

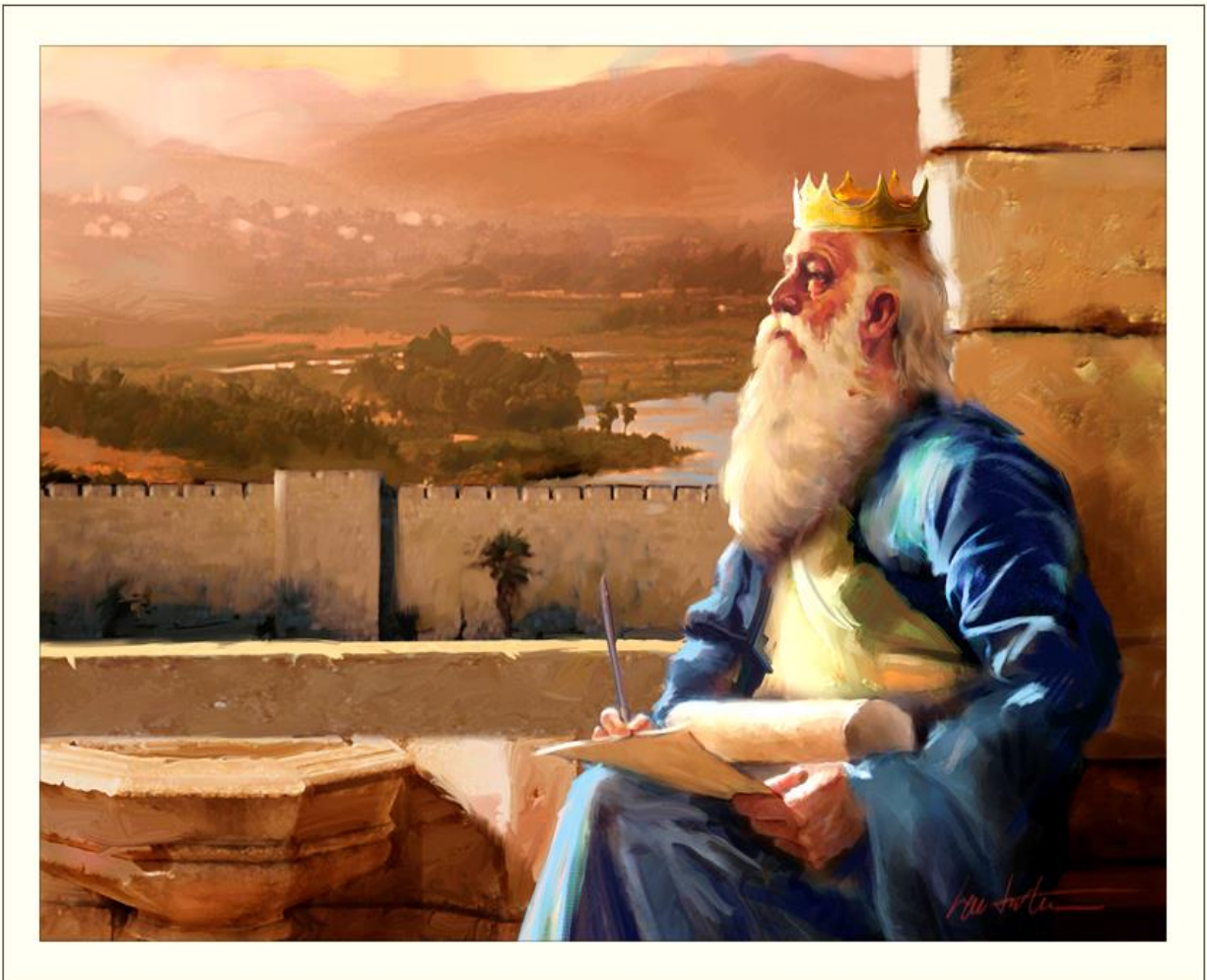
Author - STEVEN R. DOUGLAS 2017

THE HOLY BIBLE **NKJV** REFERENCE GUIDE

OLD TESTAMENT

BOOK 20

PROVERBS



King Solomon writes Proverbs

SUMMARY

King Solomon is the principal writer of Proverbs. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. Indeed, the Hebrew title Mishle Shelomoh is translated Proverbs of Solomon.

