

## Bible Overview

# Wisdom

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Song of Solomon

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## Proverbs

**Author:** Solomon and others

**Time:** 1000 – 700 B.C.

**Summary:** Proverbs is a collection of wise sayings from several sources, including King Solomon, laying practical rules for right living based on godly wisdom. The sayings deal with many different problems and situations. Most of the proverbs are very short and easy to remember. The proverbs are not organised in a way which puts all the sayings on one topic together. Instead, almost every verse raises a new and important idea. Proverbs presents the idea that humans are either good or evil, wise or foolish, with God or without him. Both are known by their deeds, their "fruits", their chosen "ways" in life and their fitting ends.

### Key verse:

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning, of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (9:10)

1. Superiority of the way of wisdom 1:1 – 9:18
  - a) Introduction 1:1–7
  - b) Appeals and warnings confronting youth 1:8–33
  - c) Commendation of wisdom 2:1–4:27
  - d) Warnings against folly 5:1–7:27
  - e) Appeals addressed to youth 8:1–9:18
2. Main collection of Solomon's proverbs 10:1–22:16
3. The thirty sayings of the wise 22:17–24:22
4. Additional sayings of the wise 24:23–24

5. Hezekiah's collection of Solomon's proverbs 25:1 – 29:27
  6. The words of Agur 30:1–33
  7. The words of Lemuel 31:1–9
  8. The ideal wife 31:10–31
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## **Ecclesiastes**

**Author:** Solomon

**Time:** 960 B.C.

**Summary:** Ecclesiastes is a philosophical book looking at the futility of life without God. It was written by Solomon from his perspective as a man who had opportunity to experience everything life could offer. He concludes that, without God, life would be meaningless; all his worldly possessions and all the pleasures possible would amount to nothing. The conclusion of the book is that man should love and fear God and obey his commandments.

### **Key verse:**

"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (12:13)

1. The futility of human efforts without God 1:1–11
2. The test of practical experience 1:12 – 2:26
3. Men's opportunity limited by time 3:1–22
4. Human futility greatly increased by oppression 4:1–16
5. Futility in insincere worship 5:1–9
6. Futility of riches 5:10–6:2
7. Futility of human desires 6:3 – 11:6

8. Advice and warning to youth 11:7 – 12:8

9. Conclusion: reverently trust in and obey God 12:9–14

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## Song of Solomon

**Author:** Solomon

**Time:** about 960 B.C.

**Summary:** This song is a poem in the form of a conversation about the wonder of sexual love. It depicts the beauty of love between a man (Solomon) and a woman (Shulamith) which develops into a mature undying relationship. Many interpret it as an allegory of God's love for his people or the relationship between Christ and his church. The basic message is the purity and sacredness of love.

It is a kind of love song in which Solomon and Shulamith take turns in singing about their love for the other. There is also a chorus sung by a group of their friends. The speeches and events described do not necessarily follow in chronological order.

### Key verse:

"Love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame." (8:6)

Main people: Solomon (the lover), Shulamith (the beloved), friends.

1. The beginning of love 1:1 – 5:1

a) The wedding day 1:1 – 2:7

Shulamith in the palace (1:1–8)

At the banquet table (1:9–14)

In the bridal chamber (1:15 – 2:7)

b) Reflections on a courtship 2:8 – 3:5

A springtime visit (2:8–11)

The little foxes (2:15–17)

A dream: on counting the cost (3:1–5)

- c) The wedding day (continued) 3:6 – 5:1
  - The wedding procession (3:6–11)
  - The wedding night (4:1 – 5:1)

## 2. The development of oneness 5:2 – 8:14

- a) a dream of love refused 5:2 – 8:4
    - the dream (5:2–8)
    - a change of attitude (5:9 – 6:3)
    - the return of Solomon (6:4–10)
    - Shulamith in the garden (6:11–13a)
    - The dance of the Mahanaim (6:13b – 8:4)
  
  - b) a vacation in the country 8:5–14
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