

Sermon, June 19, 2011
“The Father’s Wisdom”, Proverbs 1:1-9
Pastor Thomas P. Bellhy

The Books of Poetry and Wisdom¹

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon are regarded as books of poetry; Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes are also books of wisdom.

- Job: cosmic struggle between the Lord and angelic enemies
- Psalms: the full range of emotions
- Proverbs: a father’s and mother’s wisdom sayings to their son
- Ecclesiastes: musings about the human condition
- Song of Solomon: love song of a bride and groom

Overview of Proverbs:

- 31 chapters
- The phrase “Proverbs of Solomon” is more a title than an absolute statement of authorship (1:1).
- While King Solomon is the author of the first section (chaps. 1-9) and the proverbs of 10:1-22:16, he is likely only the compiler of the “sayings of the wise” in 22:17-24:34.
- The collection in chaps. 25-29 was originally composed by Solomon (25:1) but copied and included later by Judah’s king Hezekiah (ca. 715-686 B.C.).
- Chapter 30 reflects the words of Agur
- Chapter 31 the words of Lemuel, who perhaps was Solomon.
- Proverbs was not assembled in its final form until Hezekiah’s day or after.
- The book reflects a 3-fold setting as:
 - 1) general wisdom literature;
 - 2) insights from the royal court; and
 - 3) instruction offered in the tender relationship of a father and mother with their children, all designed to produce meditation on God.

• **Overall Outline Proverbs²:**

- I. Prologue (1:1-7)
 - A. Title (1:1)
 - B. Purpose (1:2-6)
 - C. Theme (1:7)
- II. Praise and Wisdom to the Young (1:8-9:18)
- III. Proverbs for Everyone (10:1-29:27)
 - A. From Solomon (10:1-22:16)
 - B. From Wise Men (22:17-24:34)
 - C. From Solomon Collected by Hezekiah (25:1-29:27)
- IV. Personal Notes (30:1-31:31)
 - A. From Agur (30:1-33)
 - B. From Lemuel (31:1-31)

Major Themes of Proverbs:

- The two major themes which are interwoven and overlapping throughout Proverbs are wisdom and folly.
- The practical discernment of everyday living of a life who longs to please God.
- Proverbs addresses man’s ethical choices, calling into question how he thinks, lives, and manages his daily life in light of divine truth.
- More specifically, Proverbs calls man to live as the Creator intended him to live when He made man (Ps. 90:1, 2, 12).
- The recurring promise of Proverbs is that generally the wise (the righteous who obey God) live longer (9:11), prosper (2:20-22), experience joy (3:13-18) and the goodness of God temporally (12:21), while fools suffer shame (3:35) and death (10:21).
- However, Job illustrates that there are occasions when the godly wise are struck with disaster and suffering.
- All of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge expressed in Proverbs are hidden in Christ (Col. 2:3).

¹ Mears, H., “What the Bible is All About”, p.182

² MacArthur Study Bible

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1. The purpose of the book is stated in verses 2-4

- **Proverbs 1:1-4**
- Learning, understanding, gaining instruction, to teach you
- “Preaching” to your children... why is it sometimes hard for your children to accept?
- Imparting wisdom, instruction, words of insight, wise dealings, righteousness, justice, equality, shrewdness, knowledge

2. But these words are not only for children to hear...

- **Proverbs 1:5-6**
- Even the wise parent, teacher, boss, wife, husband can gain
- Gain in learning, acquire skill, to understand...

3. What is the first lesson of the wise?

- **Proverbs 1:7**
- Awesome, extreme, fearful reverence,
- Wanting in your heart not to disappoint your Dad...
- Wanting to please your Father out of love, respect, and reverence.
- If you do not see or appreciate wisdom in the revealing light of truth in the Lord then you are no more than a fool who despises wisdom and instruction

4. For the Christian who believes in Jesus recognizes the truth of all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Jesus...

- **Colossians 2:2-3** *2 I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ himself, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*
- **1 Corinthians 1:30** *30 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption,*
- The plea for your loved ones to understand comes from the heart of the believer

5. There is promise in a willing heart who seeks wisdom

- **Proverbs 1:8-9**
- The willing heart who seeks wisdom in Christ will be lifted up and placed at the table of the King.

Conclusion

- Christ was and is wisdom personified.
- Christ is the Word incarnate.
- Jesus lived a life pleasing His Father
- He embodies wisdom and knowledge.
- He is the way, the truth and the light.
- **Proverbs is filled with so many lessons, but most important, wisdom begins when your life wants to please the Father.**