

Lesson 6: Wisdom



Old Testament

New Testament

Where in the Bible?

The Book of Proverbs is near the very center of the Bible.

The Old Testament: The Writings

Throughout the Old Testament you can find instances of poetry, proverbs, and songs. But there are some books in the Bible written entirely in this style. In addition to the Law and the Prophets, the Jewish people referred to this third category of books in the Bible as “the Writings.”

Biblical Genre: Wisdom & Poetry

The Bible is honest in reflecting the real-life experience of faith in our lives — both good times and bad. The people of Scripture were not so different from us; they experienced joy as well as pain, happiness as well as hardship.

In the writings of Scripture we find the thoughts and prayers of God’s people who were facing situations common to us all. God gives us these words to read and speak to express our own faith in the many different circumstances in which we may find ourselves.

Introduction

All of Scripture is given to “make us wise for salvation” (2 Timothy 3:15). But there are a number of books in Scripture specifically dedicated to passing on words of wisdom. One of these is the Book of Proverbs, which contains common sense advice for daily living.

Read: Proverbs 1:1-19

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

When in Time?

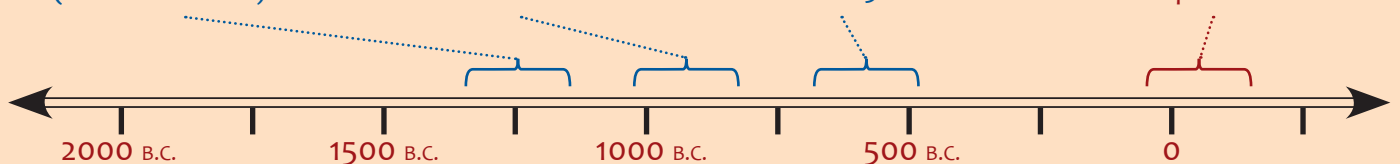
The Bible was not written all at one time, or by the pen of a single person — it was written over the course of several hundred years as God spoke through many people over time:

The first small pieces of the Bible were written at the time of Moses, around 1200 B.C. (“Before Christ”).

The first major section of the Old Testament was written at the time of King David, around 1000 B.C.

A second large section of the Old Testament was written at the time of the Major Prophets, around 500 B.C.

The New Testament was written during the 20-80 years after Jesus’ ministry, at the time of the Apostle Paul.



Discuss: Proverbs 1:1-19

1. Many proverbs in this book are attributed to King Solomon. How, or from where, did Solomon get his great wisdom? (See 2 Chronicles 1:7-13.)
2. What are the many different words in verses 2-6 that refer to mental or intellectual ability, or the act of communicating this to others?
3. In verse 7, what do you think is meant by “the fear of the LORD”? What does this have to do with wisdom and knowledge?
4. What metaphors are used in verse 9 to refer to a parent’s guidance? What would it mean to “wear” good sense at all times? In what sense is wisdom something that no one can take away from us?
5. What particular temptation does the father warn his son about in verses 10-19? What sort of advice should we *not* listen to? How can we tell the difference between good advice and bad advice?
6. What does the Bible say that a life of crime leads to? Even if others convince us to do something wrong, how are we responsible to God for our own actions?
7. Read: 1 Corinthians 1:20-25. In your own words, how would you describe the difference between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world? In what sense has God “made foolish the wisdom of the world”? Why?
8. Why does the crucifixion of Jesus seem foolish to the world? What does faith reveal to us that human reason cannot?



Christians commonly refer to the Hebrew Scriptures as the **Old Testament**.

Jewish believers refer to their Scriptures as the **Tanak**. The word Tanak is an acronym formed from the initials for the three major sections of the Hebrew Scriptures:

T = Torah (the Law)

N = Nivi'im (the Prophets)

K = Khetuvim (the Writings)

While the Hebrew Scriptures recognized by Jews and Christians are practically the same, they are ordered, grouped, and numbered differently in printed volumes.

The Book of Psalms is a great collection of Hebrew hymns, poetry and prayers, expressing the varied emotions of joy, sadness, anger, and guilt — as well as a genuine trust and praise toward God.

The Book of Proverbs is a collection of wise sayings and good advice, reminding people to do the right thing and not be foolish.

The Book of Job is the story of a man who suffered much under the devil’s temptation, but God remained faithful to Job to the end.

The Book of Ecclesiastes contains the reflections of a wise man who was honest about the struggles of life and faith.

The Song of Songs (also known as the Song of Solomon) is a love poem between a man and a woman. It symbolizes God’s faithful and loving relationship with us as his people.