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# PROVERBS

## WHO WROTE IT?

King Solomon is the principal writer of Proverbs. Solomon's name appears in verses 1:1, 10:1, and 25:1. We may also presume Solomon collected and edited proverbs other than his own, for Ecclesiastes 12:9 says, "besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care." Indeed, the Hebrew title *Mishle Shelomoh* is translated "Proverbs of Solomon."

## WHEN(ISH) WAS IT WRITTEN?

Solomon's proverbs were penned around 900 BC. During his reign as king, the nation of Israel reached its pinnacle spiritually, politically, culturally, and economically. As Israel's reputation soared, so did King Solomon's. Foreign dignitaries from the far reaches of the known world traveled great distances to hear the wise monarch speak (1 Kings 4:34).

## WHY WAS IT WRITTEN?

Knowledge is nothing more than an accumulation of raw facts, but wisdom is the ability to see people, events, and situations as God sees them. In the book of Proverbs, Solomon reveals the mind of God in matters high and lofty as well as common, ordinary, and everyday situations. It appears that no topic escaped King Solomon's attention. Matters pertaining to personal conduct, sexual relations, business, wealth, charity, ambition, discipline, debt, child-rearing, character, alcohol, politics, revenge, and godliness are among the many topics covered in this rich collection of wise sayings.

## SOME KEY VERSES

Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance.

### **PROVERBS 1:5**

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

### **PROVERBS 1:7**

Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth.

### **PROVERBS 4:5**

The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. I have counsel and sound wisdom; I have insight; I have strength.

### **PROVERBS 8:13-14**

## A QUICK SUMMARY

Summarizing the book of Proverbs is a bit difficult, for unlike many other books of Scripture, there is no particular plot or storyline found in its pages; likewise, there are no principal characters in the book. It is wisdom that takes center stage—a grand, divine wisdom that transcends the whole of history, peoples, and cultures. Even a quick reading of this collection of writings shows how these concise sayings of the wise King Solomon are as relevant today as they were some three thousand years ago.

## FORESHADOWINGS

The theme of wisdom and its necessity in our lives finds its fulfillment in Christ. We are continually exhorted in Proverbs to seek wisdom, get wisdom, and understand wisdom. Proverbs also tells us—and repeats it—that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (1:7; 9:10). Our fear of the Lord's wrath and justice drives us to Christ, who is the embodiment of God's wisdom as expressed in His glorious plan of redemption for mankind. In Christ, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3), we find the answer to our search for

wisdom, the remedy for our fear of God, and the “righteousness and sanctification and redemption” that we so desperately need (1 Corinthians 1:30). The wisdom that is found only in Christ is in contrast to the foolishness of the world which encourages us to be wise in our own eyes. But Proverbs also tells us that the world’s way is not God’s way (Proverbs 3:7) and leads only to death (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

There is an undeniable practicality found in this book, for sound and sensible answers to all manner of complex difficulties are found within its thirty-one chapters. The recurring promise of the book of Proverbs is that those who choose wisdom and follow God will be blessed in numerous ways: with long life (9:11); prosperity (2:20-22); joy (3:13-18); and the goodness of God (12:21). Those who reject Him, on the other hand, suffer shame and death (3:35; 10:21). To reject God is to choose folly over wisdom and is to separate ourselves from God, His Word, His wisdom, and His blessings.

## MY NOTES

