



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

## Old Testament Survey

### Lesson 25 – The God-Given Wisdom of King Solomon – Part I (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes)

#### Solomon's Wisdom

In answer to Solomon's prayer at Gibeon, God gave him greater wisdom than any man before him or after him (except Jesus, of course). In his wisdom Solomon spoke 3000 proverbs, he wrote 1005 songs, and he studied natural science (see 1 Kings 4:29-33). Some of these proverbs and songs are in the Old Testament: **PROVERBS, SONG OF SOLOMON**, some Psalms, and **ECCLESIASTES**. Solomon encouraged literature and the arts. Very likely the book of Job and many of the psalms were written during his reign. His own people and outsiders, such as the Queen of Sheba<sup>1</sup> and Hiram of Tyre, marveled at his God-given wisdom.

#### The Book of PROVERBS

Except for the last two chapters, which were written by Agur and Lemuel (both of whom are otherwise unknown) and the section from 22:17 to 24:34, which contain proverbs from wise men before Solomon, the book of Proverbs is a collection of Solomon's wisdom intended chiefly for the education of the young.

Read as many chapters of Proverbs as you can as you study the outline and notes below. If you have any questions, ask them.

#### **SECTION I – A Discussion of True Wisdom** (Proverbs 1:1 – 9:18)

The theme: **"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge"** (1:7).

Proverbs 1 – *A Warning against Getting Involved in Violence and Crime*

**"My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent"** (v. \_\_\_\_)

**"Do not walk in the way with them...for their feet run to evil"** (vv. \_\_\_\_\_)

Proverbs 2 – *The Blessings That Come from True Wisdom*

Proverbs 3 – *A Warning against Conceit and against Impatience When God Chastises*

**"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding"** (v. \_\_\_\_)

**"Do not despise the chastening of the LORD...for whom the LORD loves He corrects"** (vv. \_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_)

Proverbs 4 – *Fatherly Words of Wisdom: Stay on the Narrow Path That Leads to Life*

**"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life"** (v. \_\_\_\_)

Proverbs 5 – *A Warning against Strange Women and Unfaithfulness in Marriage*

**"The lips of an immoral woman drip honey, ...but...her feet go down to death"** (vv. \_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_)

<sup>1</sup> See the previous lesson (Lesson 24), 1 Kings 9 *The Visit of the Queen of Sheba* (also 2 Chronicles 9)

**“Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well” (v. \_\_\_\_**

Proverbs 6 – Warnings against Various Sins: Laziness, Deceit, Adultery

**“Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise” (v. \_\_\_\_**

**“The LORD hates...one who sows discord among brethren” (vv. \_\_\_\_**

**“Can a man take fire to his bosom and his clothes not be burned?” (v. \_\_\_\_**

Proverbs 7 – Resisting the Temptation to Adultery

**“With her flattering lips she seduced him. Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter” (vv. \_\_\_\_**

Proverbs 8 – Wisdom Is Personified (In Christ Is Found All the Wisdom of God)

**“Whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the LORD” (v. \_\_\_\_**

Proverbs 9 – The Contrast between Wisdom and Folly

## **SECTION II – Individual Sayings of Solomon, Short Proverbs (Proverbs 10:1 – 22:16)**

**“A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother” (10: \_\_\_\_**

**“As a ring of gold in a swine’s snout, so is a lovely woman who lacks discretion” (11: \_\_\_\_**

**“He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly” (13: \_\_\_\_**

## **SECTION III – Sayings of the Old Wise Men before Solomon (Proverbs 22:17 – 24:34)**

**“Do not mix with winebibbers, or with gluttonous eaters of meat” (v. 23: \_\_\_\_**

## **SECTION IV – Proverbs of Solomon Written Down by Hezekiah’s Men (Proverbs 25:1 – 29:27)**

Some of the proverbs in this section are the same as those in Section II.

King Hezekiah lived around 700 BC and was a direct descendant of King Solomon.

## **SECTION V – The Words of the Wise Man Agur (Proverbs 30)**

This section is distinguished by references to animals: ants, rock badgers, locusts, spiders, etc.

