

THE WISDOM BEHIND PROVERBS

By Dr. Gary M. Gulan, ©1986 (Rev. 96)

Lesson #2

1 Kings 3:

Introduction: People in the Middle-East, like the Jews, taught practical lessons on living through figures of speech such as a proverb. The book of Proverbs is a book of wisdom. Proverbs are designed to convey "wisdom." Since wisdom is a key term in the book of Proverbs, what is "wisdom?" It is the application of knowledge.

1. THE STORY OF WISDOM (1 Kings 3)(Who was the wisest man apart from Jesus Christ?)
Solomon is recorded in the Bible as a man with God-given wisdom.

A. Why did God grant Solomon a special request? (1 Kings 3:5)

Solomon was building God's temple (3:1-2). Solomon loved the Lord, (3:3). Solomon walked in God's statutes. Solomon sacrificed and was not lax.

B. What made a great impact upon Solomon which helped in his decision? (1 Kings 3:6)

The way God dealt with his father, David, which was in truth, righteousness, and uprightness.

C. What was Solomon request? (1 Kings 3:9)

Solomon wanted understanding, a heart to guide God's people, and an ability to discern between good and evil.

D. What didn't Solomon request? (1 Kings 3:11)

He didn't ask for a long life. He didn't ask for riches. He didn't want his enemies killed.

E. Why did Solomon make the request he did? (1 Kings 3:7)

He mentioned the "little children" (youth and inexperience) and the great amount of people, (3:8).

F. What did God grant Solomon? (1 Kings 3:12)

God gave him a wise and understanding heart.

F. What did God do for Solomon besides granting his request? (1 Kings 3:13-14)

God gave him riches, honor, and long life. If he walked in God's ways and kept God's statutes

2. THE SABOTAGING OF WISDOM (What can short circuit wisdom?)

Solomon was given "wisdom" yet something happened to his life which affected his wisdom.

A. What was Solomon's assessment of having wisdom? (Ecclesiastes 1:16-18)

Wisdom causes grief and increased knowledge causes sorrow. Ignorance really is bliss.

B. What happened to Solomon's life? (1 Kings 11:1-8)

He disobeyed God, (11:2). He allowed his heart to turn away from God, (11:3-4). He had 700 wives and 300 concubines. He did evil in the Lord's sight, (11:6). He worshipped other God's (11:4,7-8). His heart was not perfect, (11:6).

C. How could this happen to the man who was given the gift of wisdom?

He made bad choices. He found wisdom does work when involved with sin.

D. In spite of problems, what did Solomon do with his wisdom? (Ecc. 12:9-10; Prov. 22:20)

God used Solomon's life to shape him into a useable tool.

3. THE SAMPLES OF WISDOM (What is a proverb?)

There are at least four different descriptions used of the "wisdom" in the book of Proverbs.

A. Proverbs 1:1,6 = a "proverb" (Hebrew "masal") meaning "a saying"

B. Proverbs 1:6 = the "interpretation" (Hebrew "melisah") meaning "a parable"

C. Proverbs 1:6 = "words of the wise" meaning "wise words"

D. Proverbs 1:6 = "dark sayings" (Hebrew "hidot") meaning "obscure or indirect statements"

A "proverb" is an object lesson based on or using some comparison or analogy.

(Proverbs by Allen P. Ross, in Vol. 5 of The Expositor's Bible Commentary, page 903)

The English word "proverb" is made-up of two Latin words "pro" meaning "instead of" and "verba" meaning "word." Thus, a proverb is literally a sentence that is "instead of many words."

A proverb is a short statement that summarizes a wise principle through comparisons and contrasts.

("Proverbs" Whole Bible Study Course by D. B. Eastep, in Expository Outlines on the Old Testament by Warren W. Wiersbe, Calvary Book Room, Covington, Kentucky, 1976)

4. THE SOURCE OF WISDOM (Where does wisdom originate?)

There are two sources of wisdom listed in Scripture.

A. Source #1: From where does "godly" wisdom come?

Proverbs 2:6 = the Lord gives wisdom

James 3:17 = wisdom is from above

Colossians 2:3 = in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge

B. Source #2: From where does "ungodly" wisdom (foolishness or wickedness) come?

James 3:15-16 = descendeth not from above, earthly, sensual, demonic

1 Corinthians 3:19 = wisdom of the world

Colossians 2:8 = after the world and not after Christ

Conclusion: Much can be learned today from the life of Solomon and the books he wrote.