

## AP 38

### Proverbs / מְשָׁל / Ma-shal

The Proverbs and the Song of Solomon (later in the week) are part of what the Jews call the writings – *ketuvim*.<sup>1</sup> The Writings include poetic books you might expect (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes) and some you don't expect (Job, Esther, Chronicles, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah). Even though we might think of Chronicles as history, just like Kings (Kings is included in the Prophets). They did not. Even though we might think of Daniel as one of the prophets like Isaiah. They did not.

I am imagining they had different interpretive lenses for each of the 3 divisions. We do need different interpretive lenses. We approach parables differently than epistles. We read the Psalms with a different lens than Exodus. They all are inspired expressions of faith and truth, but they couldn't be more different in the way they express that faith.

Proverbs are often quoted as promises, but they are more like truisms. They were largely attributed to Solomon, but not all. The first 9 chapters of this book are a series of speeches from a father to a son and a few poems from wisdom (personified as a woman) to all who would hear. Chapters 10-29 are what most people think of as proverbs – short pithy sayings of wisdom. In Chapters 30-31 we find the proverbs of Agur (I have made the prayer of Agur in 30:7-9 one of my regular prayers), then in 31:1-9 we find the Proverbs of Lemuel, and the famous proverb of virtuous woman (31:10-31).

**Sunday, Aug 14**

Proverbs 1

**For Reflection:** verse 7 is an anchor verse for wisdom literature in general, but we hate fear. *What do you think the teacher means by fear of the Lord? Do you have it?* In verse 20 we have the first words from Lady Wisdom – She sounds like one of the Prophets.

**Lagniappe:** Acts 2:41-43. Awe in verse 43 translates the word *phobos* = fear. *Do we have any awe today?*

**Monday, Aug 15**

Proverbs 3

**For Reflection:** Verses 5-8 are beloved in the community of faith, I find this surprising since they include the word fear – I guess that's why most people only quote verses 5-6. *What is God asking you to trust him with today?* I also find verses 25-26 to be a great comfort when facing the storms of life. *Which Proverbs seem to have your name on them?*

**Lagniappe:** Psalm 37:3-7

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<sup>1</sup> The 3 divisions of Hebrew scripture include the Law/Torah, the Prophets/Nevi-im and the Writings/Ketuvim

Tuesday, Aug 16

Proverbs 6

**For Reflection:** Laziness and adultery are big themes in wisdom literature. I love/hate the admonition to “consider the ant”(6). Sin or wickedness in these passages seem to be actively attempting to entrap us (5). *In verses 16-19 we get an ethical summary, which of these hated things do you sometimes love?*

**Lagniappe:** 1 Peter 5:8 (You should have expected this one as I just preached this text.)

Wednesday, Aug 17 Proverbs 8

**For Reflection:** A little more for the lady. When is the last time wisdom called to you and you listened? And you ignored?

**Lagniappe:** James 1:5

Thursday, Aug 18

Proverbs 16

**For Reflection:** Chapters 10-29 share a consistent style - a string of truisms, often unrelated. I tend to think it is helpful to see these chapters as a mosaic. Each proverb a tiny bit of colored tile that is used created a grander picture. In this case it's a picture of wisdom. I think I chose this text because numerous proverbs in this chapter affirm God's providence. The sovereign and providential nature of God is a belief that sustains me in what is often a cruel and arbitrary world. *Which of the 33 Proverbs in this chapter is God using to speak to you?*

**Lagniappe:** Proverbs 21:30-31

Friday, Aug 19

Proverbs 30

**For Reflection:** Agur son of Jakeh speaks to me. He is humble, but satirical. He is poetic, but also earthy. He is like a good Rhone wine.<sup>2</sup> As mentioned in the introduction I love the prayer in verses 7-9. We know nothing of Agur at all, other than this chapter he is not mentioned again in the Bible. Verse 5: How has God of his word been a shield to you?

**Lagniappe:** Isaiah 55:11

## Song of Solomon / שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים / Shir Ha-shirim Song of the Songs

I don't know a lot about this book. There are few calls for me to preach on a book that is an unvarnished and graphic love song, even if it was written by the wisest man to have ever lived. Throughout history readers have viewed this book in many ways. Uncomfortable with the

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<sup>2</sup> Sorry I went too far with that line.

humanity of this book many suggest it is allegorical or symbolic of our relationship with God. I find that to be a stretch, and a weird stretch at that. But if it is about our relationship with God, then it would be his song to us, not our song to him.

I humbly believe it is an inspired snapshot of healthy human love and passion. That this book is in the Bible, that it is inspired by God, just makes me smile and shake my head. Apparently, all aspects of healthy human relationships (including sexual) are God blessed and good. Of course, we just read Proverbs and we know God has an opinion on what constitutes a healthy relationship.

**Saturday, Aug 20** Song of Solomon 6 & 8:6-7

**For Reflection:** I do love 6:3a. *When is the last time you verbalized, in some detail, your love for another?* Connie just called, as I was writing this and so I told her that her “teeth were like a flock of ewes.” It did not have the desired effect, so you might keep your love vocabulary up to date. ***By the way***, this a question for everyone, we don’t only love people romantically. You might have a grandchild or a friend that needs to hear that someone loves him or her.

**Lagniappe:** Psalm 59:16-17 – Our song to God?