

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

INTRODUCTION

- A. Old Testament wisdom writings are poetry.
- B. The basic form is the couplet - two lines almost always related to each other by parallelism.
- C. The parallelism makes a complete thought with the second complementing the first.

WISDOM SEEKERS, PROVERBS 2:1-22

- A. Conditions for wisdom seekers (1-4), *My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures,*
 - 1. Accept parents' teaching (1)
 - 2. Give proper attention to wisdom (2)
 - 3. Ask for wisdom (3)
 - 4. Search for wisdom (4)
 - 5. Origen, *For even the ordinary reader of Scripture can see that it contains many things too deep to understand at first. But these things are understood by those who devote themselves to carefully studying the divine Word. In proportion to the pains and zeal they spend on its investigation, these things become plain to them.*
- B. Benefits for wisdom seekers (5-20)
 - 1. Reverence for and knowledge of God (5-8), *then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints.*
 - a. Wisdom (5-6)
 - b. Protection (7)
 - c. Justice (8)
 - 2. Proper behavior (9-11), *Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path; for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you,*
 - a. Know what is right (9)
 - b. Delight in what is right (10)
 - c. Do what is right (11)
 - d. Note Proverbs 1:2-3, *To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity;*
 - 1) Righteousness - giving God His due
 - 2) Justice - giving man his due
 - 3) Equity - the standard for righteousness and justice
 - e. Gregory Nazianzen, *I don't consider the person who is clever in words to be wise, nor one who has a quick tongue but an unstable and undisciplined soul...but those who...exemplify it in life are wise. Such people prove the trustworthiness of their language by their lives.*
 - 3. Protection from negative influences (12-19)
 - a. Evil people (12-15), *delivering you from the way of evil, from men of perverted speech, who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness, who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil, men whose paths are crooked, and who are devious in their ways.*

- b. Immoral people (16-19), *So you will be delivered from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words, who forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God; for her house sinks down to death, and her paths to the departed; none who go to her come back, nor do they regain the paths of life.*
 - 1) The basic issue concerns sexual temptation - pressures from internet, cable TV, chat rooms.
 - 2) A secondary issue is the contrast between Wisdom and another suitor - the ways of the world.
- c. Martin Luther, *I more fear what is within me than what comes from without.*
- 4. Attraction to positive influences (20), *So you will walk in the way of the good and keep to the paths of the righteous.*
 - a. Crises can be a blessing - no way out means God will make a way.
 - b. Gregory I, *...those whose minds are persistent by the Holy Spirit's grace pass through the water and aren't flooded by rivers.*
- C. Reason to be wisdom seekers (21-22)
 - 1. Blessing for the righteous (21), *For the upright will inhabit the land, and those with integrity will remain in it,*
 - 2. Destruction for wicked (22), *but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the treacherous will be rooted out of it.*

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| CONCLUSION |
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- A. Wisdom is a choice - ask for it - search for it.
- B. Wisdom is serious business - brings blessing for the righteous and destruction for the wicked.
- C. Wisdom is greater than me and my needs - it is to be shared.