–Save This Page as a PDF–

Security Through Righteousness
11: 1-9

A proverb is a short and memorable saying designed to be our blueprint for living in the world that ADONAI has created. It is important to note that proverbs are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal.



False scales (11:1a CJB): The necessity of honest trading is stressed in Hebrew ethics (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy, to see link click Ev – Honest Weights and Measures**). **This book refers to the subject again in 26:11 and 20:10 and 23. Prophetical denunciations of the use of false weights and measures are found in Amos 8:5 and Micah 6:11. The Talmud includes several regulations to ensure honest dealing between seller and buyer, "The shopkeeper must wipe his measures twice a week, his weights once a week, and his scales after every weighing."** This proverb applies the book's teaching on honesty and deception to business practices. The point is very clear: **ADONAI** hates cheats and loves those who charge what is fair. The term false (Hebrew: *mirmah,* meaning *deceit, guile* or *treachery*) is used elsewhere in **Proverbs (12:5, 17** and **20, 14:8** and **25, 20:23**).

Are an abomination to ADONAI (11:1b CJB). The phrase **abomination to**

ADONAI is used a number of times in the book **(3:32, 11:20, 12:22, 15:8-9** and **26, 16:5, 17:15, 20:10** and **23)** to indicate the utmost divine censure against something. It offends **God's** moral order. The list of abominable things includes depravity, corruption, deceit, hypocrisy, wickedness, and pride. **But accurate weights please Him (11:1c CJB).** Whatever **Ha'Shem** hates must be avoided. So, to be accepted by **God** in one's transactions, one must deal honestly.

Pride (Hebrew: *zadovn*) **leads to disgrace (11:2a CJB).** In a number of places in **Proverbs (3:5** and **7, 6:17, 11:114, 25:6-7,** and so on**)**, **fools** are associated with **pride** and **the wise** with **humility**. This **proverb** fits that pattern. **Prid**e does not allow **fools** to listen to advice or learn from **their** mistakes. The consequence is, therefore, unavoidable. **They** are doomed to repeat **their foolish** behavior, and this brings **disgrace** on **them**. In **13:10** we learn that those showing **pride** get **themselves** in arguments, probably because **they** would rather fight than listen to those who would criticize **them**. In that verse, the **prideful** are contrasted with **those** who would listen to advice (also see **21:24**).

But with humility comes wisdom (11:2b CJB). Those who are **humble** do not put up defenses and thus allow **themselves** to hear criticism and change **their** behavior in a positive manner. This is reflected in **Micah 6:8** where we read: **He has told you, O man, what is good and what does the LORD require of you but to act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? It**, along with **acting justly** and **loving mercy** is a characteristic of a person who obeys the mitzvot of **ADONAI**. The whole principle is paradoxical. When people hold themselves in high estimation, they will be vilified; but the more they are aware of their weaknesses, the more they will achieve a success that will bring them glory.

Honesty guides the upright, but the crookedness of the faithless destroys them (11:3 Hebrew). Their integrity is their standard conduct and proves a reliable safeguard against error and danger. Again, this is another version of the contrast drawn between **the wise** and **the foolish**. Specifically, it highlights innocence and dishonesty as **their** respective traits. Innocence implies a kind of transparency that is completely missing from the **faithless**. What one hears and sees honestly reflects **those** with integrity. After all, **they** have nothing to hide. Yet, **the faithless** conceal, which ultimately leads to **their** destruction.

Riches won't help you on the day of wrath, but righteousness can save you from death. The day of wrath does not refer to an end-time judgment (not a focus in the **wisdom** books), but rather to a future time of disaster such as military

invasion, famine or other crisis that can sweep away carefully gathered **wealth**.[240] **The righteous are directed by honesty (11:4-5a Hebrew). Rabbi Abraham Cohen states, "Righteousness leads him along the safest route to his desired goal, removing all obstacles from his path (3:6). Proverbs** has nothing against **riches**. In fact, the book suggests that wealth can be **a** blessing from **God** for **wise** behavior **(3:9-10** and **15-16**, and **10:22)**. Indeed, **10:15** suggests that **the wealth** of **the rich** can protect someone against the troubles of this world. The present **proverb**, however, makes it clear that such protection is limited and certainly not as helpful as **righteousness**.[241] **But the wicked are trapped by their own wicked desires (11:5b and 11:6b Hebrew).** Like a dog returns to its vomit, **the wicked** will repeat **their** own **evil** deeds.[242]

Very few of **the** blatantly **wicked** get away with their crimes forever. Even Mafia types – famous gangsters like Al Capone – have their **day of wrath**, their judgement day. Some pay in ways that we never see. Perhaps they escape jail, but they live in their own prison, outcasts because of their crimes. Many a womanizer dies a lonely death, with no woman to love and care for him because he did not love and care for any woman. Many a cheat ends up poor, because no one would trust him to do business with him. The consequences of **evil**, though there are exceptions, eventually catch up with most of us.

