

Proverbs

MEANING: The Hebrew word for proverb means “comparison, similar, parallel.”

AUTHOR: The principal author is Solomon.

1. Solomon’s name appears at the beginning of the three sections he wrote:
 - a. 1:1 for chapters 1 - 9.
 - b. 10:1 for chapters 10 - 22:16
 - c. 25:1 for chapters 25 - 29
2. Agur wrote chapter 31.
3. Lemuel wrote chapter 31. (The Worthy Woman)

TIME WRITTEN:

1. Solomon’s proverbs were written by 931 B.C.
2. The proverbs in chapters 25-29 were collected by Hezekiah about 230 years later. (Hezekiah reigned from 715 B.C. to 686 B.C.)

POSITION IN THE BIBLE:

- 20th Book in the Bible
- 120th book in the Old Testament
- 3rd of 5 Poetical Books
- 19 have preceded it. 46 to follow it.

CHAPTERS: 31

VERSES: 915

WORDS: 15,043

KEY WORD: Wisdom

TWO KEY PASSAGES:

1. **Proverbs 1:5-7** - wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,
 To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles.
 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.
2. **Proverbs 3:5-6** - Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;
 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

KEY CHAPTER: Proverbs 31

1. Proverbs 31, the last chapter in the Book of Proverbs, is unique in ancient literature.
2. Written by Lemuel, it reveals a very high and noble view of women.
3. Four outstanding traits are set forth:
 - a. She is a good woman. (31:13, 15, 16, 19, 25)
 - b. She is a good wife. (31:11, 12, 23, 24)
 - c. She is a good mother, (31:14, 15, 18, 21, 27)
 - d. She is a good neighbor. (31:20-26)
4. Her conduct, concern, speech, and life stand in sharp contrast to the woman in Proverbs 7.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PROVERBS:

1. The key word in the Book of Proverbs is “wisdom,” meaning :the ability to live life skillfully.
2. A godly life in an ungodly world, however, is no simple assignment.

3. Proverbs provides God's detailed instructions for His people to deal successfully with the practical affairs of everyday life:
 - a. How to relate to God.
 - b. How to relate to parents.
 - c. How to relate to children.
 - d. How to relate to neighbors.
 - e. How to relate to government.
4. Solomon, the principal author, uses a combination of poetry, parables, pithy questions, short stories, and wise axioms to give in strikingly memorable form the common sense and divine perspective necessary to handle life's issues.
5. The wisdom of Solomon is well known to Bible readers.
 - a. According to 1 Kings 4:32, he spoke:
 1. 3,000 proverbs.
 2. 1,005 songs
 - b. Only about 800 of his 3,000 proverbs are included in this book.
6. No man was better qualified than Solomon to be the principal contributor to this book.
 - a. In 1 Kings 3:5-9 Solomon asked God for wisdom. In 1 Kings 4:29-31 God granted it to him.
 - b. Solomon's wisdom was so great that people came from foreign lands to hear him speak.
 1. **1 Kings 4:34** - "And men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom came to hear the wisdom of Solomon."
 2. **1 Kings 10:1-3, 24** - "Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions.
 She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels that bore spices, very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart.
 So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for the king that he could not explain it to her."
 3. **1 Kings 10:24** - "Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart."
7. It is likely that Solomon collected and edited proverbs other than his own. According to **Ecclesiastes 12:9** - "He pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs."
 - a. The 2nd collection of Solomonic proverbs in Proverbs 25-29, was assembled by the scribes of King Hezekiah because of his interest in spiritually benefiting his subjects with the Word of God.
 - b. The prophets Isaiah and Micah ministered during Hezekiah's time, and it has been suggested that they also might have been involved in this collection.
8. There is no Biblical information about Agur (30) or Lemuel (31).
9. Solomon probably wrote his proverbs in his middle years, before his character began to
 - a. Carnality.
 - b. Materialism.
 - c. Idolatry.
10. Proverbs is one of the few Biblical books that clearly spells out its purpose.
 - a. The purpose statement is found in **Proverbs 1:2-6** - "To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding,
 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity;
 To give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion--"

A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,

To understand a proverb and an enigma, the words of the wise and their riddles.”