**“Give me neither poverty nor riches...lest I be full...or lest I be poor” (vv. \_\_\_\_**

**“The eye that mocks his father, and scorns obedience to his mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out, and the young eagles will eat it” (v. \_\_\_\_**

## **SECTION VI – The Word of Lemuel, Including an Acrostic in Praise of the Good Wife (Proverbs 31)**

A warning against wine (1-7).

A plea for justice (8-9).

The virtuous woman (10-31).

**“Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised” (v. \_\_\_\_**

## The Book of ECCLESIASTES, or the Preacher

This book was written by a son of David who was king in Jerusalem. Most likely this Preacher was Solomon himself. It is likely that Solomon wrote these words in his old age to undo as much as possible the offense he had caused by his idolatry, and to warn others against the sins he had committed.

The main theme of Ecclesiastes is the vanity (worthlessness) of all of all earthly life that is lived **“under the sun”**, that is, without reference to God. It is foolish to become attached to the things of this world. Rather we should enjoy the pleasures of this earth as gifts from God and use them in the fear of God. **“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments... for God will bring every work into judgment”** (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Read as many chapters of Ecclesiastes as you can as you study the notes below. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

### Ecclesiastes 1 – The Vanity of All Earthly Things

Theme and introduction: **“Vanity of vanities, all is vanity”** (1-11).

The vanity of striving after earthly wisdom (12-18).

**“In much wisdom is much grief”** (v. \_\_\_\_ (Our proverb: Ignorance is bliss)

### Ecclesiastes 2 – The Vanity of Earthly Pleasures, Wisdom, and Labor

Earthly pleasures do not really satisfy (1-11).

Solomon tried: laughter, wine, constructing buildings, gardens, pursuing beauty, possessions, music, etc.

The wise man dies as does the fool (12-17).

All earthly labor perishes (18-26).

**“What has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart?”** (v. \_\_\_\_

### Ecclesiastes 3 – True Enjoyment Depends on Our Relationship to God

There is a time for everything (1-8).

We should enjoy what we have as a gift from God (9-15).

God will judge the righteous and the wicked at His own time (16-22).

**“The spirit of the sons of men...goes upward”** (v. \_\_\_\_ (but not the spirit of animals).

### Ecclesiastes 4 – The Vanity of Labor, Wealth, and High Office

**“There is no end to all his labors, nor is his eye satisfied with riches”** (v. \_\_\_\_

### Ecclesiastes 5 – The Vanity of Insincere Worship and Covetousness

Be careful in worshiping God and making vows before Him (1-7).

**“Draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools”** (v. \_\_\_\_

The greedy are never satisfied (8-17).

**“As he came from his mother’s womb, naked shall he return, to go as he came”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Enjoy earthly riches as the gift of God (18-20).

### Ecclesiastes 6 – Vanity, Vanity, Vanity

### Ecclesiastes 7 – The Value of Suffering and the Wisdom Learned through Suffering

Sorrow is better than laughter (1-10).

The wise man considers how things really are in this world (11-29).

**“There is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Ecclesiastes 8 – *The Earthly Authorities and the Almighty Judge of the Earth*

Earthly authorities are to be respected (1-8).

God is the ultimate Judge of all (9-17).

**“It will be well with those who fear God...but it will not be well with the wicked”** (vv. \_\_\_\_\_

Ecclesiastes 9 – *The Inevitability of Death*

**“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Ecclesiastes 10 – *The Big Difference between Wisdom and Foolishness*

Ecclesiastes 11 – *God Remains in Control*

**“You do not know the works of God who makes everything”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Ecclesiastes 12 – *Death Will Come, but That Is Not the End of It All*

**“Man goes to his eternal home... The dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it”** (vv. \_\_\_\_

### **Questions**

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1. What did the Queen of Sheba think about Solomon’s wisdom?
2. What was the source of Solomon’s wisdom?
3. How does chapter 3 of Proverbs emphasize the First Commandment?
4. How do Proverbs chapters 5 and 6 illustrate the Sixth Commandment?
5. What individual proverb in chapter 10 that has special meaning for you?
6. List two proverbs that speak about the training of children.
7. Which animals in chapter 30 are used to teach us useful things?
8. Name three words that summarize the virtuous woman of chapter 31 of Proverbs.
9. What is meant by the expression “under the sun” in Ecclesiastes?
10. List some verses in Ecclesiastes that speak about death.