

Proverbs

A. Introduction

1. Title

- a. Hebrew: "Proverbs of"
- b. LXX: "Proverbs of Solomon"
- c. Vulgate: "The Book of Proverbs"

2. Date

- a. 970-931 B.C. – The Proverbs of Solomon (10:1-22:16; 25:1-29:27)
- b. c. 690 B.C. – The Final Collection in the Days of Hezekiah (25:1)

B. Structure/Outline

Proverbs

Introduction	The Admonition to Acquire Wisdom	The Proverbs of Solomon and the Wise	The Final Words
Title (1:1)		Solomon (10:1-22:16)	Agur (30:1-33)
Purpose (1:2-6)		The Wise (22:17-24:34)	Lemuel (31:1-9)
Motto (1:7)		Solomon (25:1-29:27)	"The Excellent Wife" (31:10-31)
1:1	1:8	10:1	30:1

The Torah's Foundational Nature in Proverbs

Attribute/Action of Yahweh	Deuteronomy	Latter Prophets	Proverbs
Creator of the Cosmos	10:14	Is. 40:21-22	3:19-20
Creator of Mankind	4:32	Is. 42:5	14:31; 29:13
Will Avenge Wrong	32:35, 40-41	Nah. 1:2	25:21-22
Knows Man's Ways	23:14	Jer. 16:17	5:21; 15:3
The Sovereign Lord Directing History	4:19; 29:4, 6	Is. 45:1-13	16:1-9, 33; 19:21; 20:24
Withholding/Giving Rain/Plenty	11:13-17	Hag. 1:10-11	3:9-10
Disciplines His Children	8:5	Is. 1:4-6	3:11-12
Answers Prayer	4:29-31	Is. 56:7	15:8, 29
Merciful	4:31; 30:8	Is. 63:7	28:13
Wise	4:26	Is. 11:2-3; 31:2	8:22-31
Delights in Justice/Hates Iniquity	10:17	Is. 1:16-17	11:1; 17:15

C. Major Themes

1. The Necessity of Listening

Proverbs 1:33 But he who listens to me shall live securely & will be at ease from the dread of evil.

Proverbs 2:1-6 My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments within you, 2 Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; 3 For if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; 4 If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; 5 then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God. 6 For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.

- The invitation to become wise for any who will listen:

Proverbs 1:20–26 Wisdom shouts in the street, she lifts her voice in the square; ²¹ At the head of the noisy *streets* she cries out; at the entrance of the gates in the city she utters her sayings: ²² “How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing and fools hate knowledge? ²³ “Turn to my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you. ²⁴ “Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention; ²⁵ and you neglected all my counsel and did not want my reproof; ²⁶ I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes

2. The God of the Proverbs

- a. God is Sovereign (16:1, 4, 9, 33; 19:21; 20:24; 21:1)
- b. God must be feared (1:7, 9:10)
- c. God is Man’s Maker (20:12)
- d. God is Man’s Blessor (12:22; 16:7)
- e. God is Man’s Judge (16:5; 20:27; 21:2; 24:11-12)

3. Man Before God

- a. Man is a Rebel (19:3; 20:9)

b. Man needs to Trust God (15:33; 16:6, 20)

c. All Men are the same before God (22:2; 29:13)

The rich and the poor have a common bond, the Lord **is the maker** of them all" Pr 22:2.

4. The Various Characters of Proverbs

The Fool

1) The human race drifts towards foolishness

Prov 22:15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child

➤ To end up as the fool in Proverbs, one must simply do nothing.

2) The fool is a fool by choice, not intellect

3) He cannot be corrected.

"A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding than a hundred blows into a fool." Pr 17:10.

- He cannot receive reproof (cf. Prov. 15:5, 12) because he trusts in his own way and in his own heart above his God (Prov. 3:5-7, 28:26).
- 4) He is a lone-ranger.
- The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes Than seven men who can give a discreet answer. Prov 26:16.
- 5) He gossips. The fool is a gossip.
- “he who spreads slander is a fool.” Prov 10:18.
- 6) He needs to be rebuked (Prov 26:5)
- 7) At times, he needs to be ignored (Prov 26:4)
- 8) He trusts in himself; in his feelings; in his own thinking (Prov 28:26)
- Big picture: To “let go and let God” in Proverbs would be catastrophic.

The Sluggard

- Derek Kidner:
 - 1) **He will not begin things.** 6:9 “how long will you lie down O sluggard?”
 - 2) **He won’t commit.** He can’t be definitive. It’s too much for him. he’s too important. It’s always “maybe,” and, “I don’t know,” “we’ll see what happens,” and, “get back to me at some time; I don’t know when, but sometime...”

Kidner: "He does not commit himself to a refusal, but deceives himself by the smallness of his surrenders" (39).

3) **The sluggard will not finish things.**

12:27 – "he will not roast his prey," and 19:24 – "he buries his hand in the dish, but will not even bring it back to his mouth."

4) **The sluggard is a great excuse-maker.**

22:13 – the sluggard says, "There's a lion outside, I will be killed in the streets!"

