

PROVERBS

Prologue: Purpose and Theme

1 The proverbs of Solomon son of David,
king of Israel:

- ²for attaining wisdom and discipline;
for understanding words of insight;
- ³for acquiring a disciplined and prudent
life,
doing what is right and just and fair;
- ⁴for giving prudence to the simple,
knowledge and discretion to the
young—
- ⁵let the wise listen and add to their
learning,
and let the discerning get
guidance—
- ⁶for understanding proverbs and
parables,
the sayings and riddles of the wise.
- ⁷The fear of the Lord is the beginning of
knowledge,
but fools^a despise wisdom and
discipline.

Exhortations to Embrace Wisdom

Warning Against Enticement

- ⁸Listen, my son, to your father's
instruction
and do not forsake your mother's
teaching.
- ⁹They will be a garland to grace your
head
and a chain to adorn your neck.
- ¹⁰My son, if sinners entice you,
do not give in to them.
- ¹¹If they say, "Come along with us;
let's lie in wait for someone's blood;
let's waylay some harmless soul;
- ¹²let's swallow them alive, like the
grave,^b
and whole, like those who go down
to the pit;
- ¹³we will get all sorts of valuable things

- and fill our houses with plunder;
- ¹⁴throw in your lot with us,
and we will share a common
purse"—
- ¹⁵my son, do not go along with them,
do not set foot on their paths;
- ¹⁶for their feet rush into sin,
they are swift to shed blood.
- ¹⁷How useless to spread a net
in full view of all the birds!
- ¹⁸These men lie in wait for their own
blood;
they waylay only themselves!
- ¹⁹Such is the end of all who go after ill-
gotten gain;
it takes away the lives of those who
get it.

Warning Against Rejecting Wisdom

- ²⁰Wisdom calls aloud in the street,
she raises her voice in the public
squares;
- ²¹at the head of the noisy streets^c she
cries out,
in the gateways of the city she
makes her speech:
- ²²"How long will you simple ones^d love
your simple ways?
How long will mockers delight in
mockery
and fools hate knowledge?
- ²³If you had responded to my rebuke,
I would have poured out my heart to
you
and made my thoughts known to
you.
- ²⁴But since you rejected me when I
called
and no one gave heed when I
stretched out my hand,
- ²⁵since you ignored all my advice
and would not accept my rebuke,
- ²⁶I in turn will laugh at your disaster;
I will mock when calamity overtakes
you—

^a 7 The Hebrew words rendered *fool* in Proverbs, and often elsewhere in the Old Testament, denote one who is morally deficient. ^b 12 Hebrew *Sheol* ^c 21 Hebrew; Septuagint / *on the tops of the walls*

^d 22 The Hebrew word rendered *simple* in Proverbs generally denotes one without moral direction and inclined to evil.