

Israel as a Monarchy (1100 – 930 BCE)

Persons and Attributes

Various Concerns

Readings: *Proverbs*

By Topic:

Persons and Attributes:

- Parents and Children – 1:8-9; 10:1; 11:29; 15:20; 17:2, 6, 21, 25; 19:26; 20:20; 23:22-25
- Elderly – 16:31; 20:29
- Women and Wives – 11:22; 12:4; 14:1; 18:22; 19:13-14; 21:9, 19; 25:24; 27:15-16
- Kings and Rulers – 14:28, 35; 16:10, 12-15; 17:7, 11; 19:12; 20:2, 8, 26, 28; 21:1; 22:11; 23:1-3; 24:21-22; 25:2-7; 28:2-3; 28:15-16; 29:4, 12, 14
- Messengers – 13:17; 25:13
- Companions – 12:26; 13:20; 14:7; 17:17; 18:24; 24:1-2; 27:8-10; 29:24

Various Concerns:

- Caution – 16:17; 22:3, 5; 27:12
- Reputation – 22:1; 25:9-10
- Courage – 3:25-26; 14:32; 22:13; 24:10; 26:13; 28:1
- Hope – 13:12, 19; 23:17-18

Reflections:

- It is interesting to consider that Solomon's proverbs about a son honoring his father and mother may have been inspired by his brother Absalom's relationship with his father David.

- The proverbs about wives can obviously be applied to both husbands and wives. When you read them all in context together, what is fascinating is that there is only one that is positive (Proverbs 18:22) and the rest have warnings about the potential difficulty of having a spouse with poor character. Prior to the coming of Christ, Israel was experiencing everything that didn't work and so it is no surprise that having a healthy marriage was more the exception than the rule. Even today, if one of the spouses fails to surrender to Christ, the marriage is left vulnerable to significant pain.
- The proverbs concerning kings and rulers contain many fascinating insights for leadership. Again we see the responsibility of leaders to be mindful of issues of justice, care for the poor and leading in humility before God. Two proverbs appear to foreshadow the coming king, the Messiah. "Love and faithfulness keep a king safe; through love (not war or his army) his throne is made secure." Proverbs 20:28. "He who loves a pure heart and whose speech is gracious will have the king for his friend." Proverbs 22:11. In both cases, love and grace are expressed as the ultimate concerns of the king. One last interesting proverb for leaders. "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings." Proverbs 25:2. The role of leaders is to discern the heart of God. God cloaks himself in mystery to lure us into seeking him and passionately pursuing relationship with him. He asks us, "Do you want to truly know me? Then you must seek me with all your heart!" This is true for leaders who desire to help whole communities discover and live in intimate relationship with God.
- The proverbs concerning companions and friends provide many good insights into who we allow to influence us and who we rely on when in need. This is echoed as a general principle for life in the proverbs that encourage an observant, cautious approach to life (Pr. 16:17; 22:3; 27:12; 22:5).
- The concluding verses of this reading focused on hope are very encouraging for those waiting on God to fulfill his promises for their lives. "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life." (13:12) "Always be zealous for the fear of the Lord. There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off!" (23:17,18) The prophet Jeremiah will echo this to future generations as he writes, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" (Jeremiah 29:11)