

# Bible Snapshots



## **Proverbs – Law of Heaven for Life on Earth    Author – Solomon, Lemuel, Agur, Hezekiah**

- The name “Proverbs” comes from the Hebrew word that means “rule or govern.” It is fitting since these wise saying are designed to rule our actions, attitudes, words and lives as a whole.
- While at first the Proverbs seem to simply be a collection of wise and pithy sayings, they are actually united together under the basic premise that this world in which we live is governed by an instilled sense of value and morality.
- The character of the book is poetic.
- Proverbs has 31 chapters, 913 verses and 15,043 words.

## **Themes of Proverbs**

- The fear of God contrasted with the folly of self-will. On one hand the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but, on the other, but folly is denounced as the source of suffering and death.
- The two great problems –the moral government of the world and the duty of man in such a world.

## **Topics of Proverbs**

There is a Proverb for just about every situation for every person. Some subjects discussed are:

- Anger – 14:17, 29; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11
- Correction of children – 13:24; 19:18; 22:6, 13; 23:13, 14
- Fear of God – 1:7; 1:3; 9:10; 10:27; 14:26, 27; 15:16, 33; 16:6; 19:23; 23:17; 24:21
- Fools – 10:18, 21, 23; 12:15, 16; 14:9, 16; 15:2; 17:10, 12, 24; 20:3; 23:9; 27:22; 28:26; 29:11
- Friendship – 17:17; 18:24; 19:4; 27:10, 17
- Indolence – 6:6-11; 10:4, 5; 12:27; 13:4; 15:19; 18:9; 19:15, 24; 20:4, 13; 22:13; 24:30-34; 26:13-16
- Pride – 6:7; 11:2; 13:10; 15:25; 16:18, 19; 18:12; 21:4; 29:23; 30:13
- Strife – 3:30; 10:12; 15:18; 16:28; 17: 1, 14, 19; 18:6, 19; 20:3; 22:10; 25:8; 30:33
- Temperance – 20:1; 21:17; 23:1-3, 20; 23:29-35; 25:16; 31:4-7
- The tongue – 4:24; 10:11-32; 12:6, 18, 22; 13:3; 20:19; 21:23; 26:28; 30:32
- Wealth – 10:2, 15; 11:4, 28; 13:7, 11; 15:6; 16:8; 18:11; 19:4; 27:24; 28:6, 22

## **Key chapter / verse / phrase/ thought**

- Chapters 1 and 8 – the purpose of wisdom / 4:23; 8:13a; 9:10a / “wisdom” mentioned 109 times / key phrase – “The fear of the Lord” 9:10

## **Basic outline of Proverbs**

- I. General rules for guidance – 1-9
  - a. Wisdom and folly contrasted
- II. Wise and foolish sons – 10-24
  - a. The two are contrasted and compared
- III. God-given wisdom for conduct – 25-29
- IV. Summary of things learned by experience – 30

## **Interpreting Proverbs**

- As with the Psalms, one must remember that the Proverbs are poetry and as such will use a decent amount of figurative language, which must be interpreted as such within its given context.
- One must also understand that the Proverbs are a collection of thoughts that are generally true, but not always true in the same sense or applicable in all cases. Many Proverbs, for instance, draw a clear line of distinction between the righteous and the wicked, declaring that they wicked will find all that he does on earth will fail. Of course we understand that this is not always the case. The wicked can prosper and prosper abundantly here on earth.
- Finally, we must remember that each Proverb is a stand-alone piece or context. Often they may seem disjointed for this reason.

## **Proverbs and the New Testament**

- Chastisement – 3:11, 12; Hebrews 12:5, 6; Rev. 3:19
- Grace to the lowly – 3:34; with James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5
- Loving your enemies – 25:21, 22 with Romans 12:19, 20
- Dogs – 26:11; with 2 Peter 2:22
- Evil feet – 1:16 with Romans 3:15
- Self-esteem – 3:7 with Rom. 12:16
- Good for evil – 17:13, 20:22 with Rom. 12:17
- Sparing words – 17:27 with James 1:19
- Disrespect for parents – 20:20 with Matthew 15:4
- Training children – 22:6 with Ephesians 6:4
- Uncertainty of tomorrow – 27:1 with James 4:13-15
- Knowing truth – 28:5b with John 7:17 and 1 John 2:20-27

## **Contextual Customs**

- There are some ancient customs mentioned in the Proverbs that we need to be aware of in order to interpret them correctly. Many of these are very foreign to us and while the truth may be applied the same today we must only interpret the words and meaning of the verse in light of the customs.
- The contentious woman (27:15, 16) – Solomon likens a continual downpour to the contentious woman – a woman that cannot be hidden any more than we could hide the wind. In the Holy Land during the rainy seasons flat-top house are thoroughly soaked, causing leaks throughout all of the rooms. The continual dripping is nerve-racking – both day and night. Often it will last for hours on end and cause one to lose sleep and grumpy. Similarly the contentious women drips her words and ways all over her neighbors and friends until it causes annoyance and strife among them. On she goes both night and day with her arguing and poor attitude that spreads a wealth of trouble.
- Who can find a virtuous woman (31:10-31) – A near east woman has never had the standing of western women. In fact, many are married while girls, sold by their fathers, without regard to notions of love. Husbands keep them in ignorance, never showing them affection or trust in any way. To find a virtuous woman is a prize – a jewel. She is trusted by her husband and will do him well all the days of her life. Such was rare, mainly given their treatment and nature of the relationship.