰⁶ She is always, restlessly on the prowl; never at home but always in the streets and on the corners lurking for prey.¹⁰⁷ Her qualities are all negative¹⁰⁸ and unattractive (when clearly seen). She is in a constant state of agitation physically and psychologically, which evidences itself in boisterous defiance.

In scene two of the second act (vv. 13-20) the action of the narrative picks up. Upon the encounter of the adulteress with the naive youth, she, without hesitation or introduction, grabs him firmly¹⁰⁹ in her arms; holding him close she kisses him; and then she speaks to him. The manner of her speaking matches the manner of her actions -- they are brazen.¹¹⁰

Verses 14-20 contain her solicitation. She unfolds her offer in four steps.¹¹¹ First, in verse 14, she deals with her spiritual or cultic preparation. Peace-offerings and a vow¹¹² that were incumbent¹¹³ upon her have been paid. Perhaps to conceal her intentions and to reinforce the youth's perception of the chance nature of this meeting, she notes that they were fulfilled "today." Her slate is clean. Her heart is at peace.¹¹⁴ At least, so she says. Second, in verse 15, she builds upon her previous claim. Because her offerings have been made and her vow is fulfilled, she claims to have come to specifically meet this youth.¹¹⁵ Her preparation (v. 14) had a purpose; that purpose includes, she says, this youth. Third, verses 16-17, there has not only been spiritual or cultic preparation but there has also been preparation of the bed chamber. The mood of the room is created with rich and elegant linens of Egyptian origin and an aromatic effect produced by myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. The trap is visually and aromatically prepared with pleasing and impressive accessories. Surely her intentions should have been perceptible even by the naive.¹¹⁶

The final step of her solicitation is recorded in verses 18-20. First, in verse 18, the invitation proper. She invites the youth to return to her home. The purpose and plan for the return is expressed by two cohortative verb forms; seeking perhaps to portray the invitation as arising within the mind of the youth.¹¹⁷ The invitation is to be mutually "filled with love"

and "to revel in love." The first verb carries the idea of being saturated or be satiated.¹¹⁸ The adulteress offers more than just a taste or sip; her invitation is to full indulgence and complete satisfaction. The second verb refers to rejoicing or delight.¹¹⁹ The seductress offers blissful pleasure. Second, in verses 19-20, the cause for such carefreeness is revealed -- her husband is not at home. She has the run of the house to herself. Her husband is on a journey which according to his planning ("long journey"), his provision ("purse filled with money"), and his perspective ("till full moon") is sure to be long. There are no dangers only pleasures.¹²⁰ There is no hurry only solace. The trap is set and the naive considers the bait.

(3) **The third act.** Verses 21-23 contain the conclusion of the father's narration. With this act the curtain will come down on the narrative and on the naive youth. In verse 21, the decision of the youth, if indeed his choice required a thought process, is described wholly in terms of the adulteress. It is she who entices;¹²¹ the youth has only to accept. The instruments of her enticement are her persuasive, smooth words; words which are both inviting and easily swallowed. The conclusion of the encounter draws nigh. As she continues to spin her verbal web, her solicitation suddenly (*pith'om*) takes root and impels the entranced youth to follow. The trap is sprung. He is as oblivious to his ensnarement as "an ox going to slaughter" or as "a fool going to the discipline of fetters."¹²² And so he follows the harlot as an animal would the butcher, until "an arrow pierces his liver." His embrace of the adulteress's solicitation is as dooming as a bird's embrace (*hasten/dart, mahar*) of a snare. But in spite of the clarity of the whole encounter to the wise father, this naive youth does not realize that it means his very life.

Verses 24-27: Conclusion. To bring the lesson of the initial admonition and narrative home to his son, the father concludes this poem with additional admonitions and motivations. As in 5:7 the father introduces this second admonitory appeal with *we'ata banim*. The father's admonitions are both positive, involving the ear (v. 24a) and negative, involving the path of his son (v. 24b). The son is exhorted to listen and hear what his father teaches.¹²³ The son is warned against intentionally¹²⁴ or unintentionally¹²⁵ entering the way of the adulteress. The father's warning includes both consideration of ("in your heart") and participation in travel on her paths. In verses 26-27 the father gives the reasons for his admonitions. The first set of reasons focus on the seductress herself. First, quantitatively her victims are numerous ("many"); these consequences are not exceptional but customary. Second,

qualitatively her victims are capable ("mighty");¹²⁶ these consequences befall all who enter her path, not just the weak. Thirdly, categorically her victims are finished -- they are cast down, they are slain. The second set of reasons focus on the house of the seductress. First, her house is "a highway to the grave (*sheol*)."¹²⁷ It declines to the "chambers of death."¹²⁸ The way to pleasure (i.e., the path to the harlot's house) in the end is the way to Sheol. The alluringly furnished and perfumed chambers become those of Death. The naive youth is brought to full realization too late. The father's hope is that his son will learn from the experience of another -- from a peer.¹²⁹

Summary

The father's admonitions, both positive and negative, involve ear, heart, and practice. His admonitions must be personalized to be effective. The methods of his admonition include command, exhortation, appeal, storytelling, etc.¹³⁰ By using storytelling, the father seems to be telling his son that if he must learn by experience it is best to learn from someone else's experience. However, better still, to learn from instruction.

The threat of the prostitute is not only passive but exceptionally active -- she pursues the youth. Not only is her pitch (words) to be avoided but also her place (street corner and house). Her identity is distinct, as revealed by her dress, location, and words. Her solicitation is designed to make her victim think that he originated her desires. Thus the seductress discounts the dangers in her pitch and emphasizes the pleasures of her allurements. Her dangers certainly are not selective, none are excluded -- all are endangered.

CONCLUSION

Cultural Context

Ancient Near Eastern Cultures. The cultures of the ancient Near East present a uniform view of the prostitute and her trade. From the influential nations such as Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt to the less influential nations of Canaan prostitution, both secular and sacred, was an accepted and sanctioned practice. Social mores in regard to marriage allowed for the presence and practice of prostitution in society without denigrating their understanding of "monogamous" marriage or the "virtue" of women. Legally the practice was regulated but not prohibited or even

restricted. The concern of the legal codes was with the integrity of social boundaries and distinctions. The presence and practice of prostitution both secular and sacred was not repressed. Prostitution was an accepted part and practice of ancient Near Eastern societies.

In the realm of religion prostitution played a vital role. The extent of this role may have varied to some degree; for instance in Mesopotamia it was not unusual for every temple to provide sacred prostitutes, while in Egypt, though present, cultic prostitutes were not prominent. Nevertheless, their necessity to worship and communion with deity was essential. These prostitutes not only reflected the character and actions of their patron god(esse)s, but they also provided a path to the blessings and good-graces of the deity. Prostitution was a vital part and practice of ancient Near Eastern religions.

The place of prostitution in the ancient Near East is reflected in its literature. One of the oldest and most widely circulated tales of the ancient Near East, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, depicts a prostitute as a heroine. It is a prostitute and the exercise of her sexuality that lead to the humanization of Enkidu, the restraint of Gilgamesh, and the well-being of the inhabitants of Uruk. In the writings of the wise, as they counsel their sons, their admonition is twofold: primarily it is against marriage to a prostitute (*Counsel of Wisdom* and *Ani*); the reverse side of which is to establish a sound and acceptable marriage (*Phat-hotep* and *Ani*). Their caution is against her physical appeal; very little is said concerning her words (*Ani*).¹³¹ The motivation behind their admonitions primarily involves avoidance of personal sorrow and grief (*Counsel of Wisdom* and *Ani*). They also warn against a "wandering eye" for women which can only cause trouble. Only in a later period of Egypt (*Ahikar*) is there mention of condemnation by God and men for one who would "visit" a "lovely woman, rouged and antimonied." Though prostitution was an accepted and essential part of their culture, sages provide (limited) warnings concerning the prostitute.

Israel's Culture. A review of the attitudes toward prostitution in pre-Solomonic Israel stand in stark contrast to those of her neighbors in the Fertile Crescent. The legal code of Israel uniformly warns against and condemns prostitution both secular and sacred (Lev. 17:7, 20:5-6, 21:7ff; Deut. 22:21, 23:17-18). The law explicitly prohibits the women of Israel from being either secular or sacred prostitutes and implicitly prohibits those practices by foreign women within Israel's borders. Prostitution was not to be part of Israel's culture. However, in the history of pre-Solomonic Israel one finds several references to the practice of prostitution. Most accounts view the practice negatively (Gen. 34; Num. 25); while other

accounts simply record the fact of the practice without an evaluation (Gen. 38; Josh. 2-6; Judg. 11).

Solomonic Perspective

During Solomon's reign conditions within Israel's society drastically changed. The extent and nature of this change affected attitudes within Israel toward the presence and practice of both secular and sacred prostitution. One effect of Solomon's reign was an increased cosmopolitan outlook of the nation. Israel began to lose its provincialism and to gain an enhanced view of the world around it. Due to Solomon's influence and reputation scores of diplomatic ties with city-states and kingdoms throughout the ancient Near East were established. As a result of these ties Israel, particularly Jerusalem, experienced an increased foreign population. Diplomats and dignities visited Solomon's court. Foreign officials and technocrats became part of Solomon's advisers and administration. Foreign women, given in marriage to Solomon to seal political or commercial treaties, and their accompanying cultic personnel became a permanent part of Jerusalem's society. This increased cosmopolitan outlook was also augmented by Solomon's commercial practices, expanded trade, and building projects. With an increased visiting and permanent foreign population, Jerusalem and Israel as a whole experienced increased foreign influences.

A second effect of Solomon's reign was an increase of urbanization. Prosperity from Solomon's economic and technologic ventures resulted, among other things, in a population increase. Hand-in-hand with the population increase came increased urbanization. A significant portion of Solomon's building activity involved cities -- their expansion and/or their fortification. Part of Solomon's influence on the nation involved a restructuring of governmental administration. This included an expanded central bureaucracy in Jerusalem and a realignment of administrative districts throughout the nation. The effect of this governmental adjustment was twofold: first, it increased the influence and attraction of urban areas; and second it drained established social relationships such as tribe and family of their influence. People moved to cities in increasing numbers. In the cities they found new employment opportunities due to increased trade and expanding government.

A third effect of Solomon's reign apparently was a new secularization of Israel's society. Partly as a result of the first two effects and partly as a result of other influences; and in direct antithesis to Solomon's building of the Temple, the presence and practices of resident foreigners became an

accepted, if not significant, practice in Israel's society. Without a doubt this new secularization included increased acceptance of secular and sacred prostitution. The acceptance of secularization may not have involved active promotion, but apparently it did involve an indiscrete apathy. During Solomon's reign prostitutes enjoyed a degree of familiarity and acceptability that even included the right of appeal to the king for exercise of justice -- legal protection to a degree (1 Kgs 3:16-28). During Solomon's reign the construction of temple complexes for pagan deities within sight of Yahweh's temple took place. The practices and practitioners of these foreign gods no doubt viewed prostitution as a necessary and acceptable part of their worship and lifestyle.

Solomon, consciously or unconsciously, opened the door of Israel to the increased presence of persons who accepted secular and sacred prostitution as part of one's normal and necessary pattern of life. Solomon may have been absorbed by the initial benefits of his pursuit of diplomatic ties and trade and governmental efficiency. However, one unforeseen by-product of his efforts was an increase of beguiling women on the streets of the cities of Israel. At the same time, another unforeseen by-product of Solomon's efforts was a migration of native Israelites into urban areas where these seductive women walked the streets.

Exegetical Analysis

The father's admonitions concerning the seductress are manifold. They take many forms: command, exhortation, rhetorical question, dramatic narrative, and indicative statement to name a few. They are positive, counselling the son to accept and assimilate wisdom in all its forms and facets.¹³² They are also negative, exhorting the son to avoid all contact not only with the adulteress herself, but also with her words and ways. They are repeated -- every discourse about the adulteress begins with admonitions.

The father's admonitions concerning avoidance of the seductress are always supported by motivation clauses. The father always tells his son "Why." The dangers of the seductress are several. Negatively, the father's admonitions about the seductress are clear. Her ultimate destination is exclusively death. The duration of stay for those who "visit her house" is unending -- far longer than the one night fling she offers. Her seductive words are appealing both in their taste ("like honey") and in their texture ("like oil") -- they are too easily swallowed. Her price is too great -- it robs of the prime of life and the provision for one's family. She, like an animal, preys on her victims. Her character can only be described with negatives.

Positively, the father's admonitions provide both light and life for the youth's path. They supply companionship and protection for the journey through life.

The third major part of the father's instruction is to show youth what the certain results of his choices will be. Should he choose the seductress he can expect a bitter and painful path whose destination is found in death and Sheol. He will experience personal, physical, social, and familial ruin. He will not escape God's eyes or God's judgment. He can only expect guilt that will tear at his conscience. He will be subject to social castigation and the retribution of the offended husband. Should he choose wisdom he will experience blessing and joy with his own wife. He will experience full and unrepachable satisfaction with his wife. The choice between the seductress and wisdom is the choice between full and complete loss and full and complete gain.

Summary

The appeal of the seductress to youth most certainly is not limited to any single culture or age. The dangers are real and the opportunities are present wherever the sagacious and their descendants walk. To protect their sons the wise prepare them for the road of life when, without the father's presence, they alone would encounter the seductress. Preparation and instruction in wisdom founded on Israel's faith would offer companionship and protection for the dangers along the path.

This need to prepare for the choices youth must make upon life's path is a thread that runs through the whole book of Proverbs; but with greater prominence in the father's instruction found in the first nine chapters.

In the collected sayings of Proverbs (cc 10-29), the decision to become wise is presented as a continuing series of practical choices made throughout life. In contrast, in the first nine chapters of Proverbs and in other passages sprinkled throughout the wisdom corpus, this choice is portrayed as the single major decision of a lifetime. It is a choice of a young man deliberating between two women . . . One is the seductress, Lady Folly or the 'Strange Woman,' whose friendship leads to death; the other is the Wisdom Woman, whose intimacies bring blessing, life and relationship overflowing with peace and joy. Each woman symbolizes a stance toward life and the world and the inexorable consequences of taking that stance."¹³³

The ancient wise men warned their students against evil, seductive women, because involvement with such persons could only lead to trouble. They taught that the way of wisdom would protect the youth from their wiles. 134

¹ Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, para. 39.3.4f, p. 667; Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, transl. by Edward Robinson (Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1972) 23; "expressing logical sequence strictly: in the apod.: --after 'im (rare) for the sake of special emphasis . . ."

² Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs*, Institute of Theological Studies tape series (Grand Rapids, MI: Outreach, Inc., 1988) 35.

³ The use of *lama'an* may also indicate the result of the youth's adherence to the father's admonition and the choice of wisdom; compare Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 638-639.

⁴ Milton C. Fisher, "nasal," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, editors (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980) 2:594.

⁵ Reference to Solomon Mandelkern, *Old Testament Concordance of Hebrew and Chaldean* (Lipsiae: Veit, 1925) 763, reveals five occurrences. Deuteronomy 23:15 reads "If a slave has taken refuge with you, do not hand him over to his master;" indicating a state of protection from the master. Two occurrences are found in Jeremiah 1 as part of the prophet's commission. In verse 8 the meaning might be taken as active deliverance when God states, "Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you." However, in verse 19, where further detail is given, this idea does not hold up. The meaning of "protection from" is evident from the fact that they "will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you." The final two uses both occur in Proverbs 2 (vv. 12, 16).

⁶ Marvin R. Wilson, "nkh," *TWOT*, 2:578. Outside of the Book of Proverbs the term is used of an alien citizen or land; compare Exodus 2:22, 18:3; Ruth 2:10; Isaiah 28:21; Jeremiah 2:21. Also compare the use of the plural with *nashim* which always refers to the marriage of Israelite men to non-Israelite women, 1 Kings 11:1; Ezra 10:2, 10; Nehemiah 13:27.

7 Gale A. Yee, "I Have Perfumed My Bed With Myrrh: The Foreign Woman (*'issa zara*) In Proverbs 1-9," *JSOT* (1989) 43:54. She is referring to L. A. Snijders, "zur/zar", *TDOT*, IV, pp. 94-95. Compare William McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) 328-29, 365-67.

8 Donald J. Wiseman, "*halaq*," *TWOT*, 1:294. The Hiphil stem of this root is also used in Proverbs 7:5, 28:23, 29:5.

9 A. Cohen, *Proverbs, Soncino Books of the Bible*, A. Cohen, editor (London: The Soncino Press, 1976) 11. See also Gasper, *Social Ideas*, 80. Quoting Humbert, "La 'Femme Etrangere . . .," 64; "It is true that throughout, in inculcating chastity, the sages place the emphasis on the family. The good, chaste, God-fearing wife is an ornament to the family; the faithless, on the contrary, violates its integrity. So also the wife who leaves her husband, And provides an heir by another. For, first, she disobeys the law of the Most High, And second, she sins against her husband, And, third, she commits adultery through her lewdness." See also R.B.Y. Scott, *Proverbs-Ecclesiastes, The Anchor Bible*, W. F. Albright and David Noel Freedman, editors (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday & Company, 1965) 43; and Derek Kidner, *The Proverbs*, (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1964) 62.

10 Compare 5:20; 6:24, 29, 34f; 7:19. Compare also Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs*, ITS series, 40, commenting on Proverbs 5:7-20, "The prostitute in that culture was a married person, so the john could be threatened by her husband."

11 Carl Schultz, "*'azab*," *TWOT*, 2:658-659; *BDB*, 736-737.

12 Robert L. Alden, *Proverbs: A Commentary on an Ancient Book of Timeless Advice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988) 34. See also Scott, *Proverbs*, 43.

13 Edgar Jones, *Proverbs and Ecclesiastes* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1961) 67. Compare Cohen, *Proverbs*, 11-12, "The prohibition of adultery formed part of God's covenant with Israel (Exod. xx.13)."

14 Compare Ruth 1:15; Isaiah 21:9; Jeremiah 46:25; Zephaniah 3:2; each occurrence has the meaning of "her gods." NIV footnote reads "covenant of her God."

15 Compare 7:27, "Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death."

16 Compare "house" [*bayit*]: 5:8, 10; 7:8, 11, 19, 20, 27; 9:14; and "paths" [*ma'gelot*]: 5:6 (see also synonyms).

17 Compare "death" [*mawet*]: 5:5; 7:27; and its inhabitants as "spirits" [*repha'im*]: 9:18. Compare Jones, *Proverbs and Ecclesiastes*, 67, "The Rephaim are the shadowy ones who inhabit Sheol. They are silent and inactive but existent as mere shadows of their former selves. We must remember that death to the Hebrew mind is a weakened, attenuated form of life, not annihilation (cf. Isa. 14:9; Ps. 88:10; Job 26:5)." See also R. Laird Harris, "*rapa*," *TWOT*, 2:858; Adrian Curtis, *Cities of the Biblical World: Ugarit (Ras Shamra)* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1985) 105-106; while Phoenician inscriptions connect this term to residence in the grave or realm of death, Ugaritic evidence is uncertain. The term is used seven other times in Scripture, all in poetic passages. While the use in Job 26:5 is unclear, generally *repha'im* is used to refer to a group of personages inhabiting/residing in Sheol or the realm of death; compare Psalm 88:11; Proverbs 9:18, 21:16; Isaiah 14:9, 26:14, 19. The reference in Proverbs 9:18 is revealing. Lady Folly, the ultimate seductress, invites the naive into her house to partake of her provisions. The naive while on the path are called "travellers" (v. 15 - *le'obre darek, hameyasherim*); however, once they accept her invitation and enter her house they are described as *repha'im* and their location in reality is "the depths of Sheol."

18 W. Gunther Plaut, *The Book of Proverbs*, (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1961) 50; "*None that go unto her*. This is a play on words; for the Hebrew also means 'go in' unto her, in the sense of sexual relations (and is so used in Gen. 6:4, 16:2)."

19 Cohen, *Proverbs*, 12. Yee, "The Foreign Woman," *JSOT* (1989) 43:57; "The house in which the *issa zara* abides leads to death itself. Those who actively go to her (*ba'eha*) will never return."

20 Murphy, "Wisdom and Eros," 602; "The concern is to forestall illegitimate sexual pleasure."

21 Both verbs in this verse, *shamar* and *natar* have meanings which fall within the semantic domain of preserving or guarding; compare *TWOT*, 2:939-940 and 2:594-5.

22 Contrast with Song of Solomon 4:11. Compare Scott, *Proverbs*, 54; "May refer to kisses rather than to words."

23 Yee, "The Foreign Woman," *JSOT* (1989) 43:59; "In contrast [to Wisdom] . . . the seductive lips of the foreign woman also drip honey, but rather than being good to the soul, speaking noble things, they lead to Sheol and death (5:6; cf. 2:18-19)." Cohen, *Proverbs*, 26; "It is always used in the Bible as a symbol of what is bitter and harmful. The root-

7 Gale A. Yee, "I Have Perfumed My Bed With Myrrh: The Foreign Woman (*'issa zara*) In Proverbs 1-9," *JSOT* (1989) 43:54. She is referring to L. A. Snijders, "zur/zar", *TDOT*, IV, pp. 94-95. Compare William McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) 328-29, 365-67.

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10 Compare 5:20; 6:24, 29, 34f; 7:19. Compare also Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs*, ITS series, 40, commenting on Proverbs 5:7-20, "The prostitute in that culture was a married person, so the john could be threatened by her husband."

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15 Compare 7:27, "Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death."

