

			suffering in this fallen world.
Dwelling/Temple	<p>Portrait of life on earth until heaven; a taste of “judgment” that is Fatherly discipline (1 Pet. 4:12-17)-</p> <p>Book of Job STRESSES THE “NOT YET”</p>	<p>Portrait of life on earth until heaven; a taste of heaven, that enjoys joy and courage even in suffering-</p> <p>Book of Proverbs STRESSES THE “ALREADY”</p>	<p>God with us/True Temple (Matthew 12: 6, 42).</p> <p>“Lady Wisdom” is made flesh in Ruth (Ruth 3:11; cf. Prov. 31:11ff); “Lady Wisdom” is “mother” of Wisdom Incarnate (John 1:14; Col. 2:3).</p> <p>Wisdom Incarnate, the Wise King and Righteous Sufferer makes man wise by His Holy Spirit.</p>

Book of Job

Purpose of Book: Suffering- - Why? Also: *Who is Wise?* and *Where is God?*

Outline: Reading Strategy: A play in five acts

- (1) Prologue (1-2)
- (2) Job’s dialogue with his “friends” (3-31)
- (3) Elihu’s Monologue (32-37)
- (4) God’s speech to Job (38-42:6)
- (5) Epilogue (42:7-17)

I. **Prologue** (1-2)- Takes us “behind the scenes” to see the Council of God. Important points: Job *is* righteous and blameless; Satan must request God’s permission for bringing about evil; Satan will attempt to make Job curse God (through both his wife and friends, those closest to him).

II. **Job's Dialogue with his "friends"** (3-31)- Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar are the representation of the wise men and their idea of a *retribution theology*: God blesses the righteous; he curses the wicked."

A. If Job is suffering, then he *must have* sinned against God (Read: 4:7-11; 11:13-20). IOW: If you sin, then you suffer. This is not true however! (John 9; cf. Job 1-2). God allows this to befall a righteous "son" (cf. Heb. 12:5-11).

B. Job's "friends" represent man's attempt at understanding all of God's counsel from their limited perspective, while God's wisdom remains aloof - -mysterious. God alone has the true answer for our sufferings (and sometimes it is silence).

C. Job's response- Read: Job 28:12-28- Job's "moment of clarity".

D. Job 30:20- back to depression (this reveals how all of our faith wavers when suffering is upon us).

III. **Elihu's Monologue** (32-37)- He is the youngest and has waited his turn to speak (as was the custom in the ANE). He comes to the same conclusion, ultimately Job is suffering because of his sinned (Read: Job 34:11, 25-27, 37). He makes a good point about suffering being chastisement, but in Job's situation this is not the case (cf. *Prologue*).

IV. **God's Speech/Explanation to Job** (38-42:6)

A. *Who* rather than *why* should be Job's question to himself when suffering. God answers Job by teaching Job from where true wisdom comes (38:1-3; 38:36-37; 39:14-18, 26)

B. Read: Job 42:5, 6

V. **Epilogue** (42:7-17)- Job's response of submission, repentance, and wisdom to the Sovereign God.

LESSONS

1. God alone is wise and takes care of all things justly and righteously in his world (Rom. 11:33-36). He is the Source of true wisdom.

2. Suffering is not necessarily a result of sin- John 9 (cause and effect has its place as a principle in life, but cause and effect are submitted to a Person: the Living God. He is not

subsumed under some mechanical, deterministic, cause and effect. And thus he remains God: mysterious and aloof, even as he reveals himself to us in Scripture (as he should be).

3. Proper response to God is submission and repentance regardless of circumstances.
4. When suffering ask not *Why* but remind yourself of *Whom* - -that is, God.
5. When helping other's with suffering, love them compassionately. Listen to them, encourage them - -but listen more than speaking!
6. Ultimately, God is glorified in the suffering of his faithful servants.

CHRIST-CENTERED APPLICATION

Jesus is the only true innocent sufferer- - the only one completely without sin. He voluntarily submits himself to suffering in order to glorify God and remedy the problem of suffering in the world by giving victory and everlasting life to his people over sin and death!

Jesus Christ was the only victim who was not also a victimizer.

Question often asked: "Why do bad things happen to good people?" Better question: "Why do good things happen at all to bad people?!"

God is our comfort in Christ!

Book of Proverbs

"True fear comes from faith; false fear comes from doubt. True fear is joined to hope because it is born of faith and because men hope in the God in whom they believe. False fear is born of despair because men fear the God in whom they have no belief." – Pascal, *Pensees*, 4.262

Memory Verses:

ESV Proverbs 3:1-7:

My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, 2 for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. 3 Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man. 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. 7 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

Very Important Lesson entering the Book of Proverbs: Do not be autonomous, that is, do not be "wise in your own eyes" (v. 7), rather trust in the LORD rather than self (vv. 5-6) no matter how things may seem and no matter what circumstances you experience in life.

Name of Book: *Liber Proverbiorum* from Latin Vulgate title; The Hebrew name of the book is *misle* which is the construct plural form of *masal* [lṿ'ṣ'ṣ'] which means “proverbs”:

^{ESV} **Proverbs 1:1** The proverbs [lṿ'ṣ'ṣ' n.m. *proverb, parable* (of sentences constructed in *parallelism, usu. of Hebrew Wisdom, but occas. of other types*) -- *proverbial saying, brief terse sentence of popular sagacity*;] of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel:

To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, 3 to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; 4 to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth- 5 Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, 6 to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles. 7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Canonicity: Proverbs is accepted as part of the Old Testament canon; it is God’s inspired, infallible Word of revelation for wisdom. There were a minority of rabbinical scholars who stumbled over what seemed to be an apparent contradiction in the Book of Proverbs found in Prov. 26:4-5:

ESV Proverbs 26:4-5: Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself. 5 Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.

Rabbis argued that since this appears to be a contradiction, and God does not contradict himself, therefore the book may not be God’s Word. This was a misunderstanding by the rabbis of the genre of the proverbs; namely, that proverbs are wise sayings from God that apply to differing situations that we face in a world of sin and misery.

From the 2nd century BC and during the time of Jesus, the Book of Proverbs has been accepted as God’s Word (canonical) by the majority of Jewish scholars (The Apostle Paul and James especially quote or make allusions to the Proverbs in their epistles affirming its canonicity: Prov. 1:16/ Rom. 3:15-17; Prov. 3:4/ Rom. 12:16; Prov. 8:15/ Rom. 13:1; Prov. 24:12/ Rom. 2:6; Prov. 2:3-6/ James 1:5; Prov. 10:12/ James 5:20 (if these aren’t exact “matches” or translations in English remember that Paul and James would have quoted the LXX (Septuagint). ***By the way, why is Proverbs 26:4-5 scriptural? Any answers on this?***

The Place of Proverbs in the Christian Canon: Following the LXX (Septuagint) Proverbs is tucked in with Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs because all have Solomon as the common author. In the Hebrew canon, Proverbs is in the third part of the TNK (“Tanak” is Torah, Nebuim, and Ketubim: Law, Prophets, and Writings). The “Writings” or third part of the TNK begins with Psalms, then Job, then Proverbs, with Ruth and Song of Songs following. It is important that Proverbs ends with a poem of a virtuous woman and is followed by Ruth, an example of this:

LXE Ruth 3:11 And now fear not, my daughter, whatever thou shalt say I will do to thee; for all the tribe of my people knows that thou art a virtuous woman.

Authorship: Proverbs 1:1: “The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel...”
Authored and produced by King Solomon, ca. 970-930 BC. This is consistent with the history of Solomon found in 1 Kings:

And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. 8 And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. 9 Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?" 10 It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. 11 And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, 12 behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. 13 I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. 14 And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."- 1 Kings 3:7-14

ESV 1 Kings 4:29-34: And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore, 30 so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. 31 For he was wiser than all other men, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol, and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. 32 He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. 33 He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish. 34 And people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.

