

# Proverbs: *All the Wiser*

## Introduction

The Hebrew title is “The Proverbs of Solomon, the Son of David, King of Israel.” The Greek *Septuagint* used the title “Proverbs of Solomon.” The Latin *Vulgate* simply named it “The Book of Proverbs.”

**I. The Author**—Proverbs is a collection of wise sayings from several different persons: **Solomon** (10:1—22:16; and probably 1—9. Proverbs contains about 800 of Solomon’s 3,000 proverbs (1 Kings 4:32). **Wise Sages** (22:17—24:34). **Solomon’s proverbs collected and compiled by Hezekiah’s men** (25—29). **Agur** (30) [Ithiel and Ucal may have been Agur’s sons who first received divine wisdom through him]. **Lemuel** (31) [Some identify Lemuel with Solomon by saying this was his pen name, but there is no evidence for this connection.

**II. The Audience**—Israel’s educable youth (but it applies to all).

**III. The Aim**—To help the young and simple acquire the mental and moral insight to live wisely before God in every area of life. Wisdom is viewing life and self from God’s perspective.

## IV. The Arrangement

PROVERBS AT A GLANCE						
Focus	Purpose Of Proverbs	Proverbs To Youth	Proverbs Of Solomon	Proverbs Of Solomon (Hezekiah)	Words Of Agur	Words Of Lemuel
Reference	1:1 — 1:8 — 10:1 — 25:1 — 30:1 — 31:1 — 31:31					
Division	Purpose And Theme	Father's Exhortations	First Collection Of Solomon	Second Collection Of Solomon	Numerical Proverbs	Virtuous Wife
Topic	Prologue	Principles Of Wisdom			Epilogue	
	Commendation Of Wisdom	Counsel Of Wisdom			Comparisons Of Wisdom	
Location	Judah					
Time	c. 950–450 B.C.					

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- I. Introduction (1:1-7)
- II. The Foundation of Wisdom (1:8—9:18)
- III. Proverbs of Solomon (10:1—22:16)
- IV. The Words of the Wise (22:17—24:22)
- V. More Sayings of the Wise (24:23-34)
- VI. The Proverbs of Solomon Collected by Hezekiah (25:1—29:27)

- VII. The Words of Agur (30)
- VIII. The Words of Lemuel (31:1-9)
- IX. Epilogue (31:10-31)

## **V. The Analysis**

“Proverb” translates the Hebrew word *masal* which probably comes from a verb that means “to be like, to be compared with.” A proverb is a pithy maxim that makes a comparison or summarizes some common life experience. Proverbs primarily consists of single verse maxims but does contain a few more extended discourses (6:12-14, 16-19; 7:6-23; 30:11-14, 18-19, 21-23; 31:4-5). As with all Hebrew poetic discourse, Proverbs make frequent use of various forms of parallelism, especially antithetical parallelism.

*hokma* “wisdom” 45x in Proverbs    Skilled in godly living—navigating through life  
in a God-honoring way

## **VI. The Application**

Fear God (“fear of the Lord”—11x in Proverbs)  
Watch your heart  
Measure your words  
Take family life seriously  
Work hard  
Be a good friend