

Message #2

Proverbs 1:1

QUESTION #1 – What are proverbs?

The Hebrew word for “proverbs” (mishle) comes from a root word which means to make like, to assimilate or to compare (Gesenius, p. 517).

Various wise men attempted to assimilate facts about life based on personal observation and made sayings that were comparable to those facts.

The word “proverb” is used many times in the O.T. in various ways:

- 1) It is used in reference to Israel. Deut. 28:37; I Kings 9:7; II Chron. 7:20; Jer. 24:9
- 2) It is used in reference to Saul. I Sam. 24:13
- 3) It is used in reference to David. Psalm 69:11
- 4) It is used in defense by David. I Sam. 24:13
- 5) It is used in prediction by Ezekiel. Ezek. 12:22-23

A proverb is the observation and communication of truth in some form of poetic, representative language, which uses people, words, riddles, and hidden sayings to compare wise people in God’s mind with foolish people in God’s mind.

Two reasons why Jesus used proverbial or parabolic language:

- 1) To hide truth from those not supposed to have it.
- 2) To reveal truth to those who are supposed to have it.

QUESTION #2 – What are the “proverbs of Solomon”?

The phrase “proverbs of Solomon” (mishle Shlomoh) occurs three times in the book: **1:1**; 10:1; 25:1.

The meaning is that Proverbs is a book of wisdom literature of which Solomon is the key character. “The” leading figure of God’s wisdom literature is Solomon.

What Solomon proves is that it is possible for a finite, sinful human being not only to pursue God’s wisdom, but actually gain it.’’

QUESTION #3 – Who is Solomon?

Three Biblical facts, two of which are in this verse, are:

(Fact #1) - Solomon was the wisest man of his time.

How did he become so wise? The answer is found in I Kings 3:3-9:

- 1) He loved God (3:3a); 2) He obeyed God (3:3b); 3) He asked God for wisdom (3:9).

(Fact #2) - Solomon was the son of David. **1:1c**

Two observations about David:

1) David was a man who loved God—"man after God's heart." I Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22

David did things for God, talked about God, obeyed God and wanted to do big things for God.

2) David was a man who sinned against God.

Solomon's very existence came out of a sinful relationship between David and Bathsheba (II Sam. 12:24).

Solomon himself went on a major sin binge and fell big time, and there are lessons to learn:

A. Just because a child wanders away from what is wise does not mean the parent has not made a profound impact on his thinking.

B. One does not need an impeccable lineage to be an outstanding servant of God.

C. One does not need a perfect historical track record to become one of God's great leaders.

(Fact #3) - Solomon was king of Israel. **1:1d**

At the time Solomon became king, he was somewhere near the age of 20. He was not ordinary in his thinking ability:

1) He eliminated Israel's enemies. I Kings 2

2) He established rapport with foreign nations. I Kings 3, 9, 10

3) He organized his own kingdom. I Kings 4

4) He constructed a majestic temple for and to God. I Kings 5-6

5) He built a beautiful home. I Kings 7

How could a 20-year-old do so much? II Chron. 1:1, 7-12 gives us the answer; God was with Solomon and He gave him the wisdom he wanted.

Proverbs 1:1 tells us it can happen. It is possible for an individual to actually pursue and gain the wisdom of Almighty God. Let us pursue this great goal for our lives.