Solomon's proverbs were penned around 900 B.C. During his reign as king, the nation of Israel reached its pinnacle spiritually, politically, culturally, and economically. As Israel's reputation soared, so did King Solomon's. Foreign dignitaries from the far reaches of the known world traveled great distances to hear the wise monarch speak.

Knowledge is nothing more than an accumulation of raw facts, but wisdom is the ability to see people, events, and situations as God sees them. In the Book of Proverbs, Solomon reveals the mind of God in matters high and lofty and in common, ordinary, everyday situations, too.

It appears that no topic escaped King Solomon's attention. Matters pertaining to personal conduct, sexual relations, business, wealth, charity, ambition, discipline, debt, child-rearing, character, alcohol, politics, revenge, and godliness are among the many topics covered in this rich collection of wise sayings.

Summarizing the Book of Proverbs is a bit difficult, for unlike many other books of Scripture, there is no particular plot or storyline found in its pages; likewise, there are no principal characters in the book.

It is wisdom that takes center stage—a grand, divine wisdom that transcends the whole of history, peoples, and cultures. Even a perfunctory reading of this magnificent treasury reveals the pithy sayings of the wise King Solomon are as relevant today as they were some three thousand years ago.

There is an undeniable practicality found in this book, for sound and sensible answers to all manner of complex difficulties are found within its thirty-one chapters.

Certainly, Proverbs is the greatest "how-to" book ever written, and those who have the good sense to take Solomon's lessons to heart will quickly discover godliness, prosperity, and contentment are theirs for the asking.

The recurring promise of the Book of Proverbs is that those who choose wisdom and follow God will be blessed in numerous ways: with long life; prosperity; joy; and the goodness of God.

Those who reject Him, on the other hand, suffer shame and death. To reject God is to choose folly over wisdom and is to separate ourselves from God, His Word, His wisdom and His blessings.

Proverbs 1-9, Solomon addresses the young. His words are arranged in a series of discourses in praise of wisdom. A personification of Wisdom speaks as an instructor, warning against all manner of folly. The proverbs in this section are arranged with more continuity than is seen in succeeding chapters.

Proverbs 10-22:16 are the "proverbs of Solomon," and this section is usually thought to be the original nucleus around which the remainder of the book was constructed.

SUMMARY Continued

Proverbs 22:17-24 :22 contains advice for those in responsible positions, calling it "the words of the wise."

Proverbs 24:23-29 are designated as the proverbs of Solomon which the wise men of Hezekiah copied out. These are in the form of detached statements, although there are occasional signs of continuity. There are also sayings on related subjects such as rulers, sluggards and fools.

Proverbs 30, the sayings of Agur, and Proverbs 31, the great chapter on womanhood which purports to come from the mother of King Lemuel which was constructed in acrostic form, the verses beginning with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This last chapter completes this book of Hebrew wisdom.

NKJV SELECTED SCRIPTURE

- 3:1** My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands;
3:2 For length of days and long life And peace they will add to you.
3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;
3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.
3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil.
3:8 It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.
3:21 My son, let them not depart from your eyes-- Keep sound wisdom and discretion;
3:23 Then you will walk safely in your way, And your foot will not stumble.
3:24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid; Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet.
3:25 Do not be afraid of sudden terror, Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes;
3:26 For the Lord will be your confidence, And will keep your foot from being caught.
3:32 For the perverse person is an abomination to the Lord, But His secret counsel is with the upright.
3:33 The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the home of the just.
4:4 He also taught me, and said to me: "Let your heart retain my words; Keep my commands, and live.
4:5 Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth.
4:6 Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; Love her, and she will keep you.
4:14 Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not walk in the way of evil.
4:15 Avoid it, do not travel on it; Turn away from it and pass on.
4:16 For they do not sleep unless they have done evil; And their sleep is taken away unless they make someone fall.
4:24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put perverse lips far from you.
14:25 A true witness delivers souls, But a deceitful witness speaks lies.
15:3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, Keeping watch on the evil and the good.
15:29 The Lord is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.