16 Compare "house" [*bayit*]: 5:8, 10; 7:8, 11, 19, 20, 27; 9:14; and "paths" [*ma'gelot*]: 5:6 (see also synonyms).

17 Compare "death" [*mawet*]: 5:5; 7:27; and its inhabitants as "spirits" [*repha'im*]: 9:18. Compare Jones, *Proverbs and Ecclesiastes*, 67, "The Rephaim are the shadowy ones who inhabit Sheol. They are silent and inactive but existent as mere shadows of their former selves. We must remember that death to the Hebrew mind is a weakened, attenuated form of life, not annihilation (cf. Isa. 14:9; Ps. 88:10; Job 26:5)." See also R. Laird Harris, "*rapa*," *TWOT*, 2:858; Adrian Curtis, *Cities of the Biblical World: Ugarit (Ras Shamra)* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1985) 105-106; while Phoenician inscriptions connect this term to residence in the grave or realm of death, Ugaritic evidence is uncertain. The term is used seven other times in Scripture, all in poetic passages. While the use in Job 26:5 is unclear, generally *repha'im* is used to refer to a group of personages inhabiting/residing in Sheol or the realm of death; compare Psalm 88:11; Proverbs 9:18, 21:16; Isaiah 14:9, 26:14, 19. The reference in Proverbs 9:18 is revealing. Lady Folly, the ultimate seductress, invites the naive into her house to partake of her provisions. The naive while on the path are called "travellers" (v. 15 - *le'obre darek, hameyasherim*); however, once they accept her invitation and enter her house they are described as *repha'im* and their location in reality is "the depths of Sheol."

18 W. Gunther Plaut, *The Book of Proverbs*, (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1961) 50; "*None that go unto her*. This is a play on words; for the Hebrew also means 'go in' unto her, in the sense of sexual relations (and is so used in Gen. 6:4, 16:2)."

19 Cohen, *Proverbs*, 12. Yee, "The Foreign Woman," *JSOT* (1989) 43:57; "The house in which the *issa zara* abides leads to death itself. Those who actively go to her (*ba'eha*) will never return."

20 Murphy, "Wisdom and Eros," 602; "The concern is to forestall illegitimate sexual pleasure."

21 Both verbs in this verse, *shamar* and *natar* have meanings which fall within the semantic domain of preserving or guarding; compare *TWOT*, 2:939-940 and 2:594-5.

22 Contrast with Song of Solomon 4:11. Compare Scott, *Proverbs*, 54; "May refer to kisses rather than to words."

23 Yee, "The Foreign Woman," *JSOT* (1989) 43:59; "In contrast [to Wisdom] . . . the seductive lips of the foreign woman also drip honey, but rather than being good to the soul, speaking noble things, they lead to Sheol and death (5.6; cf. 2.18-19)." Cohen, *Proverbs*, 26; "It is always used in the Bible as a symbol of what is bitter and harmful. The root-

meaning of the word is 'curse.' Bitterness is the reality as compared with the honeyed sweetness of her words."

24 The contrast at this point may also include the medicinal properties of oil with the damaging properties of the sword.

25 This verb is used six times in Scripture. It is a demoninative verb from *peles* meaning scale or balance. Basically the verb means to weigh in the sense of exercising discernment or attending to details. In Psalm 58:2 the basic idea of weighing is involved. In Psalm 78:50 God "prepares a path for His anger." In Proverbs 4:26 the father exhorts his son to consider the paths of his feet. In both Isaiah 26:7 and Proverbs 5:21 it is Yahweh who considers man's paths. Compare *TWOT*, 2:726; *BDB*, 814.

26 Jack P. Lewis, "*yada*," *TWOT*, 1:366; "This root . . . expresses a multitude of shades of knowledge gained by the senses." Compare the description of Folly in 9:13, "without knowledge."

27 Andrew Bolling, *TWOT*, 2:564; the verb *nua'* primarily refers to "repetitive, to and fro movement. These movements can be on a relatively small scale expressed by ideas such as shaking, reeling, or swaying. Or they can be on a geographic scale calling for meanings such as 'to wander about.'" Thus the adulteress's ways are completely opposite that which the father advises his son, 4:26-27; as well as antithetical to righteous paths (2:20, 4:11); *yashar* literally means "to go straight or direct in the way." (Donald J. Wiseman, "*yashar*," *TWOT*, 1:930). Also note the apparent contrasting description of the same item. In v. 5 her steps are described as "straight"; while in verse 6 her paths are described as "crooked."

28 Cohen, *Proverbs*, 27; "The plural as in iv.1, but in the following verses we have the singular 'thou,' 'thy.' He invokes them collectively, but addresses himself to each personally."

29 The vocative use of the plural of *ben* in Proverbs occurs only in 4:1, 5:7, 7:24, 8:32. In 4:1 the use occurs with a multi-generational transference of wisdom. The usages in both 5:7 and 7:24 follow a singular vocative use introducing the whole pericope and are immediately preceded by *we'attah*. Perhaps an emphatic type of focusing is involved. In 8:32 Wisdom addresses her adherents. Note the LXX uses the singular in this occasion. Verse 8 returns to the singular.

30 William White, "*rahaq*," *TWOT*, 2:844; "The primary meaning of the Qal stem expresses the state of a person or thing as being 'far' from someone or something else." The use of the Hiphil imperative in Proverbs is always to provide a warning or request to remove something evil or detrimental far away, compare 4:24, 5:8, 30:8. The only other uses of the

Hiphil imperative are in Job 11:14 and 13:21 which have similar meanings.

31 Victor P. Hamilton, "*pen*," *TWOT*, 2:726-727; "The primary function of *pen* at the beginning of a clause is to express precaution. For example, many of the instances of *pen* in Prov follow the negative particle 'al and the jussive form of the verb . . . 20:13;22:25; 26:4-5; 30:6,10."

32 Bruce K. Waltke, "*sabea*" *TWOT*, 2:869.

33 Compare 4:17; 5:15ff; 6:26; 9:17; 20:16-17; 30:20.

34 Forms of the verb *naham* only occur five times (Proverbs 5:11, 28:15; Ezekiel 24:23; Isaiah 5:29,30). The verb has the meanings of growling (of the sound of a lion, Prov. 28:15; Isa. 5:29; or of the sound of the sea, Isa. 5:30) and of groaning (Prov. 5:11 and Ezek 24:23). Compare *BDB*, 625; *TWOT*, 2:559. Charles Bridges, *The Book of Proverbs*, revised by George F. Santa (Milford, MI: Mott Media, 1978) 70; ". . . the piercing cry of the accusing conscience."

35 John N. Oswalt, "*kala*," *TWOT*, 1:439.

36 This may infer the results of sexually transmitted diseases. Compare Alden, *Proverbs*, 50-51; "It is possible she is the kind who will transmit some disease which will induce her partner's premature death. . . . Adultery results in the loss of self-respect, disease, and possibly even death. . . . Verse 11 is explicit about one effect of adultery; illicit sexual activity brings on venereal disease which often proves excruciatingly fatal." Cohen, *Proverbs*, 28; "The verse is best explained in the light of Deut. xxii.22, *If a man be found lying with a woman married to a husband, then they shall both of them die; so shalt thou put away the evil from Israel*. The concluding phrase often occurs in Deut. in connection with sin which is regarded as a demoralizing element in the community that has to be removed. On reflection it will be brought home to this man that he had been such an *evil in the midst of the congregation* and incurred the danger of being 'put away.'" Compare Kidner, *The Proverbs*, 70; "The primary thought of these verses [vv. 9-14] is not that loose living invites disease (though 11 may well include this), but that it dissipates irrevocably the powers a man has been given to invest. He will wake up to find that he has been exploited by his chosen circle, with whom he had no real ties."

37 The use of both *qahal* and *'edah* emphasizes the public nature of this reality. Jack P. Lewis, "*qahal*," *TWOT*, 2:790; "An assembly of any sort and purpose may be designated by *qahal*. . . . But the *qahal* is especially an assembly for religious purposes." Lewis, "*eda*," *TWOT*, 1:388, ". . . an assembly by appointment . . . the noun itself does not imply the purpose of

the gathering . . . Despite the fact that we have 'congregation and assembly' (*qahal we'eda*, Prov 5:14), *qahal* and *'eda* seem to be synonymous for all practical purposes. . . . Most characteristic of the OT is the use of *'eda* for the congregation of Israel." Compare Alden, *Proverbs*, 51; "He also faces the loss of respect in the community, one kind of disgrace which has led many to suicide. Just what this loss meant in Bible times is uncertain . . . might include a priestly ban on sexual offenders."

