

Proverbs Series

Lesson #002

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Dean Bible Ministries

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Proverbs

Guide for Skillful Living

Title

Prov. 1:1, “The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:”

Proverbs Outline

- I. Introduction: It's All About Wisdom (1:1–9:18)
- II. Solomon's Proverbs (10:1–22:16) **375 Proverbs**
- III. The Thirty Sayings of the Wise (22:17–24:22)
- IV. Further Sayings of the Wise (24:23–34)
- V. More Proverbs from Solomon (25:1–29:27) **137 Proverbs**
- VI. The Sayings of Agur son of Jakeh (30:1–33)
- VII. The Sayings of Lemuel (31:1–31)

Author:

Several:

Solomon (Prov. 1:1; 10:1; 25:1)

David (taught Solomon)

Agur (Prov. 30)

Lemuel (Prov. 31:1–10)

The Human Viewpoint (HVP) Challenge

The HVP claim:

The Bible reflects and imitates previous writings, whether the claim is that the Bible is a Jewish version of *Enuma Elish*, the Babylonian myth of creation, or in this case, that Solomon is simply writing the Hebrew version of wisdom sayings which is a copy of what others wrote.

Problem: This puts the human literature and experience prior to biblical.

Divine Viewpoint: The events of the Bible come first.

The Human Viewpoint (HVP) Challenge

Solomon write Proverbs after the Egyptian book called “The Wisdom of Amenemope.”

The Human Viewpoint (HVP) Challenge

Most scholars have noted this, and many have gone beyond this observation to draw attention to similarities they perceive to exist between this composition and an Egyptian wisdom text known as “The Wisdom of Amenemope” (written around 1200 B.C.). The two works have a number of common themes and expressions. Also, “Amenemope” consists of thirty chapters, and Proverbs 22:20 (NIV) asks, “Have I not written thirty sayings for you?”

The Book of Proverbs may have borrowed and adapted some of these sayings in Amenemope, or perhaps both Proverbs and Amenemope borrowed from some earlier writings. At any rate, this does not compromise the integrity of the biblical passages as the inspired Word of God, for extra-canonical and even non-Israelite writings are commonly cited by biblical authors (for example, Josh. 10:13; 2 Sam 1:18; 1 Kings 11:41; Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12). Much of the wisdom of the ancient Israelite teachers was common to the ancient Near East world. The present text, then may indeed consist of aphorisms known in Egypt as well. The Holy Spirit, however, guided in their being selected and included in the Scriptures.

The Human Viewpoint (HVP) Challenge

- 1. Amenemope's Egyptian text has a large proportion of Semitisms, Hebrew idioms and styles, that indicate a borrowing from Hebrew.**
- 2. A large number of unknown or garbled "Egyptian" words that can only be explained if they were first borrowed from a previous Hebrew text.**
- 3. Numerous cases where the Egyptian translator misunderstood the corresponding Hebrew word. The original can be reconstructed on the basis of a Hebrew original, but the Hebrew could not be reconstructed with an Egyptian original.**
- 4. Only 1/3rd of the material in Proverbs 22–24 shows any similarity to the text of Amenemope.**

Archer: The Egyptian text seems to have drawn most of its material from a prior Hebrew text.

Date

Solomon probably wrote this near the middle of his life, before his fall into spiritual rebellion (ca. 950 BC).

The later passages, related to Hezekiah's sages, would have been written during that reign, 714–686 BC. The rest is difficult to date with any precision.

Hebrew Wisdom Poetry

Proverbs is didactic poetry—teaches principles about life by means of maxims (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes).

Hebrew poetry is not based on assonance (rhyme) or meter.

The key to understanding Hebrew poetry is *parallelism*, which involves the “rhyming” of ideas through careful arrangement of parallel thoughts.

1. *Synonymous parallelism.* The second line reinforces the thought of the first by using similar words and concepts (Prov. 11:7, 25; 12:28).

Prov. 1:2,

**“To know wisdom and instruction,
To perceive the words of understanding,”**

Prov. 11:25,

**“The generous soul will be made rich,
And he who waters will also be watered himself.”**

Prov. 12:28,

**“In the way of righteousness is life,
And in its pathway there is no death.”**

2. *Synthetic parallelism.* The second line adds to or completes the idea of the first line.

Prov. 4:23, “Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”

3. *Antithetic parallelism.* The thought of the first line is contrasted in the second line.

**Prov. 10:1, “The proverbs of Solomon:
A wise son makes a glad father,
But a foolish son is the grief of his mother.”**

**Prov. 14:34, “Righteousness exalts a nation,
But sin is a reproach to any people.”**

**Prov. 15:1,
“A soft answer turns away wrath,
But a harsh word stirs up anger.”**

There are Four Ways People Handle Problems:

1. They **IGNORE** the problem and hope it will someday resolve itself without any focused effort or embarrassment. Often this is rationalized as putting something in God's hands, but often we have to put something in God's hands, which means facing realities and using our spiritual weapons to defeat the enemies of our sin nature.
2. They can't ignore it, so they address it with as **MINIMAL A RESPONSE** as possible to avoid really facing the significant spiritual issues, and other related unpleasant realities.
3. They try somewhat, then **GIVE UP**.
4. They **FACE** the problem honestly and straight up until the problem is resolved using God's divine principles and promises.

Prov. 1:2, “To know wisdom and instruction, To perceive the words of understanding,

Prov. 1:3, “To receive the instruction of wisdom, Justice, judgment, and equity,

Prov. 1:4, “To give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion—

Prov. 1:5, “A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,

Prov. 1:6, “To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles.

Prov. 1:7, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

Deut. 11:2, “Know today that I do not speak with your children, who have not known and who have not seen the chastening of the LORD your God, His greatness and His mighty hand and His outstretched arm—”

Isa. 53:5, “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.”

Jer. 2:30, “In vain I have chastened your children; they received no correction. Your sword has devoured your prophets like a destroying lion.”

Jer. 5:3, “O LORD, are not Your eyes on the truth? You have stricken them. But they have not grieved; You have consumed them. But they have refused to receive correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; they have refused to return.”

Jer. 7:28, “So you shall say to them, ‘This is a nation that does not obey the voice of the LORD their God nor receive correction. Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth.’ ”

Prov. 3:11, “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor detest His correction;

Prov. 3:12, “For whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.”

Deut. 4:6, “Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ ”