

Wisdom

1 What is Wisdom?

Wisdom has a broad range of meanings in Scripture as the rest of this article will demonstrate. It might be summarised as skilful living in the light of the reality of God's revelation. It is not primarily about knowledge, but how one uses the knowledge one has and what influences our decisions. The opposite of wisdom is foolishness, a conscious denial of God's purposes that has its roots in a rebellious heart (Psalm 14:1; 53:1).

1.1 The Development of Wisdom in Ancient Israel

1.1.1 A human activity. Wisdom was considered a precious possession in the Ancient World and men were exhorted to seek for it (Prov. 16:16). It could be gained by learning from other people (Prov. 13:20), but the search for wisdom required the right attitude of the heart and mind (14:6).

1.1.2 The Home. The book of Proverbs indicates that the home was the place where instruction in wisdom was given to children. Again and again it refers to the teaching of both the father and mother (Prov. 1:8; 4:1-4; 6:20; 23:22) and addresses the reader as "my son" (1:10, 15; 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1, 7; 6:1; 7:1; 23:26), but also mentions other teachers and instructors (5:13).

1.1.3 Schools. There is no direct evidence for any formal education in Israel until the first century AD. In 63 AD the rabbi Joshua ben Gimla "decreed that every town and village should have a school which all children would have to attend from the age of six or seven." (de Vaux, 1965: 50). Scholars assume that with the institution of the monarchy some formal education was carried out within the court as was customary in the courts of Mesopotamia and Egypt, but there is no direct evidence for this (de Vaux, 1965: 50). Nor can it be proved that the ordinary Israelite received any further education than that which his parents could provide. It is speculated that wealthy families could hire itinerant teachers to instil wisdom into their children, but the existence of such men cannot be proved. The first reference to a school in the Hebrew Text occurs in Sirach 51:23: "Draw near to me, you who are uneducated, and lodge in the house of instruction." (NRSV)

1.1.4 The Royal Court. Following the discovery of the Egyptian text called *Teaching of Amenemope* (see further 2.1), Hugo Gressmann (1877-1927) argued that just as wisdom taught in the court of Egypt, there must also have been a class of professional "wise men" within the court of Solomon (Clements, 1976: 110). The references to the "Proverbs of Solomon" (Prov. 10:1) and the activities of the "men of Hezekiah" (25:1) in addition to the existence of Proverbs referring to the king all appear to point to presence of wise men within the Royal Court (1 Kings 4:2-19). The close relationship between Egypt and Israel during the reign of Solomon is well established (see Currid, 1997: 159-171), as is the size of Solomon's royal court. However, there is no evidence for the existence of a élite group of wise men within it (Clines, 1989: 271-271).

The book of Proverbs appears to be aimed at training young men in general, not just those within the court. This accounts satisfactorily for the variety of situations referred to in Proverbs, relatively few of which mention the king. One might expect that if the book were intended as a court manual of some kind to see a much narrower focus in its content (Clements, 1976: 111-112). These conclusions are consistent with an understanding of wisdom that is founded and nurtured in the home and family. From there it extended outwards into all areas of life, finding its highest expression in the palace of the King.

1.2 By divine inspiration. Although it forms a minor theme in Scripture, there are few examples of people claiming that their wise sayings were the result of divine inspiration. Perhaps the most notable is Eliphaz, who claimed to have received a revelation in the form of a dream (Job 4:12-17). More generally Elihu speaks of the wider role of the Holy Spirit in leading men into the truth (32:6-9, 18-20).

1.3 A combination of training and divine gift. Proverbs 2:1-10 combines both of the means of acquiring wisdom into a seamless whole. The desire for wisdom leads to a seeking after it (vv. 1-5) which in turn allows the Lord the opportunity to grant the gift of wisdom to the seeker (vv. 6-10). The same thought is repeated in the next chapter. The reader is instructed not to forget what he has been taught (3:1), but at the same time urged to trust in the Lord and not on his own understanding (3:5).

2 Wisdom in the Ancient Near East

2.1 Egypt. In Egypt the wisdom evolved from being an attribute of the high gods Re and Osiris called Maat. By the 18th Dynasty Maat was independently worshipped as the daughter of Re (Hart, 1986: 116). Babylonian deities evolved in a similar manner, but there is no evidence that the Hebrews worshipped wisdom (Dunn, 1980: 170).

2.1.1 Teaching of Amenemope. Numerous wisdom texts have been discovered in Egypt. Without doubt the most significant of these is a papyri document entitled the *Teaching of Amenemope* which was brought from Egypt by Sir. E.A.W. Budge in 1888. Amenemope was the administrator of the royal estates, serving in the court of Pharaoh in about 1 000 BC. Following the publication of a complete translation in 1923 the remarkable similarities between it and Proverbs 22:17-24:22 became apparent (for examples, see Table 1). It was argued that either: 1) Proverbs was dependent upon the *Teaching of Amenemope*; 2) the *Teaching of Amenemope* was dependent upon Proverbs, 3) that they were both derived from a common source (Clements, 1976: 102-103; Harrison, 1970: 1007) or 4) there is no direct link at all between the two, but they owe their similarities to experiences shared by all people of that Ancient Near East (Currid, 1997: 215-216). The current consensus is that *Amenemope* is the original (Lasor *et al*, 1996: 466-467).