38 This admission is reminiscent of Proverbs 16:25 & 14:12. Compare Jones, *Proverbs and Ecclesiastes*, 82-83; "The probable reference is to the death penalty for adultery in accordance with the law, cf. Deut. 22.22 and Lev. 20.10. Yet in Prov. 6.33 the punishment is 'wounds and dishonour' which suggests that the actual death penalty was not exacted at this time (cf. Sirach 23.21). The UTTER RUIN would be the public scourging with the scandal and shame attached." Kenneth T. Aitken, *Proverbs* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986) 63; ". . . denouncing the offender in a public assembly . . ."

39 Yee, "The Foreign Woman," *JSOT* (1989) 43:60; "The imagery recalls Cant. 4.15 where the groom describes the bride as an enclosed garden containing 'a garden fountain, a well of living water . . . and flowing streams." Cohen, *Proverbs*, 28; "The language is symbolic of marital intercourse. In Cant. iv.5 the beloved is called *a well of living waters*. The intention is: find contentment in thy lawful wife."

40 For various interpretations of these verses see Paul A. Kruger, "Promiscuity Or Marriage Fidelity? A Note On Prov 5:15-18," *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* (1987) 61-68.

41 It is noteworthy that since both terms used of the husband in verse 16 refer to the "flow" of water (*ma'yan* and *palge mayim*), perhaps his fertility is in view. Compare Carl Schultz, "*ma'yan*," *TWOT* 2:663, *TWOT*, 2:724 and *BDB*, 811; and Gerhard Von Rad, *Wisdom In Israel*, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1972) 45.

42 Alden, *Proverbs*, 52; "The semantic image here is someone who throws water from his wells into the street, a foolish and wasteful gesture. In the east water is so scarce that this picture of waste is even more meaningful."

43 Compare verse 10 the only other occurrence of *zarim* in Proverbs, Mandelkern, 352-353.

44 The verb *rawa* has the basic idea of "be satiated, have one's fill," (William White, "*rawa*," *TWOT*, 2:835); to saturate or be sated sexually (*BDB*, 924). Compare Murphy, "Wisdom and Eros," 602; this passage

contains "a clear command to the youth to cultivate sexual pleasure with his wife."

45 The term *'ahab* includes attitudes, emotions, desires, etc. as well as actions; compare *BDB* 12f; *TDOT* 1:99ff; and *TWOT* 1:14.

46 The verb *shaga* (stagger) has the primary meaning of swerve or stray. In this context the father draws on the association of this verb with wine and strong drink; thus intoxication that produces staggering. The point is that the husband is to be intoxicated and thus under the influence of his wife's love. The *beth* is used instrumentally. The point is not instability, but influence. Compare Victor P. Hamilton, "*shaga*," *TWOT*, 2:904; *BDB*, 993. See also Alden, *Proverbs*, 52; "An uncommon verb ("captivated") appears in 19c, 20a, and 23b. Its root meaning is to wander or stray, leading to the idea of being captured, captivated, or ravished. The latter meanings seem to fit our passage best; perhaps 'captivate' would work in verses 19 and 20, but 'capture' would go better in verse 23."

47 Gerard Van Groningen, "*habaq*," *TWOT*, 1:259; "*habaq* basically designates an expression of love by the position or action of one's hands or arms. . . . The first use of the term expresses the idea of embracing someone else to show fondness or affection. . . . The second use of *habaq* describes the embrace of lovers. This embrace can designate virtuous love (Song 2:6) or the adulterous embracing of a stranger's bosom." The verb is used thirteen times in the OT: Gen. 29:13, 33:4, 48:10; II Kings 4:16; Job 24:8; Prov. 4:8 [positive command to embrace Wisdom], 5:20; Eccl. 3:5, 5, 4:5; Song 2:6, 8:3; Lam. 4:5.

48 The term *derek* has reference literally to a "path worn by constant walking" and thus is used of thoroughfares and roadways, the "more numerous" metaphorical sense includes "the actions and behavior of men," Herbert Wolf, "*derek*," *TWOT*, 1:196-197. On the other hand, the term *ma'gal* can refer to either an entrenchment or track (*BDB*, 722). The plural form of the noun is used 10 times: I Samuel 17:20; Psalm 17:5, 23:3, 65:12; Proverbs 2:15, 18, 4:11, 5:6, 21; Isaiah 59:8. The four uses in Proverbs are in the context of wicked men (2:15); the adulteress (2:18, 5:6); the father's admonition concerning wisdom (4:11); and man's paths (5:21). The term is used at times with a distributive sense; i.e., the "track" is viewed as being composed of individual "tracks" (Prov. 4:26, "Ponder the path of thy feet.")

49 This verb is used six times in Scripture. It is a demoninative verb from *peles* meaning scale or balance. Basically the verb means to weigh in the sense of exercising discernment or attending to details. In this context the reference is to discerning, accurate judgment. Compare *TWOT*, 2:726;

BDB, 814. Cohen, *Proverbs*, 29; "The exhortation concludes with a statement on Divine retribution. Virtue has God's approval and He comes to the aid of those who adhere to it, while the vicious are punished."

50 Walter C. Kaiser, "*lakad*," *TWOT*, 1:481; "Most of the 121 uses of *lakad* deal with men capturing or seizing towns, men, spoils, and even a kingdom." Compare Judges 15:4; Amos 3:4, 5 for usages with hunting connotations.

51 R. D. Paterson, "*tamak*," *TWOT*, 2:973; *BDB*, 1069.

52 The concept of "binding" is associated with capture, punishment, and/or judgment; Judges 15:10ff, 16:5ff; Psalm 105:22, 149:8; Daniel 3:20.

53 Paul R. Gilchrist, "*yasar*," *TWOT*, 1:387; ". . . *musar* primarily points to a God-centered way of life, and only secondarily to ethical behavior. Proverbs 1:7 couples it with the 'fear of Yahweh,' and 1:8 with *tora* 'instruction, teaching.' . . . Proverbs and other wisdom literature speak of discipline with emphasis on instruction."

54 The meaning of the verb *nasar* in this context is to keep with fidelity, thus to observe or to obey instructions, laws, or provisions of covenant. Compare Walter C. Kaiser, "*nasar*," *TWOT*, 2:594-595; *BDB*, 665.

55 The meaning of the verb *natash* in this context is to reject, abandon, or forsake. Compare Marvin R. Wilson, "*natash*," *TWOT*, 2:577; "There are forty occurrences of *natash* in the OT. About half of these uses carry the idea of forsake or reject"; and *BDB*, 643-644. The phrase, "Do not forsake your mother's law" also occurs in Proverbs 1:8. A quick survey of concordances reveals that this is the only verse in which both verbs occur together.

56 This is the first occurrence of *tora* in the instructions to the son concerning the adulteress. Significantly *tora* is connected to the youth's mother and not father.

57 The Qal imperative of the verb *qashar* (to tie or bond) is used three times in Proverbs (3:3, 6:21, 7:3); always in instructions to the son and always of elements necessary to his preparation for the road of life. In 3:3 both the "neck" and "heart" are mentioned as in the verse under study. The only other occurrence of this root in Proverbs is found in 22:15 in a somewhat negative sense. Compare Leonard J. Coppes, "*qashar*," *TWOT*, 2:818-819. Compare Patrick D. Miller, "Apotropaic Imagery in Proverbs 6:20-22," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (April, 1970) 129-130; "the function of the bound commandment or teaching . . . serves not simply to

remind and admonish the wearer but goes with him as a protective companion."