NKJV SCRIPTURE Continued

- 15:33** The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is humility.
- 16:20** He who heeds the word wisely will find good, And whoever trusts in the Lord, happy is he.
- 17:10** Rebuke is more effective for a wise man Than a hundred blows on a fool.
- 17:20** He who has a deceitful heart finds no good, And he who has a perverse tongue falls into evil.
- 18:10** The name of the Lord is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.
- 18:21** Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.
- 19:11** The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, And his glory is to overlook a transgression.
- 19:14** Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the Lord.
- 19:17** He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, And He will pay back what he has given.
- 19:23** The fear of the Lord leads to life, And he who has it will abide in satisfaction; He will not be visited with evil.
- 20:1** Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.
- 20:7** The righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are blessed after him.
- 20:22** Do not say, "I will recompense evil"; Wait for the Lord, and He will save you.
- 21:3** To do righteousness and justice Is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.
- 21:19** Better to dwell in the wilderness, Than with a contentious and angry woman.
- 21:23** Whoever guards his mouth and tongue Keeps his soul from troubles.
- 22:4** By humility and the fear of the Lord Are riches and honor and life.
- 22:10** Cast out the scoffer, and contention will leave; Yes, strife and reproach will cease.
- 23:17** Do not let your heart envy sinners, But be zealous for the fear of the Lord all the day;
- 23:18** For surely there is a hereafter, And your hope will not be cut off.
- 23:20** Do not mix with winebibbers, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat;
- 23:21** For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags
- 23:22** Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.
- 28:9** One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer is an abomination.
- 28:14** Happy is the man who is always reverent, But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.
- 29:25** The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.
- 30:4** Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, If you know?

CHARACTER Definitions

SOLOMON - Solomon was the son of David who was chosen to build the Temple. His name comes from the Hebrew word for peace (shalom), and he is recognized in the Bible as the ultimate peacemaker King in the history of the kingdom of Israel.

The book of Proverbs not only names Solomon as the author in the very first verse, but there are other verses that indicate that Solomon was the person responsible for the Proverbs.

The book of Kings indicates that Solomon was blessed with wisdom from God, he was a man of humility, and a great diplomat; to such an extent that people came from all over the world to hear his wisdom. The book of Kings also indicates that Solomon wrote over 3000 proverbs, and this is many more than the book of Proverbs contains.

David had chosen Solomon to sit upon the throne of Israel and serve the Lord. After Solomon had removed his enemies, he allied with the Pharaoh of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter to be his wife.

Solomon had thought intensely about his task to build a house for the Lord, the Temple in Jerusalem. He went to offer sacrifices to the Lord at Gibeon and that night the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying ask what you will and I will give it to you and Solomon said you have shown great mercy to your servant David, my father, even as he walked before you in truth and justice and with an upright heart.

You have continued your great mercy toward him and given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is today. And now, O Lord God, you have made your servant King succeeding David, my father. I am but a child and know not how to act.

You have chosen me to be king over so many that they cannot be counted. Give me, therefore, an understanding heart, to judge your people and to discern between good and evil.

The Lord was pleased with Solomon's request and said, because you have not asked for long life or riches, nor for the death of your enemies, but have asked wisdom for yourself to discern what is right, I have done for you as you asked, and have given you a wise and understanding heart, so much so that you are unlike anyone before you, nor shall there be anyone like you after.