In the Rabbinical writing *Midrash Rabbah* it speaks of Song of Songs, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes as belonging to three phases of Solomon’s life: “When a man is young he composes songs; when he grows older he makes sententious remarks; and when he becomes an old man he speaks of the vanity of things.” Although Solomon is the author and the produce of the Proverbs, it seems that like the Psalms it was written over a long period of time, and so was edited and collected before it was finally a closed book by the inspiration and work of the Holy Spirit (which is a mystery to us, but we must remember that inspiration extends beyond one author to include all that God has chosen to take part in the writing, editing, or collecting of a book of the Bible).

Outline of the Book for Study:

- Preamble- 1:1-7
- Extended Discourses on Wisdom- 1:8-9:18
- Solomonic Proverbs- 10:1-22:16; 25:1-29:27
- Sayings of the Wise- 22:17-24:34 (It seems these were sayings that all men made in God’s image wrote down and that the Word of God agreed with! Such wisdom comes from Egyptian, Sumerian, and Akkadian wisdom. It seems that wisdom literature as a genre seems to be the most widely shared genre among different peoples in the ancient Near East; cf with how Solomon is compared or contrasted to the Egyptians in 1 Kings 4:29-34 above; the wisdom of the other peoples is not necessarily criticized, but affirmed as true wisdom in some cases).

- Sayings of Agur- 30:1-33
- Sayings of King Lemuel- 31:1-9
- Poem of the Virtuous Woman- 31:10-31

Genre of the Book of Proverbs: Most pervasive genre is proverbs (chaps. 10-31). A proverb form is the most common in this book:

^{ESV} **Proverbs 10:4**

A slack hand causes poverty,
but the hand of the diligent makes rich.

Proverbs 10:4- Hebrew

hY"mir> -@k; hf,[o var"

ryvi[]T; ~yciWrx' dy:w>

^{ESV} **Proverbs 15:1**

A soft answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Proverbs 15:1

hm'xe byviy" %R:-hn< []m;

@a'-hl, []y: bc,[,-rb;d>W

But there are also genres of discourses as in chapters 1-9 (compare chaps. 1-9 with chaps. 10-31 for example). These discourses are like lessons from a father to a son (or teacher to a student which could also use the language “father and son”).

^{ESV} **Proverbs 2:1-3:** *My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, ² making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; ³ yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding...*

Similar Important Themes between Proverbs and other Ancient Near Eastern Writings:

- The Dangerous Woman: Proverbs 2:23-30
- The Wise and the Foolish: Proverbs 9 (Lady Wisdom and Dame Folly)

What does this teach us about similarities of people made in God’s image even though they are pagans and exchange the revelatory truth of God for a lie (cf. Rom. 1:18-32)?

The Theology of the Book of Proverbs:

- **The Fear of the Lord**- Proverbs 1:7: This should instruct us as an opening verse or “thesis statement” for all of the truth throughout the book. Wisdom is not merely learning principles or lessons throughout life (that can lead to vanity as we learned in *Ecclesiastes*). Wisdom is gained as we begin with a relationship to God our Creator through Jesus Christ, who reveals His grace and mercy as Covenant Lord, by His Spirit. There is no real wisdom apart from a relationship to the Living God, Maker of Heaven and Earth (cf. with larger OT context: Deut. 6:5; Josh. 24:14; Isa. 29:13- fear of the Lord → worship of the Lord).
- **Who is God?** The Transcendent One: Proverbs 5:21; 15:3, 11; 22:12, 22-23; 23:10-11; 24:12; 29:26. The Immanent One: Proverbs 14:31; 15:25; 17:5; 22:2, 22-23; 23:10-11.
- **Embracing Woman Wisdom**- 1:20-33; 8:1-9:6: Woman is a metaphor for wisdom in the Book of Proverbs. Woman Wisdom as a metaphor represents God’s wisdom, and even God Himself.

ESV Proverbs 8:22-29: "The LORD possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. 23 Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. 24 When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. 25 Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth, 26 before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world. 27 When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, 28 when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, 29 when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth..."

Old Testament Professor Tremper Longman III is helpful here when he comments: “...What would it mean to press the language [of Woman Wisdom] in detail as a literal description [of God]? Like all poetic metaphors (and personification is a type of metaphor), the language is not meant to be understood in that way. Part of the art of the interpretation is the uncertain process of coming to grips with how far the comparison may be taken. The major point of these verses [on Woman Wisdom in Proverbs] seems to be that Wisdom and Creation are inextricably bound. Thus, if one wants to know how the world works and thus to successfully navigate life, one had better know this woman, which is Yahweh’s wisdom and Yahweh himself” (*Proverbs*, Baker Comm. On the OT Wisdom and Psalms, pg. 59).