21:25-26 – the desire of the sluggard puts him to death. It's not that he does not desire. Oh, he desires. V. 26 – "he desires desire..." – What does that mean??

The Scoffer

- 9:8 Do not reprove a scoffer or he will hate you; reprove a wise man and he will love you
- 13:1 a scoffer does not listen to rebuke
- 15:12 A scoffer does not love one who reproves him, he will not go to the wise.
- 22:10 Drive out the scoffer, and contention will go out

The Friend

- 18:24 there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother
- 17:17 a friend loves at all times

- 17:9 he who conceals transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.
- 27:5-6 Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

The Wise

- 9:8 “reprove a wise man and he will love you.” – are we wise, brothers? Do we love those who bring biblical reproof to us?
- 9:9 Give instruction to a wise man and he will be still wiser, Teach a righteous man and he will increase his learning.
- 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
- 15:31-33 He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof Will dwell among the wise. ³² He who neglects discipline despises himself, But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding. ³³ The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, And before honor *comes* humility.

5. The Personal Conduct of Man

- a. Diligence (10:4; 12:11; 16:26; 27:23-27)
- b. Speech (10:21; 12:25; 15:23; 20:19; 29:20)
- c. Humility (11:2; 12:9; 16:19)
 - 27:21 a man is tested by his praise.
 - 27:1 do not boast about tomorrow
 - 25:14 like clouds and wind without rain [so] is a man who boasts of his gifts falsely
- d. Control of Temper (12:16; 14:29; 17:14; 22:24-25)

e. Joy (14:10; 15:13, 15; 25:20; 27:9)

6. Man in Society

a. Sexual Temptation

- 7:6-12 For at the window of my house I looked out through my lattice, ⁷ And I saw among the naive, *And* discerned among the youths A young man lacking sense, ⁸ Passing through the street near her corner; And he takes the way to her house, ⁹ In the twilight, in the evening, In the middle of the night and *in* the darkness. ¹⁰ And behold, a woman *comes* to meet him, Dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart. ¹¹ She is boisterous and rebellious, Her feet do not remain at home; ¹² *She is now* in the streets, now in the squares, And lurks by every corner.
- 7:21 with her many persuasions she entices him, w/ her flattering lips she seduces him
- 7:22 suddenly he follows her as an ox goes to the slaughter...until an arrow pierces through his liver...so he does not know that it will cost him his life
- 7:26-27 many are the victims she has cast down and numerous are all her slain. Her house is the way to Sheol

b. Family Life

1) Wives (12:4; 18:22; 19:14; 21:9, 19; 25:24)

The bad:

21:9 It is better to live in a corner of a roof Than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

21:19 It is better to live in a desert land Than with a contentious and vexing woman.

The good:

31:10-12 An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. 11 The heart of her husband trusts in her, And he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good and not evil All the days of her life.

2) Discipline of Children (22:6, 15; 23:13-14; 29:15, 17)

The Rod

- 22:15 foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.
- The Hebrew word מִשְׁכָּה

The Hebrew word used in context of discipline (e.g. Prov. 13:24, 22:15, 23:13-14, 29:15) speaks of an object like a club, staff, or scepter (*Brown-Driver-Briggs*, 986).

It was used to describe an instrument for beating cumin (Isa. 28:27), a weapon (2 Sam. 23:21), and as a shepherd's implement either to muster or count sheep (Lev. 27:32; Ezek. 20:37), or to protect them (Ps. 23:4; Mic. 7:14)." (Dan Phillips, *God's Wisdom in Proverbs*, p. 274).

The rod was also used as an instrument for either remedial or penal punishment. As a corrective instrument it was used for a slave (Exod. 21:20), a fool (Prov. 10:13, 26:3), and a son (Prov. 13:24, 22:15, 23:13-14, 29:15). (Bruce Waltke, *Theological Workbook of the Old Testament*, 2:897).

- Kidner: "It will take more than words to dislodge [foolishness]." (47)

- 13:24 He who withholds his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.
- 23:13–15 Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you strike him with the rod, he will not die. 14 You shall strike him with the rod & rescue his soul from Sheol. 15 My son, if your heart is wise, my own heart also will be glad
- 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.
- 29:17 Correct your son and he will give you comfort.

An Often-Misunderstood Verse

- 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old, he will not depart from it.
 - Proverbs 22:6 Interpretation Discussion:
<http://thecripplegate.com/reconsidering-proverbs-226/>
- c. Kings (14:28, 35; 25:4-5; 28:2; 29:4)
- d. Neighbors (11:9; 14:21; 25:17)
- e. Money (22:7; 23:4-5; 11:24-26; 14:21; 28:11)

D. Purpose: The young, naïve son is given exhortation to, and instruction in, the ways of wisdom.

E. Bibliography

1. Exegetical: Waltke (NICOT); 2 vols.
2. English Interpretation: Kidner, *Proverbs* (TOTC).
3. Expositional: Mayhue, *Practicing Proverbs*.
Koptak, *Proverbs* (NIVAC).

F. Preaching Proverbs