

When is silver valuable? (10:20)

The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver, the heart of the wicked is *worth* little.

THE TEXT (NASB)

The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver, the heart of the wicked is *worth* little.

The tongue of the just is as choice silver: The heart of the wicked is little worth. Classic KJV - Proverbs 10:20

INTRODUCTION



For thousands of years, silver has been universally recognized as a precious metal.

A precious, rare, and incorruptible metal is used to store wealth. It has enduring value. Its price fluctuates, depending on how precious it is, whether it is precious, very rare, or semi-precious. In this text, incorruptible silver is used as an archetype of the worth of good words. There are grades or assays of silver. Someone who speaks truthfully and lovingly is as precious as the highest grade, sterling silver.

We all value the right words at the right time. We also value pure silver—if we can get it. If we observe the history of using silver, we'll understand why it's so valuable.



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COMMENTARY

Like all precious metals, silver's value fluctuates. From 1975 to 2004 its price normally averaged between \$US 4.00 to \$US 6.00 per oz. Yet it peaked in 1980 at \$US 48.00. To learn more about why, visit: www.silverinstitute.org

Silver Historically

Silver is one of the precious metals most mentioned in the Bible. The Hebrew word, כסף (kě•sěp, pronounced "ke-sef"), is used 287 times, starting in Genesis 13:2 where Abram is described as being "very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold." It stems from the word for "pale," referring to its colour. Like gold, silver was a store of value, but less valuable than gold, so it was the currency of everyday commerce.

Mining, Refining, and Shekels



There is no record of silver mines in Syria or Palestine. It was brought in quantity by foreign merchants from abroad, from Spain, India, and Greece. (The ancients travelled more than we give them credit.) It was extracted from its ores by smelting with lead. The lead-silver alloy then was purified by fire, burning off the lead as oxide, and the impurities skimmed off. There are frequent references to the refiner's fire and the dross of silver (Ezekiel 22:18-22).

A shekel was a measure of weight of about half an ounce or 14 grams. Shekels were made of gold, silver, brass, and iron. In Hebrew use, one gold shekel was worth about eight silver shekels. In biblical times there were only three precious metals: Gold, silver, and brass. Today, however, we include others like platinum, palladium, as well as radioactive metals like uranium and plutonium.

God Supports Silver Prices (Usually)



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Despite silver's fluctuating value (due to government monetary policies, the business cycle and jewelry demand), the divinely-inspired, infallible text implies that God will not allow silver prices to fall through the floor, except for brief periods (as during King Solomon's reign – 1 Kings 10:21). Many financial advisors believe that gold and silver prices vary inversely with the stock and bond markets.

Some people believe that it's wise to have silver coins stashed away, in case the economy and monetary system totally collapse. It would be easier to carry on commerce with silver coins than gold coins or bullion. While the economy is thriving, it makes little sense and is seen as unnecessary caution.

OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

Jesus was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15).

Judas, who betrayed Jesus Christ, never benefited from that silver. Judas felt such great remorse, that he tried to return the bribe to Christ's enemies. Ironically, these religious leaders did not want the coins back. It was now blood money, filthy from the criminal activity (Matthew 27:6).

Judas was deceived by silver. He gave up his most precious treasure—his own soul (Mark 14:21). The value of silver is insignificant compared to the value of a human soul.

APPLICATION



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- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- A well-balanced investment portfolio should include some precious metals, even if only 10% of the holdings. Consider using a good mutual fund to achieve this goal.
- Whatever you feed your mind will determine your speech. Read good books and visit beneficial websites. Improved speech will follow.
- If you are worried about a collapse of the financial system, and wish to have a way of bartering or trading, store some silver coins in a secret place as a financial doomsday currency.

Which of these steps, if any, does Jesus want you to take now? Ask Him.



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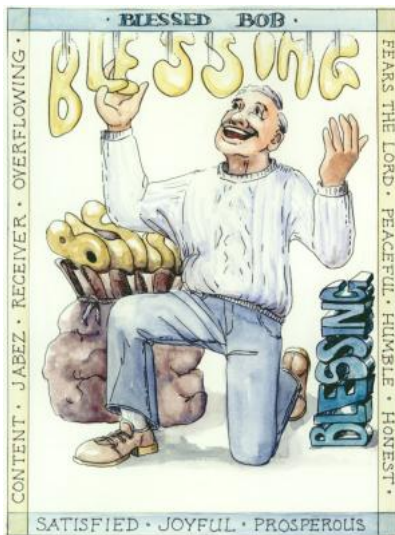
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KEY WORDS

better life (quality), investments, righteous, silver, speech, capital, treasure, virtue, waste, wicked, bf saving

ILLUSTRATION

[Who is Blessed Bob?](#)



Blessed Bob is very fortunate. He recognizes that good things come from God! God is shunned by many, but not by Bob. Bob loves God. He wants to receive all the good things that God has for him. He's not too proud to ask God for help. In fact, Bob prays often. Some think that he prays without ceasing. But he is not without fault. Blessed Bob makes many mistakes, and when he does, he admits his errors. He corrects them and presses on.

Bob gets so many blessings he feels overwhelmed. His cup overflows. But he doesn't hoard his blessings. Like Generous Genevieve, Blessed Bob likes to give to others. He is truly prosperous, even though there are many who are financially richer than he is.

We see examples of Blessed Bob in the Bible in the lives of Job and Joseph. Job went through some very good times (Job 29:2-25) and some very bad times (Job 2:7-8). Joseph had similar financial cycles (Genesis 39:2,21). Both men kept their focus on God, not on their financial condition (Job 1:21, Genesis 50:19-21).

More recently we have examples of those who have lived with the same life focus. R. G LeTourneau was the inventor of the largest earth moving machines in the 1930's and 1940's. He credited God for his tremendous success. He gave away much of his wealth while he was



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still living saying that, "When I shovel money out to God's interests, God shovels money back to me, but God's shovel is bigger than mine." He was called the mover of men and mountains because of his great work and influence. On his gravestone, R. G. LeTourneau left all visitors with these words, SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU MATTHEW 6:33.

Blessed Bob is full of joy. He is satisfied with life!



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FOOTNOTES

Photos/Illustrations:

“Forge,” Photo, 2006, stock.xchng, ID454186.

“Silver Dollar,” Photo, 2007, stock.xchng, ID702702.

“White Silver,” Photo, 2006, stock.xchng, ID681245.

