

PROVERBS 1:1-7

1. PROVERBS

- Proverbs are a form of biblical knowledge, and a pretty common one found throughout the Bible.
- They can best be described as object lessons based on or using comparison or analogy.

1. PROVERBS

- Something is like something else (cf. Ps 49:12).
- In the Old Testament, however, the word “proverb” may be synonymous with an extended parable (Ezek 17:2-24; 20:45-49 45-49; 24:3-14).

1. PROVERBS

- It may refer to an extended didactic discourse (Prov 1:8-19).
- They may be short statements of truth (Ezek 16:44), object lessons drawn from experience (Ps 78:2-6), common examples (Deut 28:37), or oracles of future blessings or curses (Ezek 21:1-5).

1. PROVERBS

- The parables of Jesus can be considered proverbs in this sense.

2. WISDOM

- The usages of “wisdom” cover the whole gamut of human experience.
- Wisdom is seen in the skill of technical work in making garments for the high priest (Exo 28:3), craftsmanship in metal work (Exo 31:3, 6), as well as the execution of battle tactics (Isa 10:13).

2. WISDOM

- Wisdom is required from government leaders and heads of state for administration (Deut 34:9; 2 Sam 14:20), including pagan leaders as well as Israelites (Ezek 28:5).

2. WISDOM

- The Messiah demonstrates wisdom and discernment in his function as leader of his people (Isa 11:2).
- The source of all wisdom is a personal God who is holy, righteous, and just.

2. WISDOM

- His wisdom is expressed against the background of his omnipotence and omniscience.
- Wisdom, being found in God, is regarded as a divine attribute (Job 12:13).

2. WISDOM

- He alone knows wisdom in its truest sense (Job 28:20, 23).
- Wisdom should not be regarded as God but it does belong to God; it is one of his attributes.

2. WISDOM

- Wisdom for people is not only to make one humanly wise, but also to lead them to fear the Lord, for this is the beginning of all wisdom (Job 28:28).
- Skeptics will never find this wisdom and will never know the full meaning of life (Prov 14:6ff).

3. INSTRUCTION

- From the usage and parallels in the OT, one must conclude that “instruction/discipline” denotes correction which results in education.

3. INSTRUCTION

- The words for “instruction” are found almost ninety times; nine times in the Pentateuch, twenty-six times in the prophets, and fifty times in the wisdom literature (thirty-six of these in Proverbs).

3. INSTRUCTION

- Key to an understanding of “instruction” is Deut 11:2ff., “Consider the discipline of the Lord your God, his greatness,... his signs and his deeds which he did in Egypt to Pharaoh..., and what he did to the army of Egypt..., and what he did for you in the wilderness.”

3. INSTRUCTION

- In short, the instruction of Yahweh is his mighty activity in covenant history by which he reveals himself (cf. v. 7 with Deut 4:35ff).

3. INSTRUCTION

- The discipline of Yahweh is not to be taken negatively, for the hardships in the wilderness were balanced by his miraculous provisions both designed to test “what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not” (Deut 8:2).

3. INSTRUCTION

- Discipline gives assurance of sonship, for it primarily points to a God-centered way of life, and only secondarily to ethical behavior.

Proverbs 1:7 couples it with the “fear of Yahweh,” and Proverbs 1:8 with “instruction, teaching.”

3. INSTRUCTION

- The seemingly disparate notions of correction and instruction converge beautifully only in God's covenant.
- How was discipline administered?

3. INSTRUCTION

- Proverbs 22:15 speaks of the “rod of correction.”
- But most often, it is oral instruction, hence the close association with the “teaching.”

3. INSTRUCTION

- Isaiah 53:5 adds “the chastisement of our peace was upon him.”
- This is clearly a context of substitutionary atonement.

4. PRUDENCE

- This word has positive (prudence) and negative (shrewdness) connotations.
- Positively, the prudent one does not vaunt his knowledge (Prov 12:23), ignores an insult (Prov 12:16), acts with knowledge (Prov 14:8), looks where he is going (Prov 14:15), sees danger and acts appropriately (Prov 22:3; Prov 27:12), and is crowned with knowledge (Prov 14:18).

4. PRUDENCE

- This adjective is negative when rendered “crafty” (see Job 5:12; Job 15:5).
- The most memorable use of the word in this negative nuance is, of course, Gen 3:1, “Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild creature which the Lord God had made.”

4. PRUDENCE

- His “malevolent brilliance” is contrasted to the naked innocence of Adam and Eve in Gen 2:25.

5. KNOWLEDGE

- The word is a general term for knowledge, particularly that which is of a personal, experimental nature (Prov 24:5).
- It is also used for technical knowledge or ability such as that needed for building the tabernacle and temple (Exo 31:3; Exo 35:31; 1Kings 7:14).

5. KNOWLEDGE

- It is also used for discernment (Psa 119:66).
- Knowledge is possessed by God (Job 10:7; Psa 139:6; Prov 3:20), from whom nothing can be hidden (Psa 139:1-18).

5. KNOWLEDGE

- He teaches it to people (Psa 94:10; Psa 119:66; Prov 2:6).
- It appears parallel with wisdom and understanding, instruction, and teaching.

5. KNOWLEDGE

- “Knowledge of God” appears in parallel with “fear of the Lord” (Isa 11:2; cf. Isa 58:2; Jer 22:16) as a description of true religion.
- The man who has a right relation with God confesses him and obeys him.

5. KNOWLEDGE

- To do justice and righteousness and to judge the cause of the poor and the needy is to know God (Jer 22:15-16).
- On the other hand where there is no knowledge of God there is swearing, lying, killing, stealing, committing adultery and destruction upon a people (Hos 4:6; cf. Isa 5:13).

5. KNOWLEDGE

- Knowledge of God is more pleasing to him than sacrifice (Hos 6:6).

6. FEAR OF THE LORD

- The fear of the Lord is the beginning, or the first step in acquiring, moral knowledge.
- Before proverbs can change a person's behavior or way of thinking, a person must have the fear of the Lord, in which the Lord is the object of fear.

6. FEAR OF THE LORD

- It is expressed in submission to the Lord's will, hatred of evil, and avoidance of sin.
- The fear of the Lord in Proverbs is a composite response of attitude and will shaping human behavior in conformity with the commandments of God.

6. FEAR OF THE LORD

- In contrast to the one who has the fear of the Lord is the fool, or a person characterized by moral folly.
- The book of Proverbs is meant to produce and to build upon the fear of the Lord while showing the foolishness of the alternative, the lifestyle of the fool.

6. FEAR OF THE LORD

- The idea of the fear of the Lord prevents proverbial wisdom from degenerating into a rigid system of cause and effect relationships.
- The fear of the Lord preserves the nature of God and maintains the profound mystery of life.

6. FEAR OF THE LORD

- These qualities help us explain the tension between the two stands of Hebrew wisdom – the instructions for the ideal life and the discussions about the consuming issues of real life.

6. FEAR OF THE LORD

- The message of Proverbs hinges on the belief that wisdom can be taught and can be passed on from one generation to another (4:1-9).

6. FEAR OF THE LORD

- The heart of Old Testament wisdom instruction is desiring and choosing to learn and apply “the fear of the Lord” to daily life (2:1-6).