

Proverbs 10:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth.

Analysis

The tongue of the just is as choice silver; the heart of the wicked is little worth. Righteous speech is precious and valuable like refined silver. Conversely, wicked hearts (and thus their speech flowing from hearts) are worthless. The contrast emphasizes both inner character (heart) and outer expression (tongue). What makes righteous speech valuable is the valuable heart from which it flows.

Historical Context

Silver required refining to remove impurities, making it valuable. Righteous speech similarly requires heart purification to produce valuable words worth heeding.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How valuable is your speech to others - choice silver or worthless dross?
2. What heart impurities need refining to produce more valuable speech?

Interlinear Text

כֶּסֶף	נִבְחָר	לִשׁוֹן	צֶדֶק יֶקֶת	לֵב	רָשָׁעִים
silver	is as choice	The tongue	of the just	the heart	of the wicked
H3701	H977	H3956	H6662	H3820	H7563

כְּמַעֲט:

is little worth
H4592

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 12:18 (Parallel theme): There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.

Jeremiah 17:9 (Evil): The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Genesis 6:5 (Evil): And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.