

# SOLOMON'S WRITINGS

## Week 17: United Kingdom: Solomon— Proverbs, Poetry & Prose (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs)

Love. Wisdom. Purpose. Whether king or pauper, these three topics have been the contemplation of many. King Solomon, considered to be the wisest man of his day, addressed these three topics. Jewish tradition has it that Solomon wrote the Song of Songs (love) in his youth; Proverbs (wisdom) while he was in his prime; and Ecclesiastes (purpose) after he had grown weary of this world.

### Week Seventeen Reading Plan

Prov. 1:1-7; 2:1-22	The Importance of Wisdom
Prov. 3:1-35	Wise Advice
Prov. 20:1-21:31	A Collection of Proverbs
Prov. 31:10-31	Lady Wisdom
Eccl. 1:1-3:17	A Time for Everything
Eccl. 11:7-12:14	Remember Your Creator
Song 1:1-2:17	In Praise of Love

Chapter  
1

# PROVERBS – *Wisdom*

Chapter  
31

The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom (1:7; 9:10)

537 Proverbs in 3 Collections													
<i>Purpose: Choose Wisdom</i>		<i>A Father's Exhortations</i>			<i>375 Observations by Solomon</i>		<i>36 "Sayings of the Wise"</i>		<i>126 Proverbs collected by Hezekiah</i>		<i>Proverbs of Agur</i>		<i>Wisdom as a virtuous woman</i>
1:1-7	1:8	9:18	10	22:16	22:17	24	25	29	30	30	31	31	CHAPTERS
Wisdom especially for youth			Wisdom for all										} TOPICS
Person of Wisdom			Principles of Wise Living						Practice of Wisdom				
Subjects & Statements			People & Problems				Counseling & Correction						
Wisdom is the skill of living consistent with the character of God.													} STYLE
A book filled with short statements that declare a profound truth providing wisdom for life.													
Judah										Unknown			PLACE
971-931BC Solomon's reign						729-686BC Hezekiah's reign						TIME	

Proverbs' first nine chapters encourage Solomon's son to pursue "lady wisdom" and to avoid the "foolish woman." Chapters 10-30 follow with emphasis on basic themes of humility vs. pride, integrity vs. deceitfulness, hard work vs. dishonest gain, good-heartedness vs. wickedness, carefulness vs. rashness, encouragement vs. gossip, and peacemakers vs. troublemakers. The last chapter summarizes Proverbs by returning to the imagery of a virtuous woman personifying Wisdom.

While the love story contained in the Song of Songs seems rather easy to *read*, it is generally considered the hardest book in the Bible to *understand*. While the straightforward story tells of the romantic love between a man and a woman who are celebrating courtship and consummation, the purpose of the book itself has been interpreted in hundreds of ways. The five most common ways can be broken down into two historical narratives, two allegorical applications and one instructional manual:

<p><b>Literal Historical:</b> Considered a dedication from Solomon to the first of his many wives, before he got entangled in polygamy. Only one main male character in the story.</p>	<p><b>Literal Historical:</b> King Solomon attempts to woo a young maiden who is in love with a shepherd to whom she is faithful. She does not yield to the advances of Solomon. Two male characters in the drama.</p>	<p><b>Allegorical:</b> Historically, especially among the Jews, it is interpreted as an allegory concerning Yahweh’s faithful relationship with the nation of Israel.</p>	<p><b>Allegorical:</b> A Christian view is that it represents the love of Christ for the Church, with Solomon (or the shepherd-lover) serving as a type of Christ and the Shulamite woman as a type of the church.</p>	<p><b>Instructional:</b> The book can be seen as an encouragement to true love and purity within the bonds of matrimony. An instructional manual for intimate relationships within marriage.</p>
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At any rate, no matter which view one holds, the Song of Songs seems to be at the heart of the Bible. It describes a passion that God seems to liken to the strength of His love toward His people. It’s a book worth reveling in!

## The Search for Meaning

