

Message #1

Various Texts

There is no book in Scripture more intimidating than Proverbs. There is no book in Scripture more graphic than Proverbs. There is no book in Scripture more practical than Proverbs. There is no book in Scripture more needed than Proverbs.

QUESTION #1 – What is the book of Proverbs?

1) It is a book of Hebrew poetry.

In Hebrew poetry there is no rhyme scheme, no meters, and no sound consistency.
In Hebrew poetry there are parallel clauses and idea consistency.

Five types of Hebrew poetic parallelism:

- A. Synonymous parallelism—main idea stated followed up by another similar idea which reinforces the main idea. Prov. 3:13
- B. Antithetic parallelism—main idea stated, then another idea which is directly opposite of the main idea. Prov. 10:2-5
- C. Synthetic parallelism—main idea stated and another idea stated right after it to bring more of an understanding of the first idea. Prov. 26:4
- D. Climactic parallelism—main idea stated, which introduces an idea that builds to a logical, climactic ending or conclusion. Prov. 6:12-15
- E. Emblematic parallelism—main idea stated by using some symbolic picture to zero in on main point. Prov. 11:22; 25:25

2) It is a book of wisdom literature.

The difference between Proverbs and other literature classified as wisdom literature is that Proverbs is inspired by God!

QUESTION #2 – Who wrote Proverbs?

Several authors were used to write and compile Proverbs, but the central Biblical literature wisdom figure is Solomon.

1) Solomon wrote many of the Proverbs. Prov. 1:1; 10:1; 25:1

I Kings 4:32 says Solomon spoke 3000 proverbs and wrote more than 1000 songs. These numbers suggest we do not have most of Solomon's writings because Proverbs only has 915 verses. Ecclesiastes has 222 verses and Song of Solomon contains 117 verses for a total of 1254 verses.

2) Wise men wrote some of the Proverbs. Prov. 22:17-24:34

We don't know who they were for certain, but the language structure is very different.

- 3) Hezekiah's men edited many of the Proverbs. Prov. 25:1
Hezekiah lived some 250 years after Solomon and commissioned some of his scholars to systematically compile some of Solomon's proverbs.
- 4) Agur wrote some of the Proverbs. Prov. 30
- 5) Lemuel wrote some of the Proverbs. Prov. 31

QUESTION #3 – When was Proverbs written?

- 1) Much was written during the time of Solomon (950-900 B.C.).
 - 2) Much was compiled during the time of Hezekiah (700 B.C.).
- Our conclusion is that the book of Proverbs covers approximately 200-250 years from 950 B.C. – 700 B.C.

QUESTION #4 – How does the book of Proverbs develop?

The book of Proverbs breaks down into eight recognizable and distinct parts:

- 1) The introduction to the Proverbs. 1:1-6
- 2) The introduction to wisdom. 1:7
- 3) Wisdom instruction from a father to his son. 1:8-9:18
There are ten “my son” sections: 1:8-23; 2:1-22; 3:1-20; 3:21-35; 4:10-19; 4:20-27; 5:1-23; 6:1-19; 6:20-35; 7:1-23.
There are two “sons” sections: 4:1-9; 7:24-9:18
- 4) Wisdom of Solomon (Part #1). 10:1-22:16
- 5) Wisdom of the wise. 22:17-24:34
The sayings of the wise (Part #1). 22:17-24:22
The sayings of the wise (Part #2). 24:23-24:34
- 6) Wisdom of Solomon (Part #2). 25:1-29:27
- 7) Wisdom of Agur. 30:1-33
The theological wisdom. 30:2-9
The practical wisdom. 30:10-33
- 8) Wisdom of Lemuel. 31:1-31
Instruction from a mother to a son. 31:1-9
Instruction concerning a godly woman. 31:10-31

QUESTION #5 – What is the theme of Proverbs?

If a person will continually pursue an understanding of God's wisdom and continually apply God's wisdom to his life, that person will be successful in this life and in the life to come, because God will personally bless and prosper this person.