



*Proverbs
&
Ecclesiastes*

Quiet Time Guide
July 4 - August 30, 2024

Proverbs

Some Bible scholars have noted that there is a change of pronoun in the Book of Proverbs from the second person to the third person. The conclusion of these scholars was that the proverbs which used the second person were taught to Solomon by his teachers, and the proverbs using the third person were composed by Solomon himself.

There are some characteristics and features of the Book of Proverbs that I think we should note:

1. Proverbs bears no unscientific statement or inaccurate observation. For example, “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” (Proverbs 4:23). This is a remarkable statement, because it was about 2,700 years later that Harvey found that the blood circulates and that the heart is the pump. It is wonderful and extraordinary that this is an ancient book containing hundreds of proverbs and not one of them is unscientific today. That in itself ought to alert any thinking person to the fact that the Book of Proverbs is God-inspired.
2. Proverbs is a book on a high moral plane. You simply will not find in its pages the immoral sayings which occur in other writings. As an example, Socrates gave instructions to harlots on how to conduct themselves! The best that can be said of Socrates is that he was amoral.
3. The Proverbs do not contradict themselves, while man’s proverbs are often in opposition to each other. For example: “Look before you leap” contrasted with “He who hesitates is lost.” “A man gets no more than he pays for” contrasted with “The best things in life are free.” “Leave well enough alone” has over against it, “Progress never stands still.” “A rolling stone gathers no moss” versus “A setting hen does not get fat.” The proverbs of man contradict each other, because men’s ideas differ. There is no contradiction in the Book of Proverbs because it is inspired by God.
4. Proverbs should be considered “general probabilities” not promises. “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from them.” This is a general probability but not a universal promise. Proverbs treated as promises can lead to disillusionment.

The Book of Proverbs tells a story, which we will notice as we go along. It is a picture of a young man starting out in life. He gets his first lesson in Proverbs 1:7, which is the key to the book. The advice that is given in the Book of Proverbs transcends all dispensations. Whether one lives in Old Testament or New Testament times, old Jerusalem or new Jerusalem, its truths are still true. It is a good book for anyone.

Some may raise this objection: “There is nothing in it about the gospel.” Just wait a minute, it is there. The One in this book whose wisdom it is, is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. The book is not a hodgepodge of unrelated statements, nor is it a discourse of cabbages and kings. It is a book that makes sense, and it does have an arrangement and an organization.

Here is something that will or may make the Book of Proverbs a thrilling experience for you: There is in Proverbs a thumbnail sketch of every character in the Bible. I am sure you will enjoy finding them. Also, I believe you will find there is a proverb that will fit all your friends and acquaintances. There is a proverb that will fit every one of us, and you - we can have a good time going through this book.

Ecclesiastes

Solomon is the writer. This fact is very well established among conservative expositors, and there is no other reasonable explanation for the book.

You - We will find Ecclesiastes to be quite different from the Book of Proverbs. In Proverbs we saw the wisdom of Solomon; here we shall see the foolishness of Solomon. Ecclesiastes is the dramatic autobiography of Solomon's life when he was away from God. Ecclesiastes indicates a preacher or philosopher. I rather like the term philosopher because it is less likely to be misunderstood.

To correctly understand any book of the Bible, it is important to know the purpose for which it was written. We need to back off and get a perspective of this book. The book of Ecclesiastes is human philosophy apart from God. We need to understand this about Ecclesiastes, because there are many statements which seem to contradict certain other statements of Scripture. This book has been the favorite of atheists, and they have quoted from it profusely. Voltaire is an example. Today we find the cynic and the critic are apt to quote from this book. And it is quite interesting to note the number of cults that use passages from this book out of context and give them an entirely wrong meaning. ***Man has tried to be happy without God;*** it is being tried every day by millions of people. ***This book shows the absurdity of the attempt.***

Solomon was the wisest of men, and he had a wisdom that was God-given. He tried every field of endeavor and pleasure that was known to man, and his conclusion was that all is vanity. The word vanity means "empty, purposeless or temporary." Satisfaction in life can never be attained in this manner. In Ecclesiastes God showed Solomon, the wisest man, that he was a fool in God's sight. This is a book from which a great many professors, Ph.D.'s and Th.D.'s, and preachers could learn a great lesson. In spite of all their wisdom, in spite of all attempts at being intellectual, unregenerate men in the sight of God are fools. That is something that is hard to swallow for those who put an emphasis upon their IQ and the amount of knowledge and information that they have accumulated.

In Ecclesiastes we learn that without Christ we cannot be satisfied - even if we possess the whole world and all the things that men consider necessary to make their hearts content. The world cannot satisfy the heart. In the Song of Solomon we will learn that if we turn from the world and set our affections on Christ, we cannot fathom the infinite preciousness of His love.

The key word in Ecclesiastes is "vanity," which occurs thirty-seven times. Try replacing the word "vanity" with "temporary" or "meaningless" and you will often gain better insight. The key phrase is "under the sun," which occurs twenty-nine times. Solomon is living life under the sun, considering nothing above and beyond the sun. In other words, this is life without the consideration of God. Another phrase which recurs is "I said in mine heart." In other words, this book contains the cogitations or meditations of man's heart. These are conclusions which men have reached through their own intelligence, their own experiments. Although Solomon's conclusions are not inspired, the Scripture that tells us about them is inspired. This is the reason for Solomon's explanatory: "I said in mine heart," "under the sun," and "vanity."

Quiet Time Text on next page.

QUIET TIME TEXT

Week 1 **Scripture Reading**

- 4-Jul Proverbs 1
- 5-Jul Proverbs 2

Week 2 **Scripture Reading**

- 8-Jul Proverbs 3
- 9-Jul Proverbs 4
- 10-Jul Proverbs 5
- 11-Jul Proverbs 6
- 12-Jul Proverbs 7

Week 3 **Scripture Reading**

- 15-Jul Proverbs 8
- 16-Jul Proverbs 9
- 17-Jul Proverbs 10
- 18-Jul Proverbs 11
- 19-Jul Proverbs 12

Week 4 **Scripture Reading**

- 22-Jul Proverbs 13
- 23-Jul Proverbs 14
- 24-Jul Proverbs 15
- 25-Jul Proverbs 16
- 26-Jul Proverbs 17

Week 5 **Scripture Reading**

- 29-Jul Proverbs 18
- 30-Jul Proverbs 19
- 31-Jul Proverbs 20
- Aug 1 Proverbs 21

Week 6 **Scripture Reading**

- 5-Aug Proverbs 23
- 6-Aug Proverbs 24
- 7-Aug Proverbs 25
- 8-Aug Proverbs 26
- 9-Aug Proverbs 27

Week 7 **Scripture Reading**

- 12-Aug Proverbs 28
- 13-Aug Proverbs 29
- 14-Aug Proverbs 30
- 15-Aug Proverbs 31
- 16-Aug Ecclesiastes 1

Week 8 **Scripture Reading**

- 19-Aug Ecclesiastes 2
- 20-Aug Ecclesiastes 3-4
- 21-Aug Ecclesiastes 5
- 22-Aug Ecclesiastes 6
- 23-Aug Ecclesiastes 7

Week 9 **Scripture Reading**

- 26-Aug Ecclesiastes 8
- 27-Aug Ecclesiastes 9
- 28-Aug Ecclesiastes 10
- 29-Aug Ecclesiastes 11
- 30-Aug Ecclesiastes 12

