

**A LOOK AT THE BOOK
PROVERBS
WISDOM FOR LIVING**

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AUTHOR

The majority was written by Solomon (971-31 B.C.).

He received special wisdom from God to apply to the task, as noted in 1 Kings 4:32-34.

Part of the book is credited to other wise men who are not identified (22:17-24:34).

The last two chapters were written by Agur and by King Lemuel, neither of whom are identified elsewhere.

DATE

Since most of the proverbs came from the pen of Solomon, they would have been written during his reign (971-31).

The dates of the other writers are unknown.

Although no final date is identifiable with certainty, the compilation of some of the proverbs during the reign of Hezekiah (c. 700 B.C.) identifies the earliest date possible for its completion (cp. 25:1).

The final collection may have been written shortly thereafter.

BACKGROUND

The only clearly defined historical context for these dateless, universal teachings is that of the early years of Solomon's reign.

Recognizing the enormity of his responsibility as king over God's people at the height of their historical development, Solomon asks God for help (1 Kings 3-4).

When offered a choice of anything he wanted, Solomon chose wisdom over everything else.

God granted him his request and gave him many other blessings as well.

Solomon's wisdom became known around the world.

Only a small portion of it is recorded in the book.

He spoke 3000 proverbs, of which less than 800 are recorded.

Other wise men added to those teachings.

Proverbs is the result of the compilation

PURPOSE

That the reader might give first priority in his life to the search for wisdom.

The purpose is to change our lives and help us enjoy living.

MESSAGE

Proverbs is a counselor's guide which seeks to apply God's wisdom to the details of daily living.

Its emphasis is practical.

It provides God's children with a road map to indicate how they can best go through life and enjoy their relationships with others.

How to enjoy life more!

Counsel to read a chapter a day and go through its advice once a month.

ORGANIZATION

Exhortation to seek wisdom before anything else 1-9

Solomon made that his pursuit and recommends it to everyone.

Building on that foundation, the remainder of the book contains several **collections of proverbs which provide specific counsel regarding life 10-31**

ARGUMENT

EXHORTATION TO SEEK WISDOM 1-9

PROLOGUE 1:1-7

Author 1:1

The prologue introduces Solomon, the author of the initial exhortation.

Purpose 1:2-6

The purpose of the initial exhortation, which also serves as the purpose of the book is then presented.

The book was written to teach us the way of wisdom and discipline (Five sub-purposes are identified).

The reader ought to learn how to live rightly and how to do what is right, and just, and fair.

Those who are not wise ought to learn how to become wise.

Those who are already wise ought to add to their wisdom and find additional guidance.

Theme 1:7

The basic starting point, which underlies all the counsel given, is that the fear of Yahweh—recognizing Who God is and submitting to His authority— is the beginning of all true knowledge.

Fools want nothing to do with Him, nor with the wisdom which He teaches them.

EXHORTATION 1:8-9:18

The basic message of the book is contained in the initial exhortation:

He exhorts us to make the search for wisdom our first priority in life.

ALL OTHER TREASURES ARE SECONDARY TO WISDOM!

Warning to avoid evil companions 1:8-19

Rather than accept the invitation of evil companions to go along with them, . . .

Warning to accept wisdom 1:20-33

. . . we ought to accept the call from wisdom to walk in its way.

Basis for finding wisdom 2:1-8

Conditions for wisdom 2:1-5

True wisdom comes to those who recognize its value and search for it more than any other valuable treasure.

Source for wisdom 2:6-8

When we seek wisdom with that kind of dedication, we will learn that the only real source of wisdom is God Himself.

Benefits of wisdom 2:9-3:12

Many benefits accrue to those who recognize the importance of wisdom and pursue it. These benefits include:

Protection 2:9-22

Long life and prosperity 3:1-2

Favor with God and man 3:3-4

Guidance 3:5-6

Healthy life 3:7-8

Material prosperity 3:9-10

God's love and pleasure 3:11-12

Value of wisdom 3:13-26

The value of wisdom is described as greater than any other treasure.

From all points of view, wisdom brings greater satisfaction than any other treasure.

Practice of wisdom 3:27-36

True wisdom isn't just theoretical knowledge which accumulates in the brain.

It is demonstrated in the practical lifestyle of those who have found it.

Therefore, some of the specific results of wisdom as it affects the practice of the possessor are presented.

Teaching of wisdom 4

Parents are to teach their children wisdom.

Solomon's instruction to his son serves as a model.

A father's counsel 4:1-10

(Model from David's instruction to him)

He counsels his son as to the importance of seeking wisdom.

Two alternatives 4:11-19

He describes the two alternative paths which compete for his son's attention.

Importance of untarnished life 4:20-27

Finally, he urges his son to maintain a lifestyle that is blameless.

Warnings of wisdom 5-7

Specific warnings are given concerning some of the traps which await his son along the path of life.

Concerning marital faithfulness 5:1-23

Concerning cosigning loans 6:1-5

Concerning laziness 6:6-11

Concerning deceptive dealings 6:12-19

Concerning adultery 6:20-35

Concerning prostitution 7:1-27

Invitation from wisdom 8

The last two sections of the address deal with the call of wisdom to follow its leading through life.

Wisdom is personified and presented as a woman pleading with people to follow in her path.

Two competing invitations 9

Hers is not the only invitation.

There is a competing invitation from folly.

The results of the two invitations differ greatly.

An invitation from wisdom 9:1-12

The invitation from wisdom, when accepted, will lead to life.

An invitation from folly 9:13-18

The invitation from folly leads to death.

COLLECTIONS OF PROVERBS WITH SPECIFIC COUNSEL 10-31

FIRST COLLECTION OF PROVERBS BY SOLOMON 10-22:16

The collection contains 375 proverbs on practical morality.

While no specific theme is traced, they deal with practically every area of daily living.

Contrast of wise and foolish lifestyles 10-15

Solomon first contrasts, by means of a series of couplets, the way of life of the righteous and that of the wicked.

Counsel concerning wise lifestyles 16-22:16

That is followed by counsel concerning how the righteous should live in order to enjoy an abundant life.

COLLECTIONS OF SAYINGS FROM WISE MEN 22:17-24:34

Solomon's counsel is interrupted by the sayings of the wise.

Though unidentified, these may be contemporaries of Solomon that he himself has chosen to quote.

They too provide counsel for practical living that would be worth practicing.

First collection 22:17-24:22

Second collection 24:23-34

SECOND COLLECTION OF PROVERBS BY SOLOMON 25-29

A second collection of Solomon's proverbs was compiled under the direction of Hezekiah.

This additional selection from the mass of his proverbs seems to be collected for their individual values, not according to any significant logical sequence.

Their unity is based on the time of their compilation.

SAYINGS OF AGUR 30

The sayings of Agur are included, in spite of the fact that he is otherwise unknown.

He is talented at drawing lessons from nature which help us obtain a proper perspective on our life.

He uses a literary device: "three, yea four . . ." to dramatically demonstrate the parallels he seeks to use for his teaching.

SAYINGS OF LEMUEL 31

King Lemuel, who is also unknown otherwise, records the words of an oracle he learned from his mother, and probably, the acrostic description of a woman of noble character.

An oracle from his mother 31:1-9

The oracle warns of the dangers of a reckless life and the importance of justice.

A wife of noble character 31:10-31

The description of the virtuous woman, pictures a woman who is industrious, trustworthy, and dedicated to her family.

Such a woman merits the praise of her entire family.

Practical study and diligent application of the practical counsel of this book will make any child of God a more pleasant person.

The way of wisdom, as traced here, pays rich rewards.