- b. The purpose statement in these five verses is twofold:
 1. To impart moral discernment and discretion.
 2. To develop mental clarity and perception.
 - c. The words “wisdom” and “instruction complement each other.
 1. WISDOM means “skill.”
 2. INSTRUCTION means “discipline.”
 - d. No skill is perfected without discipline.
 - e. Proverbs deals with the most fundamental skill of all: practical righteousness before God in every area of life. This requires three things:
 1. Knowledge.
 2. Experience.
 3. A willingness to put God first.
11. Proverbs as a whole is designed both to:
- a. PREVENT ungodly life-styles.
 - b. REMEDY ungodly life-styles.

SUMMARY OF PROVERBS

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Proverbs is the most intensely practical book in the Old Testament because it teaches s killful living in the multiple aspects of everyday life. Its specific precepts include:
 1. Instruction on wisdom and folly.
 2. The righteous and the wicked.
 3. The tongue and speech.
 4. Pride and humility
 5. Justice and vengeance.
 6. The family.
 7. Laziness and work.
 8. Poverty and wealth.
 9. Friends and neighbors.
 10. Love and lust.
 11. Anger and strife.
 12. Masters and servants.
 13. Life and death.
 14. Drunkenness.
- B. Proverbs touches upon every facet of human relationships, and its principles transcend the bounds of time and culture.
- C. A proverb uses a comparison or figure of speech to make a pithy but poignant observation.
- D. Proverbs have been defined as simple illustrations that expose fundamental realities of life.
- E. There are six divisions to the Book of Proverbs.
 1. The Purpose of Proverbs. (1:1-7)
 2. The Proverbs to the Youth. (1:8 - 9:18)
 3. The Proverbs of Solomon. (10:1 - 24:34)
 4. The Proverbs of Solomon Copied by Hezekiah’s Men. (25:1 - 29:27)

5. The Words of Agur. (30:1-33)
6. The Words of King Lemuel. (31:1-31)

THE PURPOSE OF PROVERBS. (1:1-7)

- A. These seven brief verses state the:
1. Author.
 2. Theme.
 3. Purpose of the book.

THE PROVERBS TO THE YOUTH. (1:9 - 9:18)

- A. Following the introduction, there is a series of ten exhortations, each beginning with “my son.”
- B. These messages introduce the concept of wisdom in the format of a father’s efforts to persuade his son to pursue the path of wisdom in order to achieve godly success in life.
1. Wisdom rejects the invitation of crime and foolishness.
 2. Wisdom rewards seekers of wisdom on every level.
 3. Wisdom provides freedom and safety. (1-4)
 4. Wisdom protects one from illicit sensuality and its consequences.
 5. Wisdom protects one from foolish practices and laziness.
 6. Wisdom protects one from adultery and the lure of the harlot. (5-7)
 7. Wisdom is to be preferred to folly because of its divine origin and rich benefits. (8-9)
- C. Proverbs speaks about fools.
1. There are four kinds of fools, ranging from those who are naive and uncommitted to scoffers who arrogantly despise the way of God
 2. The fool is not mentally deficient; he is self-sufficient, ordering his life as if there were no God.

THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON (10:1 - 24:34)

- A. There is a minimal amount of topical arrangement in these chapters.
1. There are some themes here and there. Units, if you please.
 2. The usual style is one-verse maxims.
- B. This section contains some 375 proverbs of Solomon.

THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON COPIED BY HEZEKIAH’S MEN (25:1 - 29:27)

- A. The proverbs in chapters 25-29 develop the themes in chapters 10-24.

THE WORDS OF AGUR. (30:1-33)

- A. Most of Agur’s material is given in clusters of numerical proverbs.

THE WORDS OF KING LEMUEL. (31:1-31)

- A. The last chapter in Proverbs include an acrostic of twenty-two verses (the first letter of each verse consecutively follows the complete Hebrew alphabet) portraying a virtuous woman.

