

VIA EMMAUS:

A CHRIST-CENTERED WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE

Proverbs: Wisdom is the Way to the Obedient Son (22)

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

1. What is a Proverb?

Unique Literary Type – emphasizes a certain kind of general analogy based on ‘worldly’ observation
Found in other books – taunt (Deut 28:37); solemn declaration (Job 27:1); prophecy (Isa 14:4)

Commonality with Ancient Near East – *Sumeria, Aramaic, Egypt* (cf. 30 sayings ~ Amenemope)

Differences with Ancient Near East – Singular Creator, Covenantal Lord, Relationship to Christ

Two styles in Proverbs

Proverbs 1-9

Short discourses on a variety of topics: (1) father to son, (2) lady wisdom

Proverbs 10-31

Mostly individual couplets that make general observations and comparison

2. Who wrote Proverbs?

Solomon (1:1; 10:1); The wise (22:17; 24:23); Men of Hezekiah (25:1); Agur (30:1); Lemuel (31:1)

3. Solomon and the Proverbs

1 Kings 3 – *He asked God for wisdom; God granted wisdom; He becomes OT Prototype for wisdom*

1 Kings 4:29-32 – *3000 Proverbs, Insight into Creation; Gained International Acclaim*

4. Davidic Kingship and the Proverbs

Royal *Kingly emphasis in the Proverbs: 8:15; 14:28, 35; 16:10, 12-15; 19:12; 20:2, 8, 26, 28; 21:1, 11; 22:29; 24:21; 25:1-3, 5-6; 29:4, 14; 30:22, 27-28, 31; 31:1, 3-4*

Covenant *Inter-canonical links with Mosaic Covenant (cf Prov 3:1-12; 24:15-16) and Davidic*

Sonship *“Hear, my son” = 17x in Prov. 1-9 (1:8, 10, 15; 2:1... / cf. 23:26; 24:13, 21, 27:11)*

The wise son (10:1, 5; 13:1; 15:20) and the foolish son (17:25; 19:13, 26; 28:7; 29:17)

Warn and Train Your Son = (13:24; 19:18, 27; 22:6, 15; 23:13-14; 29:15; cf. 2 Sam 7)

5. How should we interpret Proverbs?

(1) *They are not promises, but general, open-ended truths (Prov 22:6; ‘like’ statements in ch. 25-26)*

(2) *They are often relative, comparative, and contextually undefined (19:1)*

(3) *They must be balanced with other statements (26:4-5)*

(4) *They rest on a presupposition of faith in God’s covenant faithfulness (1:7; 9:10; The LORD = 88x)*

(5) *As a whole, Proverbs are lenses to look at the world more than a set of keys to unlock specific doors.*

OUTLINE

1. Sayings for the Simple (1-9)

a. Introduction (1:1-7) – Fear the Lord and Get Wisdom!

b. A Father's Invitation to Wisdom (1:8–9:18)

i. Beware of the serpent’s seed (1:8-19) – violent men & strange women (2:12-15 & 16-19)

ii. Pursue Wisdom (1:20-33; 2:1-22; 3:21-35; 4:1-9; 4:20-27) and Reject Folly (6:1-19)

iii. Particular Emphasis on Sexual Purity (2:16-19; 5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:1-27)

c. Wisdom Personified (8:1-36; cf. 30:4)

d. Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly (9:1–18)

2. **Instructions for Sinners (10-24):** Proverbs of Solomon (10:1–22:16); The Thirty Sayings of “the Wise” (22:17–24:22); Further Sayings of “the Wise” (24:23–34)

3. **Lessons for Leaders (25-31):** Hezekiah's collection of proverbs (25:1–29:27); Agur’s Sayings (30); King Lemuel’s Sayings (31) – *Includes the Acrostic Extolling the Virtuous Woman*

SOME COMMON THEMES IN PROVERBS

- (1) Words (10:19-21; 12:18; 15:1-2; 16:23; 23:1-2; 25:16-17; 26:17-19;)
- (2) Work (6:6-11; 11:1; 26:13-16)
- (3) Wealth (3:9-10,13-14; 11:4; 13:1, 7, 22; 21:5; 28:20; 30:8-9)
- (4) Marriage & Sexuality (2:16-19; 4:23; 5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:1-27; 12:4; 18:22; 19:14; 31:11-31)
- (5) Friendship (3:27-28; 18:24; 27:6, 9, 17)

Each of these areas manifest one of two ways of living:

- (1) The Way of Wisdom Leads to Life (Wise, Diligent, Righteous)
- (2) The Way of Folly Leads to Death (Foolish, Sluggard, Wicked)

THE WORLDVIEW OF PROVERBS

Creation & Order

- YHWH is the Creator (**3:19-20; 8:22-36; 16:4; 20:12; cf. Job 28**)
- YHWH is the Sovereign Lord (**16:1-9, 33**)
- Creation instructs us (**6:4-8; 30:18-31**)

Fall

- God hates... false balances (**20:10, 23**), perversity (**11:20**), deceit (**12:22**), pride (**14:25**)
- The categories of righteousness & wicked demonstrate God's judgment of sin
- God will punish sin (**10:3; 11:21; 20:22-21:2**)

Covenant & Redemption

- Blessings & Curses give evidence of Proverbs covenantal shape (**3:1-12**)
- The predominant characters in the book also depict this covenantal cast

Life: The Wise, The Righteous, and The Diligent

- 60x Wise (**10:8, 14; 13:14; 14:16; 15:7; 21:11, 22; 24:5-6**)
- 87x Righteous (**4:18; 9:9; 10:2-3, 6-7, 11, 16, 20, 21, 24-25, 28; 30-32; 11:4ff**)
- Diligent (**10:4; 11:27; 12:24, 27; 13:4; 21:5**)

Death: The Fool, The Wicked, and the Sluggard

- 81x Fool (**1:7; 3:35; 14:3, 7-9; 15:8; 13:20; 17:12; 19:29; 26:4-5**) – scoffer (**21:24**)
- 88x Wicked (**2:22; 3:33; 4:19; 5:22; 17:15; 18:5** – *What about Romans 4:5?*)
- 14x Lazy (**10:26; 13:4; 15:19; 19:24; 20:4; 21:25; 22:13; 24:30; 26:13-16**)

These characters are “co-referential” (cf. Prov 10:21; 19:1)

Eschatology & Divine Retribution

- A Judgment is Coming
- Blessing & Curses (**8:32-36; 10:16, 25, 30; 11:10, 31; 14:32; 23:17-18**)

Christotelic – *In the end, the Book of Proverbs leads us to anticipate...*

- (1) An Obedient and Wise Son of David (**Proverbs 1-9**)
- (2) The Personification of Wisdom (**Proverbs 8:22-35; cf Prov 30:1-4**)

RELATIONSHIP TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Gospels depict Jesus as the Perfect Wise Man – **Matthew 12:42**

Jesus is God's Wisdom – **1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:9-10**

In Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and understanding – **Colossians 2:3**

When we ask God for wisdom, we know we already have it in Christ – **James 1:5ff; Matt 7:24-27**