58 The verb *'anad* occurs only here and in Job 31:36 of a crown placed on one's head.

59 The singular subject of this verse compared to the plural of verse 20 (commands and teaching) "indicate . . . the substantial identity of the teaching of the father and the mother . . ." (Cohen, *Proverbs*, 35).

60 Both terms occur together in Psalm 199:105 whose context also focuses on *miswa* (22 times) and *tora* (25 times); as well as mentioning youth (v. 9).

61 The root *yakah* has forensic, theological (exposure of sin and call to repentance), and corrective facets. The corrective aspect of this root contains the idea of education and discipline; Paul R. Gilchrist, "*yakah*," *TWOT*, 1:376-377. Also *BDB*, 406-407. Verbal forms are used in Proverbs of rebuking a wise or understanding person (9:7-8, 19:25), of rebuking a scorner (9:8, 15:12), of Yahweh's rebuke (3:12, 30:6), of convicting the guilty (24:25), of the wise reproving (25:12), and of reproof in contrast to flattery (28:23). The noun form occurs in Proverbs 1:23, 25, 30; 3:11; 5:12; 6:23; 10:17; 12:1; 13:18; 15:5, 10, 31, 32; 27:5; 29:1, 15.

62 *TWOT*, 2:939-940; *BDB*, 1036-1037.

63 The adulteress's tongue is described as *mehleqa* (smooth). Compare Donald J. Wiseman, "*halaq*," *TWOT*, 294; the principal use of this root "is of smooth speech or flattery, i.e. words which were smoother than butter and like oil (Ps 55:21 [H 22]). This use of the tongue is always condemned . . . It is characteristic of the seductive woman who is to be avoided." This root is also found in Proverbs 7:21.

64 The verb *hamad* refers to desire which may be either good or evil. It is the same root used in Exodus 20:17, "Thou shalt not covet." In the negative sense it refers to an "inordinate, ungoverned, selfish, desire" (*BDB*, 326). Compare J. Barton Payne, "*hamad*," *TWOT*, 1:294-295. Forms of this root are also found in Proverbs 1:22; 12:12; 21:20.

65 Paul R. Gilchrist, "*yapa*," *TWOT*, 1:391-392; "Esthetically . . . denotes 'beauty as to outward appearance,' . . . 'beautiful in form'." Also *BDB*, 421.

66 Walter C. Kaiser, "*laqah*," *TWOT*, 1:482; the verb *laqah* basically means to take "often taking its nuance from the words with which it is used." Compare *BDB*, 543; "take = capture, seize . . . of seductions of woman, . . . Pr 6:25 and let her not capture thee with her eyelids."

67 *BDB*, 733, "*eyelids*, usu. nearly = eyes." Used 10 times in the OT:

Job 3:9, 16:16, 41:18; Ps. 11:4, 132:4; Pro. 4:25, 6:4, 25, 30:13; Jer. 9:18. Cohen, *Proverbs*, 36; "If *eyelids* is not a poetical substitute for 'eyes' as in verse 4, and it is probably not, its use has been explained by the custom of Oriental woman blackening the eyelids for the purpose of adding brilliance to the eyes (cf. 2 Kings ix.30). . . . probably refers to using the eyelids with seductive intent."

68 John E. Hartley, "*sud*," *TWOT*, 2:756; "This root is used metaphorically to indicate one who pursues the life of another to destroy it. The adulterous woman stalks a man's very life; i.e. she yearns for more than he can provide and she holds power over his whole life (Prov 6:26)." This is the only occurrence of *sud* in Proverbs.

69 John E. Hartley, "*yaqar*," *TWOT*, 1:398; "It comes from a Semitic root which conveys the idea of 'heavy,' 'honor,' 'dignity.' An object is considered precious or valuable either because of its intrinsic worth or its rarity." Outside of Proverbs it is used primarily of gems (II Sam. 12:30; I Kings 7:9-11; Ezek. 27:22). It occurs 6 times in Proverbs: 1:13; 3:15; 6:26; 12:27; 17:27; 24:4. Compare Yee, "The Foreign Woman," *JSOT*, 60; "Unlike an ordinary harlot who is simply bought, an adulterous . . . , married woman, stalks a man's very life." Compare Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 88; "Proverbs 6:26 seems to imply that sexual relations with a harlot are a peccadillo when compared with adultery, although the point may simply be that a prostitute's price is a pittance when set over against what a married woman demands for her favors."

70 Thomas E. McComiskey, "*ish*," *TWOT*, 1:38-39; "Frequently the word functions as an individualizing element connoting the concept 'each' as in 'each person' (Gen 10:5). It also functions in a broadly inclusive sense meaning 'whoever' (Lev 15:5)." Also *BDB*, 35-36.

71 John N. Oswalt, "*ken*," *TWOT*, 1:434; "A widely used adverb expressing the realization of something previously spoken." See *BDB*, 485 and Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 235.

72 The verb *bo'* does have sexual connotations (Gen. 16:2; 30:3; 38:8-9; Deut. 22:13; II Sam. 12:24; 16:21; 20:3; etc.); compare *BDB*, 98. Horst D. Preuss, "*bo'*," *TDOT*, G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, editors, John T. Willis, transl. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1975) 2:21; "*bo'* is also used of having sexual relations with a woman, Gen. 6:4, 16:2, 4; Dt. 22:13; Cant. 5:1; etc."

73 Leonard J. Coppes, "*naga'*," *TWOT*; "Another special use connotes cohabitation. So, Abimelech states that he had not touched Rebekah (Gen 20:6). Proverbs says that whoever touches (goes to and has relations with) an adulteress shall be punished (6:29)." See *BDB*, 619.

74 Milton C. Fisher and Bruce K. Waltke, "naqa," *TWOT*, 2:596-597; "The verb *naqa* has the root meaning of being clean, pure spotless physically. . . . The derived juridical notion 'to be acquitted,' 'to go unpunished' is found only in Hebrew. . . . Of the forty occurrences of this verb the vast majority have an ethical, moral, or forensic connotation. The fact that in the Piel (transitivizing) stem it is synonymous with *sadaq* Piel or Hiphil . . . should bear adequate testimony to its significance."

75 *GKC*, paragraph 126 l-m, page 406.

76 Elmer A. Martens, "buz," *TWOT*, 1:95-96; "Despise, hold as insignificant. . . . With derivatives, *buz* appears twenty-four times, almost entirely in wisdom and poetic material."

77 The factor of "seven times" does not appear to be a legal prescription but indicates a full and adequate repayment, cf. Psalm 79:12. The verse is somewhat ironic: 1) the thief steals due to hunger but apparently has 'wealth' in his house. 2) He is judged to 'pay sevenfold' yet no compensation is acceptable to the wronged husband (vv.34-35).

78 That is, parallel to the *ken* of verse 29 in making the application to the rhetorical question.

79 Magen Broshi, "Beware the Wiles of the Wanton Woman," *Biblical Archaeology Review* (July/August, 1983) 54; "The foolish young man may be harmed financially, socially and corporeally."

