

Getting to Know Proverbs

Lesson 4: Christ, Our Wisdom for Living

Who wrote Proverbs?

Solomon

The Men of Hezekiah

Agur

King Lemuel

What is a Proverb?

By its nature a proverb is:

something that **happens** to us

spread by **word** of mouth

written down as part of a **narrative** or in a deliberate gathering together of wisdom sayings

Solomon's relationship to Proverbs

Solomon probably was not responsible for the whole process by which all the included sayings reached their present written form.

Solomon took it upon himself to gather as much of the oral wisdom tradition that he could and to commit it to writing.

Solomon added some sayings based on his own experiences.



Solomon was concerned to promote the pursuit of wisdom in Israel.

Proverbs' structure

There are seven **collections** of Proverbs:

The Proverbs of Solomon, Son of David, **King** of Israel: 1:1 – 9:18

The **Proverbs** of Solomon: 10:1 – 22:16

The **Sayings** of the Wise: 22:17 – 24:22

These Also are Sayings of the **Wise**: 24:23 – 24:34

The Proverbs of Solomon, Copied by the Men of **Hezekiah**: 25:1 – 29:27

The Words of **Agur**: 30:1 – 33

The Words of King **Lemuel**: 31:1 – 31

The relationship between wisdom and the law

Human wisdom, as it is informed by divine revelation, is controlled by grace and law:

1. The wisdom of God in his word about creation and redemption
2. The wisdom of God in the law
3. Human wisdom worked out within the framework of 1 and 2

The fear of the Lord

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom

1. **Submission** to God's Will as outlined in the law
2. **Love** the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and might

3 Forms of Wisdom in Proverbs

1. Wisdom may refer to the grace of God in redemption
2. Wisdom may refer to the law either in some particular detail or in general.
3. Wisdom may reflect on any of a multitude of experiences or concerns that are part of our common human lot.

The Theology of Wisdom

All true wisdom and knowledge starts with the proper response of reverence and trust in the God of the covenant.

Proverbs reminds us that being human means making human decisions for human acts and then wearing the consequences.

The theological orientation of Proverbs is that of how human beings, created in the image of God, are intended by God to function in the world.



Wisdom and Worldviews

Christianity involves a total view of **reality**.

The gospel is **relevant** to everything because God made everything.

A sovereign and personal God who **communicates** with us by his Word created the world.

The authentically Christian worldview is based upon the revelation of God, which is in Jesus Christ and in all the Old Testament revelation as that which **foreshadows** him.

Proverbs and Worldviews

Proverbs recognizes the **validity** of the use of all our faculties to observe and to reason about the nature of reality.

Proverbs understands our **sinful** human nature as that which needs redemptive revelation from God.

The “fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” means that a true response to God is the **only** basis for a true understanding of all reality.

Proverbs is based on a theory of knowledge that takes **prior** account of what God says in his word.