As Woman Wisdom represents YHWH’s wisdom and even YHWH himself, Dame Folly represents all of the false gods who counterfeit God’s purposes and twist the truth (gods such as Marduk, Asherah, Anat, Ishtar and Baal). How is this revealed in chapter 9? Compare the two “women”.

- **Life as a Path or Journey**- Prov. 1:10-15 and 2:12-15 (cf. Psalm 1): Path or journey implies an origin and destination. How are the two paths described in these passages?

We should also remember Jesus' wise words as Wisdom Incarnate (1 Cor. 1:30) and to be reminded that the ultimate destination for all men is eternal:

13 "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. 15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. –Matthew 7:13-20

- **Education of God's Wisdom begins in the Home-** Proverbs 4:1-9 (notice how the extended family is represented including grandfather, father and mother, and son). This is the transmission of the family's spiritual inheritance. Compare this with the way Moses taught the covenant people to study and disseminate the Law of God in the homes in Deuteronomy 6:7-9:

ESV Deuteronomy 6:7-9: You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Reading Proverbs with Ecclesiastes and Job:

The Books of Ecclesiastes and Job seem to serve a special and particular canonical function in the Hebrew Bible of helping us not to over read the Book of Proverbs in a world of sin and misery.

As OT Professor Bruce Waltke asks: ***"Does Proverbs promise too much?"*** The Book of Proverbs seems to promise that if you are a hard worker, then you will be wealthy; if you are lazy, you will be poor. It seems to promise that if you are righteous then you will be wise and live long, and if you are a fool, you will suffer and die. What does this mean in light of what we have learned from *Ecclesiastes* and the suffering we know of Job? Read the following passage and discuss in light of Proverbs:

ESV Ecclesiastes 7:15-18: In my vain life I have seen everything. There is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evildoing. 16 Be not overly righteous, and do not make yourself too wise. Why should you destroy yourself? 17 Be not overly wicked, neither be a fool. Why should you die before your time? 18 It is good that you should take hold of this, and from that withhold not your hand, for the one who fears God shall come out from both of them.

Reading Proverbs in Light of the New Testament:

ESV Luke 24:25-26: And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

ESV Luke 24:44-47: Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

As Jesus said, the Old Testament in its three divisions in Hebrew (Law, Prophets, and Writings-Psalms being representative here of the Writings because it was the first) revealed the end of the story.

How does the Book of Proverbs help us to understand the Person and Work of Jesus and how does it forecast the future with a foretaste of eschatological hope?

Jesus is the Ultimate Wise Man who lived a perfectly wise life loving God and His wisdom from his youth (Luke 2:40, 52).

Jesus was able from youth to understand the truth of wisdom and discuss it with some of the wisest scholars of his time (Luke 2:46-47).

Jesus taught with wisdom in his ministry (Mark 1:21-22; 6:2).

Jesus taught in parables which is a form of Wisdom Literature (Luke 8:1-15; Matthew 13).

Jesus told the people that Solomon in all his wisdom was not as great in wisdom as he:

ESV Luke 11:31 The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

“God made Christ to be wisdom itself” -1 Corinthians 1:30

“In Christ is hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” –Colossians 2:3

Jesus’ work of the Kingdom was the most profound and obvious expression of God’s Wisdom found in the Proverbs:

ESV Matthew 11:18-19: For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."

The rewards for righteous living and the wisdom of living in the fear of the Lord will be rewarded with “Well, done my good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your Master!” (Matthew 25:21).

SUMMARY TRUTHS OF BOTH WISDOM BOOKS:

Job/Proverbs call us to:

- 1. Listening well**
- 2. Reflection/Meditation**
- 3. Fear of the LORD**
- 4. Devotion**
- 5. Application**
- 6. All wisdom possible through union with Christ who is Wisdom Incarnate by His Holy Spirit.**

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