80 The verb *naga'* basically means to touch but is used of striking or inflicting a blow. Compare Psalm 73:14; Isa. 53:4; I Sam.6:9; Deut. 17:8, 21:5. Compare *TWOT*, 1;551-5523; *BDB*, 619. Compare Cohen, *Proverbs*, 38; "No doubt signifies bodily injury caused by the outraged husband. . . . In Rabbinic times, when the death penalty ordained in the Pentateuch fell into abeyance, the punishment for this crime was scourging; but when this Book was written, the change had not yet taken place." Note this is the same root used in verse 29 for cohabiting with the adulteress -- he who "touches" the alluring beauty of the prostitute; will be "touched" by the rod.

81 Leonard J. Coppes, "qala," *TWOT*, 2:799; "This root signifies the lowering of another's social position . . . frequently occurs as the opposite of glory and honor . . . This noun represents the effect on the object(s) of the action exercised in the verb. It denotes a state wherein its referent is as if he were in a lower social position than he in fact occupies. This noun occurs exclusively in poetical contexts." In *Proverbs* this root is found once as a verb (12:9) and 8 times as a noun (3:35; 6:33; 9:7; 11:2; 12:16; 13:18; 18:3; 22:10).

82 Thomas E. McComiskey, "*harap*," *TWOT*, 1:325; "Basically, the word means 'to reproach,' with the specific connotation of casting blame or scorn on someone. . . . In most instances the word is used in the sense of casting scorn." See *BDB*, 358.

83 Walter C. Kaiser, "*maha*," *TWOT*, 1:498-499; ". . . wipe, wipe out . . . erasures in ancient leather scrolls were made by washing or sponging off the ink rather than blotting. 'Wipe out' is therefore more accurate than the idea of expunge. . . . is also used to describe the lifestyle of an adulterous woman who eats, wipes her mouth, and protestingly claims that she has done no wrong." See *BDB*, 562.

84 The term used for husband is *geber* which "relates to a male at the height of his powers" (John N. Oswalt, "*gabbar*," *TWOT*, 1:148). See *BDB*, 150; "man as strong, disting. fr. women, children, and non-combatants whom he is to defend, chiefly poetic." This term is used 8 times in Proverbs: 6:34; 20:24; 24:5; 28:3, 21; 29:5; 30:1, 19; compare *ish* which is used 83 times (7:19; 20:17; 21:2; 22:29); *enosh* which is used 5 times in Proverbs (24:1; 25:1; 28:5; 29:8, 10); *ba'al* which is used 14 times (12:4; 31:11, 23, 28). Compare Yee, "The Foreign Woman," *JSOT*, 61.

85 Leonard J. Coppes, "*qana*," *TWOT*, 2:802-803; "This verb expresses a very strong emotion whereby some quality or possession of the object is desired by the subject. . . . The central meaning of our word, however, relates to 'jealousy' especially in the marriage relationship." Compare Numbers 5:14, 15, 18, 25, 29, 30; Deut. 29:20; Psalm 79:5; Proverbs 6:34, 14:30, 27:4; Song of S. 8:6; etc.

86 Gerard Van Groningen, "*yaham*," *TWOT*, 1:374-375; "The term is used, as a rule, to convey the concept of an inner, emotional heat which rises and is fanned to varying degrees. The context usually gives a clue as to which translation should be preferred whether anger, hot displeasure, indignation, wrath, rage or fury." See *BDB*, 404. The term is used 9 times in Proverbs: 6:34; 15:1, 18; 16:14; 19:19; 21:14; 22:24; 27:4; 29:22.

87 Elmer B. Smick, "*naqam*," *TWOT*, 2:598-599. This verb and associated forms carry the ideas both of vengeance and of revenge. God and man are used both as objects and subjects of the verb. "Study of the use of this root reveals that there are comparatively few cases where man is considered a proper source of vengeance. . . . Most of the cases of *naqam* involve God as the source . . ." See *BDB*, 667-668. This is the only occurrence of the root in Proverbs. Compare also Lev. 19:18; Deut. 32:35f; Isa. 34:8, 35:4; Psalm 94:1.

88 "*shamar*," *TWOT*, 2:939-940; ". . . it expresses the careful attention to

be paid to the obligations of a covenant, to laws, statutes, etc. This is one of the most frequent uses of the verb." For other uses of forms of this root in Proverbs compare 2:8, 11, 20; 3:26; 4:4, 6, 21; 5:2; 6:22, 24; 7:1, 2, 5; 8:32, 34; 10:17; 13:3, 18; 14:3; 15:5; 16:17; 19:8, 16; 21:23; 22:5, 18; 28:4; 29:18.

89 Compare 6:20. In this verse both "commands" (*miswa*) and "instruction" (*tora*) is used of the father alone.

90 Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971) 119; "This important sequence [modal nuance + modal nuance] usually has a special translation value, which should be carefully noted. The second clause expresses a purpose or result (Eng. 'so that')." Also note that the promise of life is not unfamiliar to Wisdom or her province -- 3:1ff; 4:10, 13, 22-23; 8:35; 9:11; 13:14; 15:24.

91 Compare 3:3. The verse is reminiscent of Deuteronomy 6:1-8.

92 This may simply imply adoption into a family relationship, a close relationship, or may imply marriage (Song of S. 4:9, 10, 12; 5:1, 2). Compare *TWOT*, 1:31-32; *BDB*, 27-28.

93 The verb *qara'* followed by the preposition *lamedh* is often used of the naming process; compare Gen. 1:5; 31:47; Exod. 33:7.

94 The noun *moda'* occurs only here and in Ruth 2:1 of Boaz who was Naomi's kinsman. A variant form *moda'at* is also found in Ruth (3:2) of Boaz and Naomi's family relationship. Interestingly enough both forms come from the verb *yada'* which can have the connotation of one of the closest of kinship relations: husband-wife (Gen. 4:1, 19:8; Judges 11:39; 1 Kings 1:4; etc). See Jack P. Lewis, "*yada'*," *TWOT*, 1:366-367; *BDB*, 396.

95 Perhaps this was intended to function something like a role play concerning what not to do when encountering an adulteress. Perhaps the use of the first person would indicate an actual experience of the father. If so the proximity of the harlot to his own home would explain the father's candid instruction of his son. Compare Kidner, *The Proverbs*, 75; he identifies these verses as a "Drama."

96 The use of the verb *shaqap* would indicate that the view is from the second story of a structure, which also indicates not only the advantageous nature of the view but reinforces the idea of concealment, being inconspicuous. Compare *TWOT*, 2:954.

97 The naivety of this youth is described in two ways. First, he is simple, foolish (*peti*); that is, basically immature "open to all kinds of enticement, not having developed a discriminating judgment as to what is right or wrong," (Louis Goldberg, "*pata*," *TWOT*, 2:742-743). Second, he is

"needy (or lacking) of heart." The adjective *haser* "is used primarily . . . in reference to the lack of wisdom and understanding. Thus it occurs most frequently in the wisdom literature and primarily in Prov (thirteen times out of nineteen)," (Jack B. Scott, "*haser*," *TWOT*, 1:309). Of the thirteen occurrences of *haser* in Proverbs it is used with *leb* eleven times (6:32; 7:7; 9:4, 16; 10:13, 21; 11:12; 12:11; 15:21; 17:18; 24:30). Most of these occurrences are negative (cf. 6:32; 7:7; 10:13); some are neutral (9:4, 16). (Mandelkern, 414).

98 Gerard Van Groningen, "*'abar*" *TWOT*, 2:641f; "The main idea of this verb is that of movement . . . '*abar* may be used to express the fact that there is some movement between two specific places."

99 John E. Hartley, "*sa'ad*," *TWOT*, 2:771-772; "It pictures how one methodically takes the path to the house of the harlot, fully conscious of his direction but totally ignorant of its consequence -- Sheol (Prov 7:8; cf. 5:5)." See also 7:22-23. Compare *BDB*, 857.

