

Gleanings from the Book of Proverbs – Part 2

Introduction: Christ – The Wisdom of God

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 1:1-9

What is a proverb?

A proverb is a short memorable saying that expresses truth, wisdom, warning, or advice. Because they are short, they are easier to remember. Because they are profound, they require further thought and meditation. Some other words used instead of “proverb” could be “maxim” or “adage.” In the Bible, the Book of Proverbs belongs in the category of wisdom poetry.

Parallelism – Short two-part statements.

Hebrew poetry does not try to rhyme, as in English poetry. In short statements, using a form called parallelism, the proverbs say two things. Truths are expressed side-by side in what some call “couplets.” The parallel statement can ...

- Say the same thing twice, in two different ways, for emphasis, completeness, or better definition. (Synonymous Parallelism – Example: Proverbs 19:29)
- Say a statement that adds more to the first statement. (Synthetic Parallelism – Example: Proverbs 20:2)
- Say one thing and then say the opposite thing for contrast. (Antithetic Parallelism – Example: Proverbs 13:9)

In any case, parallelism helps you to think harder about a subject and draw good conclusions.

Parts of the book of Proverbs also contain longer discussions or narratives.

A father calls his son to hear wisdom and instruction (Proverbs 1:8,10,15; 2:1; 3:1,11,21; 4:1-4,10,20; 5:1,20; 6:1,3,20; 7:1). Also note the call of **a mother** (Proverbs 31:1-31).

Agur was probably some teacher of wisdom, unknown to us, who spoke to Ithiel and Ucal, who were perhaps two of his students (Proverbs 30:1-33 cp. Luke’s example with Theophilus – Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-2).

Wisdom is personified as a godly kinswoman – a virtuous, goodwilled, mother, grandmother, aunt, or sister who is wise, loving, and caring. She gives encouragements and warnings (Proverbs 1:20-21; 8:1-4; 9:1-3).

This personification, in the New Testament extends to the Lord Jesus Christ. See Luke 11:49-51 cp. Matthew 23:34-36. In Luke 11:49, Jesus said, **“The wisdom of God also said, ‘I will send...’** This does not refer to any Old Testament passage. This is a revelation coming from Jesus Christ. In Matthew 23:34, Jesus said, **“I will send...”** Here, Jesus is directly making the statement Himself. By the grace of God, Jesus has become our wisdom (I Corinthians 1:30-31; Colossians 3:16; I Peter 1:10-11). See also Isaiah 9:6 [“...Wonderful, Counsellor...”]; John 14:6 [“...the truth...”]; Jeremiah 9:23-24 cp. I Corinthians 1:18 – 2:16. In I Corinthians 2:16 we are told that “... we have the mind of Christ.” We must apply the mind of Christ and make use of it. We do not just try to think like Him. We must think **with** Him – interact **with** Him. See Philippians 2:5; 4:8 The Book of Proverbs will provide some of the tools to do this.

Outline of the Book of Proverbs

It is difficult to outline the Book of Proverbs because of its arrangement of so many different topics. Some people try to arrange an index of topics, with references applied to the specific topics. Here is a simple outline that shows the progression of the book in general. This is taken from “Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee” – Volume 3, page 3.

The Book of Proverbs

- **Wisdom and folly Contrasted, Chapters 1-9**
- **Proverbs of Solomon, Chapters 10-24** (Written and set in order by himself)
- **Proverbs of Solomon, Chapters 25-29** (Set in order by men of Hezekiah)
- **Oracle of Agur, Unknown sage, Chapter 30**
- **Proverbs of a Mother to Lemuel, Chapter 31**