QUESTION: Who wrote the Book of Proverbs?

Solomon, the son of David, is widely regarded as the author of the Book of Proverbs, as he himself introduces the book right at the beginning.

> Proverbs 1:1
>
> “The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:
>
> for gaining wisdom and instruction;
>
> for understanding words of insight.” (NIV)

This book is believed to have been written around 900 years before Christ and is known for its rich collection of wisdom literature. It addresses moral principles, spiritual guidance, and practical advice for daily living. It also draws heavily from nature, offering insight into how God’s creation reflects His wisdom. Proverbs is part of the wisdom literature in the Bible, which also includes Job, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs.

Divisions of the Book of Proverbs:

Proverbs 1–22:16: These verses are generally attributed directly to Solomon, providing a foundation of wisdom, moral teaching, and practical advice for righteous living.

Proverbs 22:17–24:34: Known as the “Third Book” of Proverbs, these chapters may have been written by other sages or wise men, but they were compiled by Solomon himself. They contain moral teachings, observations about life, and reflections on wisdom.

Proverbs 25–29: These chapters were indeed written by Solomon, but the record of these proverbs was later transcribed by the men of King Hezekiah’s court (around 700 BC). The Bible itself acknowledges this in Proverbs 25:1:

“These are more proverbs of Solomon, copied by the men of Hezekiah king of Judah.” (NIV)

Proverbs 30: This chapter, known as the “Fifth Book,” was written by Agur son of Jakeh. Agur’s proverbs are somewhat unique, addressing the mysteries of life and God’s creation.

Proverbs 31: The final chapter, traditionally attributed to King Lemuel, offers wisdom that Lemuel’s mother imparted to him. It provides a beautiful picture of the virtuous woman, known for her industriousness, wisdom, and reverence for God.

Some scholars argue that Agur and Lemuel might be alternate names for Solomon, which would mean that the majority of the wisdom in the book can be traced back to him. Nonetheless, the book also acknowledges the contributions of other wise individuals.

The Book of Proverbs, as a whole, is seen as a divine instruction manual, guiding God’s people to live righteous, wise, and peaceful lives. This wisdom, often referred to as God’s wisdom, is meant to shape not only moral character but also practical living and understanding of the world.

For a deeper theological exploration of this book, visit this link >> BIBLICAL BOOKS: Part 11 (Proverbs, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes)

Theological Insights from Proverbs:

> Proverbs 21:17:
>
> “He who loves pleasure will become poor;
>
> whoever loves wine and olive oil will never be rich.” (NIV)

This proverb teaches the importance of self-control and the dangers of excessive indulgence. The Bible often warns against the pursuit of pleasure at the expense of wisdom and discipline. Jesus Himself said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness” (Matthew 5:6), showing that our deepest desire should be for spiritual fulfillment, not fleeting pleasures.

> Proverbs 10:5:
>
> “He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.” (NIV)

This speaks to the importance of diligence and timely action. It mirrors the Apostle Paul’s teaching in 2 Thessalonians 3:10: “The

one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.” Wisdom involves recognizing the seasons of opportunity and making the most of them, for they are fleeting.

> Proverbs 25:13:
>
> “Like a snow-cooled drink at harvest time is a trustworthy messenger to the one who sends him;
>
> he refreshes the spirit of his master.” (NIV)

This verse uses the imagery of a refreshing, cold drink during a hot harvest to highlight the value of a trustworthy and reliable messenger. In the same way, Jesus called His followers to be faithful and trustworthy, as seen in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:21): “Well done, good and faithful servant… enter into the joy of your Lord.”

> Proverbs 5:15-18:

> “Drink water from your own cistern,
>
> running water from your own well.
>
> Should your springs overflow in the streets,
>
> your streams of water in the public squares?
>
> Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers.
>
> May your fountain be blessed,
>
> and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.” (NIV)

This passage speaks to the sanctity of marriage and the importance of faithfulness. It emphasizes the biblical view that the sexual relationship is a gift from God, meant to be enjoyed within the context of a committed, monogamous marriage. This echoes Hebrews 13:4, which says, “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled.”

Proverbs 21:1:

“The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord;

he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.” (NIV)

This verse affirms God’s sovereignty over all leaders, including kings and rulers. It reminds us that even the most powerful rulers are ultimately under God’s control. As Daniel 2:21 reminds us, “He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others.” Christians are called to trust in God’s ultimate authority and to pray for those in positions of leadership.

Conclusion:

The Book of Proverbs provides timeless wisdom that speaks directly to our daily lives, our relationships, and our spiritual walk with God. It calls us to pursue righteousness, wisdom, and understanding, while warning against the destructive nature of foolishness, sin, and indulgence. Most importantly, it points us toward the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of all wisdom (Proverbs 1:7). As James 1:5 reminds us, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

May this wisdom guide you on your journey of faith.

Blessings to you.

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