

INTERACTIVE TRAVEL GUIDE

DESTINATION: *Proverbs 1-31*

The Book of Proverbs is part of the “wisdom literature,” with Job & Ecclesiastes. It is one of the most read books of the Old Testament. It is also one of the most practical, as it deals with wisdom as we need it in our everyday lives. Proverbs contains more than 900 wise sayings by King Solomon and other authors. Throughout Proverbs we can find clusters of wisdom presented as the lessons of a teacher to his students pitting virtue against vice. Examples are wisdom and folly, justice and vengeance, poverty and wealth, friends and neighbors, love and lust, life and death, pride and humility, what God loves and what He hates.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

931 B.C.
Solomon's Proverbs completed

715-686 B.C.
Chapters 25-29 collected by Hezekiah

TRIP PLANNER:

The Book of Proverbs is more than just good advice or tips. It is God's words of wisdom that we need in order to live righteously. These Proverbs are universal principles that apply to all people for all times, because they speak of the character of God and the nature of man -- neither of which has changed.

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.

Proverbs can be divided into three parts.

1. Commendation of Wisdom 1:1-7
2. Counsel of Wisdom 1:8-29:27
3. Comparisons of Wisdom 30:1-31:31

KEY VERSES:

Proverbs 1:5 - "A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel."

Proverbs 1:7 - "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Proverbs 4:5 - "Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth."

Proverbs 8:13,14 - "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength."

PLACES OF INTEREST:

Israel - The land God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - and to David and his throne forever. At the time of Solomon, the kingdom of Israel had not yet divided. It is here where Solomon wrote his wise sayings. It is also the central location of all prophecy.

Sheol - In Hebrew it means "The abode of the dead." Sheol was where the dead went to rest, both the righteous and unrighteous. It was separated into two compartments. One was a place of torment (Hades) and the other a place of comfort (Abraham's Bosom).

Judah - Proverbs 25 begins the proverbs of Solomon compiled by King Hezekiah of Judah, which was the Southern Kingdom after Israel was divided. Judah was the home of two of the twelve tribes, Judah and Benjamin, as well as the home of the city of God, Jerusalem.

PEOPLE OF INTEREST:

Solomon - The son of David and Bathsheba, and the third king of Israel, but the last to rule the Unified Kingdom. Solomon reigned over Israel for forty years, during which time he wrote more than 900 proverbs. He was also referred to as Jedidiah which means “beloved of the Lord.”

Hezekiah - The son of Ahaz, and one of the greatest kings to reign upon the throne of Judah. It was Hezekiah who prayed to the Lord to extend his life, and he was granted fifteen more years. Chapter 25 of Proverbs tells us it was Hezekiah who compiled the writings of Solomon and added Proverbs 25-29 to the book.

Agur - The son of Jakeh. Agur was the author of the 30th chapter of Proverbs. Some speculate that this may have been Solomon himself.

King Lemuel - The author of the 31st and final chapter of Proverbs. There is much debate as to the identity of this mysterious king. Some have suggested that it is Solomon, while others assert it is Hezekiah. Yet others believe it to be a fanciful title to represent any virtuous king.

FUN FACTS:

31 Proverbs - It is an interesting fact that Proverbs contains 31 chapters, and the longest months in our calendar have 31 days. There are many people who have formed the habit of reading one chapter for every day of the month. “A Proverb a day will keep the Devil away.”

Solomon - According to 1 Kings 4:32 Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs and wrote 1,005 songs. However, only 800 of those proverbs appear in the collection that makes up the Book of Proverbs. Solomon also authored Ecclesiastes and The Song of Solomon.

Christ in the Proverbs - In chapter 8, wisdom is personified and seen in its perfection. It is divine, the source of biological and spiritual life; it is righteous and moral and available to all who receive it. Colossians 2:3 states of Christ Jesus: “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

Proverb Defined - A proverb is a short, pithy saying that usually draws a comparison between two forms of behavior in order to impart moral or religious wisdom to its receiver. The sayings in Proverbs are often addressed to young people, who are in the process of becoming wise. It is likely that the Book of Proverbs formed part of the education for Hebrew youth after the Israelite exile and return to the promised land.

Benefits of Wisdom - Wisdom notes, "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work . . . Then I was beside him, like a master worker" (8:22-30). Wisdom also affirms, "For whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord" (8:35). Wisdom is the source of life, a helper in creation, and a mediator between God and humankind. By assigning Wisdom a feminine quality, Proverbs suggests that femininity, in addition to masculinity, should be an important way in which we think about the order of the world.

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