

Proverbs Outline

Introduction: The book of proverbs was finished after Israel returned home from exile, however most of the sayings are probably quite old. Solomon is attributed as the author, but this likely has more to do with connecting these sayings to the famous wisdom of Solomon than any historical authorship. (This is especially true since Ecclesiastes, which often states beliefs in exact opposition to Proverbs also purports to be written by Solomon.) The book of Proverbs is a collection of “conventional wisdom”, i.e. wisdom lies in forgoing easy gain for hard work and diligence in the belief it will pay off in the long run. Further, in Proverbs we see the tradition of Sophia/Hokmah, or Woman Wisdom articulated most clearly.

Section One: Hymns to Wisdom

Chapter 1: Introduction; Solomon attributed as author; fear of Lord beginning of wisdom; wisdom introduced as “woman wisdom”

Chapter 2: The ‘father’ speaks- wisdom leads to better life; the “loose woman” introduced

Chapter 3: Further teaching- wisdom leads to good life; God created earth with wisdom

Chapter 4: Continuing theme of positive feedback for following wisdom

Chapter 5: “Loose woman” sounds nice at first- turns bad later

Chapter 6: An ode to hard work; an ode to the ant

Chapter 7: Again, the “loose woman” seductive but ultimately destructive

Chapter 8: Woman Wisdom speaks: Wisdom created before all things, and created all things
With God; wisdom is life itself

Chapter 9: The difference between woman wisdom and the “foolish woman”

Section Two: The Antithetic Collection of Sayings

Chapter 10-Chapter 24

Chapter 15: A soft answer turns away wrath...

Chapter 22: A good name is to be chosen over great riches

Section Three: Solomon’s Sayings Collected By Solomon

Chapter 25-Chapter 29

Chapter 25: Let your foot be seldom in your neighbor’s house (fish and company);
“If your enemies are hungry, give them bread...heap coals”

Section Four: Sayings of Agur

Chapter 30: Confession of one who hasn’t followed wisdom

Section Five: Sayings of King Lemuel’s Mother

Chapter 31: Good leadership; the importance of a good wife

Stories to know: The tradition of Woman Wisdom (1:20-33); Wisdom’s role in creation (8:22-36); The importance of diligence (6:6-15)