100 Yee, "Foreign Woman," *JSOT*; "The father sets the stage for the adulterous encounter at nightfall (7.9) It is a time when normal people usually remain at home, but normal people are not in question in the father's scenario."

101 Compare Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, (Sheffield, England: The Almond Press, 1983) 62f. The use of *hinneh* at this point in the *narrative* vignette may serve double duty in introducing a new character and/or in indicating synchronicity. Compare *BDB*, 243-244; *TWOT*, 1:220-221.

102 Leonard J. Coppes, "*qara'*," *TWOT*, 2:811; "This root denotes a planned encounter wherein the subject intentionally confronts the object."

103 The noun *shit* is found only here and in Psalm 73:6, "Therefore pride is their [cf. v. 3 = arrogant/wicked] necklace; they *clothe* themselves with violence."

104 *BDB*, 666; "secret, wily minded." *TWOT*, 2:595; "the secret or crafty mindedness of a seductress."

105 Carl P. Weber, "*hama*," *TWOT*, 1:219-220; "This root . . . means 'cry out,' 'make a loud noise,' or 'be turbulent.' It is a strong word, emphasizing unrest, commotion, strong feeling, or noise." See *BDB*, 242; "be boisterous, turbulent."

106 R. D. Patterson, "*sarar*," *TWOT*, 2:635; "The root means basically 'to be stubborn.' While Akkadian *sararu* 'be unstable,' 'obstinate,' 'be a liar/felon' is probably related. . . . The Akkadian force of the root is probably to be understood in the description of the restless woman of the

streets who lacks stable roots in the community."

107 The verb *arab* connotes lying in wait for an enemy (Joshua 8:2, 4, 12f; Judges 9:34, 43) or victim (Proverbs 1:11, 18; 23:26-28).

108 Compare the woman Folly described in Proverbs 9:13; she is without peace (unsettled); without discipline (unprincipled) and without knowledge (unlearned).

109 The Hiphil form of *hazaq* has the sense of grasp, hold firmly, seize. Compare *TWOT*, 1:276-277; *BDB*, 305. For other Hiphil uses in Proverbs see 3:18; 4:13; 26:17.

110 More literally, "she makes her face strong." Both NIV and NASB translate the phrase "with brazen face." A similar phrase is used in Proverbs 21:29 of the wicked (*he'ez 'ish rasha' bepanav*).

111 Kidner, *The Proverbs*, 75; he notes five steps in this encounter: v. 13 shock treatment; v. 14 circumstantial story; v. 15 unthinkable refusal; v. 15 flattery; vv. 16-18 sensuous appeal; and vv. 19-20 reassurance.

112 For a summary of various interpretations see Alden, *Proverbs*, 64-65. See also Karel Van Der Toorn, "Female Prostitution in Payment of Vows in Ancient Israel," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, (1989) 193ff; Duane A. Garrett, "Votive Prostitution Again: A Comparison of Proverbs 7:13-14 and 21:28-29," *JBL* (1990) 681-682 and Larue, *Sex and the Bible*, 32-33.

113 Compare *BDB*, 753, II, c; "Of a duty, payment, care, etc. imposed upon a person, or devolving on him . . . Pr 7.14 peace-offerings were upon me (= were due from me)."

114 How contrary to her true nature just described.

115 Note the emphasis on the second person singular in her claim, ". . . to meet you . . . to seek your face . . . found you." Perhaps the use of *panim* is to indicate the youth as the very person she sought and had in mind.

116 The connotation of both *'eresh* (Song of S. 1:16) and *mishkab* (Gen. 49:4; Lev. 18:22, 20:13; Num. 31:17, 18, 35; Song of S. 3:1) includes cohabitation. Yee, "The Foreign Woman," *JSOT*, 61-62; "The first speech of the *'issa zara* is . . . significant, because she *herself* verbalizes the dangers she presents to the untutored young man."

117 Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 573f; "In first-person plural, the speakers usually seek to instigate or encourage each other to some action." Since only the adulteress is recorded as speaking, she apparently speaks as if for both herself and her victim. Perhaps since only the youth is immediately privy to the invitation, she is attempting to lead him into thinking that the idea is his (alone or along with her).

118 William White, "*rawa*," *TWOT*, 2:835; *BDB*, 924.

119 *TWOT*, 2:673; *BDB*, 763. This verb only occurs in Job 20:18, 39:13; and Proverbs 7:18.

120 Claudia V. Camp, "Woman Wisdom as Root Metaphor: A Theological Consideration," *The Listening Heart*, Kenneth G. Hoglund, Elizabeth F. Huwiler, Jonathan T. Glass, and Roger W. Lee, editors, *JSOT Supplement Series #58* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987) 51-52; "The significance of the seduction of the Strange Woman is that it is carried out in language that separates deeds from consequence. . . . she creates a false sense of security, seemingly insulating the perpetrator of wrongdoing from any negative consequence. Language here throws up a smoke screen, blinding its listeners to the effect of their actions upon themselves and society."

121 The verb *nata* has the sense of casting before, spreading out before in order to entice or persuade. Compare *TWOT*, 2:573-574; *BDB*, 640-641. Compare Proverbs 17:23; 18:5. The forcefulness of her enticement is reinforced by the verb *nadah* in the following line.

122 NIV reads, "like a deer stepping into a noose."

123 Leonard J. Coppes, "*qashab*," *TWOT*, 2:817; "This root denotes the activity of hearing, emphasizing either paying close attention or obeying (heeding)." The imperative of this verb is used in Proverbs only in the father's discourses to his son: 4:1, 20; 5:1; 7:24.

124 The verb *sata* means to turn or go aside. In this context, used with the preposition *'el* it apparently has the sense of turning aside to enter the way of the harlot. Compare *TWOT*, 2:874; *BDB*, 966. The verb is used six times in the OT: Numbers 5:12, 19, 20, 29; Proverbs 4:15; 7:25.

125 Ronald F. Youngblood, "*ta'a*," *TWOT*, 2:977; "The verb *ta'a* means to 'err, stagger, stray, wander.'" The verb is used five times in Proverbs: 7:25; 10:17; 12:26; 14:22; 21:16; also compare Isaiah 53:6 and Psalm 58:3.

126 The lexicons are unclear whether this adjective refers to strength in numbers or to might, power; compare *TWOT*, 2:690; *BDB*, 783. The verbal root *'asom/asam* has a basic idea of power or strength. The adjective is used two other times in Proverbs (18:18; 30:26) each time with apparent reference to strength or power (or the lack thereof).

127 Compare Proverbs 1:12; 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; 15:11, 24; 23:14; 27:20; 30:16.

128 The phrase "chambers of death" (*hadre mawet*) is ironic in light of the

use of "chambers" with sexual connotations (Judges 15:1, 16:9; Song of S. 1:4, 3:4). In the chambers where the youth is promised unremitting pleasure, he finds himself in the presence of Death.

129 Kidner, *The Proverbs*, 76; "After watching the young man, we are made to see ourselves as conceivably filling the same role."

130 Compare James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981) 87.

131 *Ani* mentions written messages, but not spoken words.

132 Almost all of the terms for wisdom used in Proverbs 1:1-7 are found in the father's admonitions to his son.

133 Kathleen M. O'Connor, *The Wisdom Literature*, Message of Biblical Spirituality Volume 5, Carlyn Osiek, editor, (Wilmington, DL: Michael Glazier, 1988) 60-61.

134 Larue, *Sex and the Bible*, 31.