"Crime doesn't pay," the saying goes. In a sense, this "Retribution Principle," that **humility brings wisdom** and **faithlessness destroys the wicked**, is common sense. **Dishonest**, cruel, or immoral deeds have a way of being found out and of bringing trouble to **those** who practice them. This is the law of natural consequences, but it goes much deeper. **Justice** is a part of human nature, built into us by our **Creator**. As **wisdom** was the first of **God's** great words and built into the fabric of the universe (see **Bl – Wisdom's Existence before Creation**), we shouldn't be surprised by the Retribution Principle. The principle of reward and punishment is fundamental to existence in this universe. We are moral beings made in the image of **God** who is **just**.

Opposed to **the wicked**, **the righteous** walk on a level, straight **path**. That is, life's bumps and curves are smoothed out before **them**, making life easier to live. In fact, **the righteousness** (Hebrew: *tsedaqah*) **of the upright will deliver them** from perils **(11:6a BSB).** The word translated **deliver** has the sense of being snatched out of danger. When danger comes upon **them**, **the upright** (Hebrew: *tamim*) often find themselves snatched out of danger (see **Revelation By – The**

Rapture of the Church). Perhaps a financial shortfall comes to them, but **ADONAI** meets their needs. Perhaps they experience loss, but they do not add to their grief the guilt that the loss might be a judgment for sin. The way of innocence is smooth and straight.

There is certainly a sense in which divine providence will bring blessing to **the righteous** and curses to **the wicked**. As **17:13** says: **If you repay good with evil, evil will never leave your house.** However, there is also a fundamental law of the universe – requiring no special act of divine providence – by which **the wicked** will be hurt by **their** own deeds. As **the apostle Paul** says so eloquently: **Do not be deceived – God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that he also shall reap. For the one who sows to the flesh will reap corruption from the flesh. But the one who sows to the Ruach will reap from the Ruach eternal life (Galatians 6:7-8). The righteous**, in the sense now of **the redeemed**, are not saved by **their** good deeds, but **they** are characterized by **them**. As a result, let us not live according to our old sin nature and reap its curses, but surrender to **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** and receive **His** rewards.[243]

When the wicked die, their hopes die with them, for they rely on their own feeble strength (11:7 NLT). The finality of **death** is an important reminder, as **death** puts an end to any future plans and money-making schemes. **The wicked** have no **hope** beyond the grave, but that is not the point being made here. This optimistic **proverb** suggests that in the end people get what they deserve. **The righteous are delivered from trouble, but the wicked come to take his place (11:8 CJB).** It implies that **the righteous** sometimes find themselves in distress, trouble of some sort that arouses anxiety. But, eventually they will be delivered from that distress. Even more encouraging to those who desire to see things work out so that **the righteous** get **their** reward and **the wicked** get **their** just punishment.

Such teaching would help **the righteous** get through their struggles. We see this developed in **Psalm 73**. Asaph confesses that at one point he was confused and even angry as he struggled in life but saw his **wicked** neighbors living what seemed to be carefree lives. **I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked (Psalm 73:3).** Finally, through what seems to amount to a divine revelation of sorts, he recognized that present realities obscured the real nature of things. **When I tried to understand all this, it was too hard for me,** that is **until I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny (Psalm 73:16-17).** Ultimately, everyone gets what they deserve (see the

commentary on **Revelation Fo – The Great White Throne Judgment**). It is important to understand that **proverbs** are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal.

With his mouth the godless man destroys his neighbor, but through knowledge the righteous are delivered (11:9 BSB). This **proverb** contrasts the effects of **fools** (here described as **godless**) and **the wise** (here named **the righteous**). The contrast is between **the mouth** of **the godless** and **the knowledge** of **the righteous**. In the first colon, we are likely to understand this to mean that the speech (advice, counsel) of **the godless** leads to harm to those who listen to **them** because it lacks **knowledge**. And in the second colon, **the knowledge** of **the righteous**, when spoken, allows not only **the righteous** but also **their** neighbors to navigate life's difficulties. This theme will continue in the next few **proverbs**.[244]

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for always being perfectly just and fair.* ***Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne. Lovingkindness and truth go before You (Psalm 89:14).*** *Though things may look unfair when we see a wicked person prospering**, For I envied the arrogant, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked (Psalms 73:3).** Yet in the end – for all eternity, the wicked will only endure pain and torment and the righteous will rejoice with you forever in your eternal home. **They** do not have any **wisdom** to point **their** compass towards heaven. **So they say: "How does God know? And does Elyon have knowledge?" (Psalms 73:11).***

*Yet, when I place the situation in **Your** hands, and think of how long eternity is, then I know their time of false happiness will be over in a blink and in its place, they will come to ruin and **destruction**. **Until I entered the Sanctuary of God, and perceived their end. Surely You put them in slippery places. You hurled them down to destruction. How suddenly they became a ruin – terminated, consumed by terrors. Like a dream when one awakes, thus when You arise, my Lord, You will despise their form (Psalms 73:17-20)***

*The only way to have security for all eternity is to trust **God** and **believe** in **Him**.* ***But whoever did receive Him, those trusting in His name, to these He gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12). God** will give **His children Messiah's righteousness** and clothed in **His righteousness**; **they** will be able to live in heaven**. He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God***

(Second Corinthians 5:21). *In* ***Messiah's*** *holy* ***Name*** *and power of* ***His*** *resurrection. Amen*