

A stitch in time...

saves nine

Too many cooks...

spoil the broth

He who hesitates...

is lost

Look before...

you leap

Many hands...

make light the work

Proverbs

Wisdom, Fear and Faith

Where does Proverbs fit in to the Old Testament?

The Old Testament is divided into three sections

- Law
- Prophets
- Writings

Three sections of literature

- Law – Pentateuch (Genesis to Deuteronomy)
- Prophets
 - Former Prophets – Historical books
 - Latter Prophets
 - Major prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezequiel
 - Minor Prophets – Book of the Twelve

The Writings

- Psalms
- Song of Songs

- Wisdom Literature
 - Job
 - Ecclesiastes
 - Proverbs

Proverbs says that if you honour God, everything will go well with you. Job and Ecclesiastes says, we tried it and it didn't work! (Derek Kidner)

Wisdom Literature

- Solomon (1:1)
- Sayings of the wise (22:17; 24:23)
- King Agur (chapter 30)
- King Lemuel (chapter 31)

Purpose

- ¹ The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:
- ² for attaining wisdom and discipline;
for understanding words of insight;
- ³ for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life,
doing what is right and just and fair;
- ⁴ for giving prudence to the simple,
knowledge and discretion to the young-
- ⁵ let the wise listen and add to their learning,
and let the discerning get guidance-
- ⁶ for understanding proverbs and parables,
the sayings and riddles of the wise.
- ⁷ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

The teaching of Proverbs is
almost completely ethical
rather than religious

Proverbs 1-9

- Encouragement to listen to wisdom
- Warning against ignoring wisdom
- Two women
 - Lady Folly or the adulterous woman
 - Lady Wisdom or the virtuous woman

What are the proverbs of Proverbs?

- The Hebrew word for “proverb” is also translated “oracle”; “parable” and “taunt” so they are not identical to our idea of a proverb.
- Therefore how do we interpret them?

Different types of
literature require
different ways of
interpretation

Literature types

- C U 2morrow 4 T dnt B L8
 - Text message
- Once upon a time
 - Fairy Story
- There once was a man from Bengal
 - Limerick

Tips for interpreting Proverbs

- Proverbs not promises
- General principles not all-embracing descriptions of reality
- Read a direction

Tips for interpreting Proverbs

Reading a direction

- What are the underlying set of values in this group of proverbs?
- Who is being addressed in the proverbs?
- Who is restrained by the proverbs?
- Who will benefit from the following of these proverbs?

Fear and Faith as keys to wisdom

- *Proverbs 1:7* – The **fear** of the **LORD** is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.
- *Proverbs 9:10* - The **fear** of the **LORD** is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
- *Proverbs 3:5-6* – **Trust** in the **LORD** with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.