Yes, and the things also which you did not ask, I have given you: that is, riches and glory, so that you are incomparable with all previous kings. And if you will walk in my ways, and keep my precepts and my commandments, as your father, I will lengthen your life.

AGUR - Most commentators believe Agur lived in the same era as Solomon. We don't know much about Agur except what we can glean from this one chapter.

The name Agur comes from a Hebrew word meaning "collector." Agur and Jakeh are only mentioned here in the Bible and are otherwise unknown.

Agur's proverbs offer insight regarding his thoughts on life. Agur was weary and worn out, he did not consider himself wise, and he considered God's words completely true.

CHARACTERS Continued

In Proverbs 30 Agur expresses to God a request that the Lord remove lying from him and give him neither riches nor poverty.

Agur's teachings include a warning not to slander servants and an observation that many people see themselves as better than they really are. Agur then begins a numbered list of sayings that includes three things never satisfied the barren womb, the land's need for water, and the end of a fire. Verse 17 adds that the person who mocks his parents will experience judgment.

Verses 18–19 list four things beyond Agur's understanding: an eagle in the sky, a serpent on a rock, a ship on the seas, and a man with a woman.

In verses 21–23 is a list of four things that cause the earth to tremble: a slave who becomes king, a well-fed fool, an unloved married woman, and a servant who replaces the wife in the household.

Verses 24–28 note four small things that are very wise: ants, rock badgers, locusts, and lizards. Verses 29–31 specify four proud things: a lion, a rooster, a goat, and a king with his army. Verses 32–33 advise that, if you have been foolish in exalting yourself, you need to stop; also, prodding someone to anger is unwise.

These simple yet profound observations on life reveal many aspects of this otherwise unknown man named Agur. For example, Agur realized God's wisdom was greater than his own. He understood the temptation of riches. He knew many aspects of life and of God's creation would remain a mystery beyond his understanding.

And Agur knew the importance of controlling anger, avoiding foolishness, and living for God. He encourages his readers to refrain from a life that dishonors God and results in judgment. Rather, Agur promotes living life with a proper fear of God and concern for other people.

KING LEMUEL - King Lemuel is mentioned as the author of Proverbs 31, at least of the first nine verses. Proverbs 31:1 introduces this section: The sayings of King Lemuel—an inspired utterance his mother taught him.

So, as Lemuel was growing up, his mother gave him sage advice, which he later arranged in poetic form and recorded for the ages. The whole process was supervised by the Holy Spirit, and the result was an inspired utterance.

We don't know much about King Lemuel, other than what is revealed in Proverbs 31. The name Lemuel means "for God" or "devoted to God." Based on the one passage attributed to Lemuel, we know that Lemuel was a king, he had a wise mother, and he wrote some poetry.

Many commentators have surmised that Lemuel is actually King Solomon—in which case the mother would be Bathsheba. It could be that Lemuel was a pet name for Solomon, used by his mother in tender address, and that Solomon wrote down her advice in the manner she would have expressed it.

CHARACTERS Continued

Another theory is that Lemuel is actually King Hezekiah. A third theory is that Lemuel and his mother are fictional characters created by Solomon as a picture of an ideal king and queen mother.

The counsel from King Lemuel's mother is good advice for any leader of men. She warns Lemuel not to fall into the trap of immorality; chasing after women will sap a king's strength. Then she warns her son against the dangers of alcohol; a drunken king is never a good king. A ruler who craves beer and wine will pervert justice and act lawlessly.

Finally, King Lemuel's mother instructs her son about the necessity of true justice: Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. May the Lord grant us many rulers like King Lemuel who heed this advice of a queen mother on ruling well.

BIBLE TIMELINE

950 BC	The Proverbs of Solomon	Proverbs 1 - 29
950 BC	The Words of Agur	Proverbs 30
950 BC	King Lemuel's Proverb	Proverbs 31

MAP REFERENCES

