

## Lesson 20

### PROVERBS

**PURPOSE:** The fear of God and wisdom are essential for ideal Christian life.

**Memory verses: Proverbs Chapter 1:5-7 & 3:5,6**

*the wise man also may hear and increase in learning, and the man of understanding acquire skill, to understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*

## INTRODUCTION

This book emphasizes the fear of God and justice for the success of a practical Christian life.

This book also can be divided into five sections like Psalms, and the five books of Moses in the old testament.

- 1 Solomon's Proverbs (Proverbs chapter 1-9)
- 2 Solomon's words of wisdom (10-24)
- 3 Solomon's Proverbs, collected by the people of Hezekiah (25-29)
- 4 Words of Agur (30th chapter)
- 5 Lemuel's words (31st chapter)

Most of the words in this book belong to Solomon. Therefore, this book is called Solomon's Proverbs. Just like Psalms is the book of meditation, Proverbs is a book of practical knowledge. The fear of God is mentioned 14 times in this book

The book of proverbs is simple, genuine and wise statements. A majority of it contains instructions for children and young adults. The fear of God, knowledge, wisdom, freedom, holiness, self-control, faith in God the right use of wealth, matters of priority in life, compassion for poor, restraining the tongue, love for your enemies, how to choose right friends, how to take care of children, hard works, honesty, laziness, carelessness, justice, help, attention, common sense and such matters relevant to life are discussed extensively in this book. Instructions are given in this book to keep us from going astray from life's goals. The presentation in this book is similar to a father instructing his children rather than "Thus saith the Lord" style in the 5 books of Moses. The book of Proverbs is called the best guidebook for young men. Although Solomon was a good guide, he was not a good example. Therefore, even Solomon's own children (Rehoboam) did not follow his ways.

By inspiration from God in this book, Solomon provided practical knowledge, in a heart-warming manner through poems, examples, question and answers, small stories and advice.

Proverbs may be considered a historical book because it gives hints to many historical matters. This book was taught in schools in Israel (Jeremiah 18;18, Ezekiel 7:26). Three sects of people

carried out Gods work—prophets, priest, & elders. Preachers had an important role in learning centres. The preacher (Qoheleth) was also the principal and teacher. The preachers address their audiences as “My son.”

In Hebrew this book is called ‘Mishle Shelomoh’, in Greek ‘Paroimiai Solomontos’, and in Latin ‘Liber Proverbiorum’ (pro=for, verba=words). Proverbs use a single word in place of many words for simplicity. In the Rabbinical writings the book of Proverbs is called as Sepher Hokhmah—the book of Wisdom.

## **AUTHOR**

The authors of this book are Solomon, men of king Hezekiah, Agur, and Lemuel However it is generally believed that Solomon is the author of Proverbs. In their search for knowledge, even other kings sought his wisdom. They considered Solomon a great ruler, wise man, and paragon of knowledge.

In 3 areas of this book Solomon’s name has been mentioned first Proverbs 10:1 (10:1- 22 :16), and 25:1 (25-29) It is said that Solomon authored 3000 Proverbs and 1005 hymns (1 Kings 4:32). This book contains only 800 of these proverbs. God granted him prosperity and fame (1 Kings 11:4). Solomon may have combined both his and his contemporaries’ proverbs (12:9). This collection of proverbs may contain sayings by men of Hezekiah (25 to 29) Micah and Isaiah were the prophets during the reign of Hezekiah. They might have helped Hezekiah in collecting the proverbs. There was no one better than Solomon in writing proverbs. There are no details in the Bible about Agur (30) Lemuel (31). They might have been wise men who worked closely with Solomon.

## **PERIOD OF WRITING (BC 100-680)**

Solomon’s proverbs may have been written during or before 931 BC and Hezekiah’s collection was 230 years later during B.C. 715 to 680.

## **HISTORY OF THE PERIOD**

During the reign of Solomon and Hezekiah.

## **CHRIST IN THE BOOK PROVERBS**

In Proverbs chapter 8: 12-31, we can see the full picture of knowledge. This is the source of spiritual& physical life (proverbs 8: 35, 36 and chapter 3:18), and justice (chapter 8:1- 6, 32-35)

These portions depict Christ who is the incarnation of knowledge (Colossians chapter 2: 3—1 Corinthians chapter 1:30 - & 22 to 24).

### **MAIN TOPIC**

The main theme is knowledge.

### **OBSERVATION ABOUT THE BOOK**

Among all the other books in the Bible, Proverbs is the only book which states its purpose (1: 2-6). Proverbs was written for discernment & understanding. In Proverbs chapter 31 an ideal woman is depicted (a good woman, a good wife, good mother, good neighbour, good habits, good conversation, good life) and in chapter 7 a foolish woman is described. The book instructs on secrets of success in day to day life and helps the readers to discern them.

All matters concerning life are included in this book, such as knowledge, foolishness, justice, injustice, arrogance, humility, love, hatred, spiritual thoughts, anger, patience, hard work, laziness, master-servant, life-death, family, time, culture, poverty, wealth, friends & neighbours.

### **The Book can be divided as follows:**

Purpose of writing (chapter 1 V 1-7)

For the youth (chapter 1 v 8 to 9 and 18,)

Solomon's wisdom (chapter 10 V 1-24; 34)

Hezekiah (chapter 25 V 1-29)

Agar's: (chapter 30:1-33)

Lemuel (chapter 31: V 1-31)

### **The purpose of Writing:**

1:1-7 The author clarified the purpose and subject here.

### **Proverbs for the youth (1:8-9:18)**

In this section, there are 10 instructions given like a father advising his son in the ways of God. They all begin with "My Son". Cruelty and foolishness are condemned, and safety and freedom are extolled. Foolishness, laziness, adultery, traps by evil woman and spiritual treasures are discussed. Especially, 4 types of fools are presented:

- 1) Those who reject God's ways (Lemuel)
- (2) Those who are not dedicated
- (3) Wicked (4) Those who justify themselves

**Collection by Hezekiah's sages (25:1-29:27)**

These collections are by king Hezekiah's sages (25:1). These can be seen in chapters 25 to 29. These are expansions of Solomon's proverbs.

Agur's sayings (30:1-33)

The last two chapters are additions by two unknown authors. Agur's proverbs are numerical proverbs.

Words of King Lemuel.

The last chapter of proverbs is by this author. Words are arranged according to the Hebrew alphabet. The presentation is the glorious picture of an ideal wife (31: 10-31).

Book of Proverbs contains 31 chapters.

**QUESTIONS**

1. What is the similarity between the 5 books of Moses and Proverbs?
2. Why is Proverbs called the best guide for young men?
3. What are the root words/names for this Book?
4. Who are the authors of Proverbs? Why is Proverbs called the book of Solomon?
5. Knowledge/Wisdom reflect Christ. Show examples of that from this book.
6. Prepare a book review of Proverbs.