Perhaps the strongest connection between the two works is that between Proverbs 22:20 and Amenemope 27:7. It is argued that the text of Proverbs is probably more accurately translated:

"Have I not written for you thirty sayings of admonition and knowledge" (*NRSV*), which parallels the thirty chapters of Amenemope. This reading, however, is only one of a range of possible ways that the verse could be translated and there is no other evidence to support a division into either thirty sayings or chapters in Proverbs following that of Amenemope (Currid, 1997: 213; Murphy, 1996: 23-24). Further, as examples 2) & 4) in Table 1 (below) illustrate, while Amenemope gives ethical advice, Proverbs adds a further reason for following it: because the Lord will punish the wrongdoer. Israelite wisdom literature is distinctive in its "stress on people rather than deeds: men are divided into two groups, contrasted with each other as good and bad." (Emerton, 1979: 219). It is more likely, therefore that the fourth option is the correct one; there is no organic connection between the two accounts. The similarities can be explained adequately by common life experienced shared by both Israelites and Egyptians (Currid, 1997: 215-216; Walton, 1989: 178).

Table 1: A Comparison of the Teaching of Amenemope and Proverbs

No.	Amenemope	Proverbs
1	<p>Give thy ears, hear what is said, Give they heart to understand them. To put them in your heart is worth while, (But) it is damaging to him who rejects them (Pritchard, 1958: 237)</p>	<p>Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, And apply your mind to my knowledge; For it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, That they may be ready on your lips. (22:17-18 <i>NASB</i>)</p>
2	<p>Guard yourself against robbing the oppressed against overbearing the disabled (Pritchard, 1958: 237)</p>	<p>Do not rob the poor because he is poor, Or crush the afflicted at the gate; For the LORD will plead their case And take the life of those who rob them. (22:22-23 <i>NASB</i>)</p>
3	<p>Better is bread when the heart is happy, Than riches with sorrow. (Pritchard, 1958: 241)</p>	<p>Better is a little with righteousness Than great income with injustice. (16:8 <i>NASB</i>)</p>
4	<p>Do not lean on the scales or</p>	<p>Differing weights are an abomination to the LORD, And a false scale is not good. (20:23</p>

	falsify the weights, Do not damage the fractions of the measure. (Pritchard, 1958: 241)	<i>NASB</i>)
5	As for the scribe who is experienced in his office, He will find himself worthy to be a courtier. (Pritchard, 1958: 243)	Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before obscure men. (22:29 <i>NASB</i>)

2.2 Babylonia. "Wisdom" is Babylonia referred to "skill in cult and magic law" rather than to moral living as found in the Hebrew books of wisdom. Nevertheless, the term wisdom is used to describe a number of texts whose content is similar to that of the books of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes (Lambert, 1960: 1). Few Babylonian proverbs are extant (see Pritchard, 1958: 244-245) and the parallels with biblical proverbs are not as dramatic. They nevertheless demonstrate that the production and recitation of proverbs was widespread in the Ancient Near East.

3 Wisdom in the Old Testament

3.1 Literary Form. One of the distinctive features of Wisdom literature is that it is written in poetry. Ancient Near Eastern poetry did not rely simply on a parallelism of rhyming words as modern English poetry does, but used in addition a parallelism of ideas. Other distinctive features were also incorporated to aid memorisation and produce an emotional response in the reader.

3.1.1 Instruction. It is easy to see in the instruction its origin in the home or school situation. It is made up of five recognisable units: address; imperative; motive; imperative and consequence. Several examples of this literary structure can be found in Proverbs 1-9 (1:18-19; 2:1-22; 3:1-12, 21-35; 4:1-9, 10-27; 5:1-23; 6:1-5, 20-35; 7:7:1-27). The personification of wisdom is a development of the instruction (Goldsworthy, 1995: 78-79).

Table 2: Examples of Instruction in the Book of Proverbs

	Proverbs 1:8-19 (NRSV)	Proverbs 4:1-9 (NRSV)
Address	Hear, my child...	Listen, children,

Imperative	your father's instruction, and do not reject your mother's teaching;	to a father's instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight;
Motive	for they are a fair garland for your head, and pendants for your neck.	for I give you good precepts:
Imperative	My child, if sinners entice you, do not consent. If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood; let us wantonly ambush the innocent; like Sheol let us swallow them alive and whole, like those who go down to the Pit. 3 We shall find all kinds of costly things; we shall fill our houses with booty. Throw in your lot among us; we will all have one purse" - my child, do not walk in their way, keep your foot from their paths; for their feet run to evil, and they hurry to shed blood.	do not forsake my teaching. When I was a son with my father, tender, and my mother's favourite, he taught me, and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom; get insight: do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever else you get, get insight.
Consequence	For in vain is the net baited while the bird is looking on; yet they lie in wait-- to kill themselves! and set an ambush-- for their own lives! Such is the end of all who are greedy for gain; it takes away the life of its possessors.	Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honour you if you embrace her. She will place on your head a fair garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful crown."

3.1.2 Parallelism. The writers of the shorter Proverbs make use of the same parallelisms as are found in the Psalms. a) *Synonymous parallelism* repeats the same idea in a slightly different way in both lines of the proverb (e.g. Prov. 16:13, 18; 17:4; 21:14); b) *Antithetical parallelism* contrasts the second line with the first (e.g. Prov. 10:1, 5-7; 11:21; 12:2; 17:9). The majority of the sentence proverbs found in Proverbs 10-15 take this form. c) *Step or synthetic parallelism* develops the idea stated in the first line in the second (e.g. Prov. 11:22; 12:14; 15:23-24).

3.1.3 Acrostic. Acrostic is a literary device used in poetry in which each stroph begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It is not limited to wisdom literature, but examples of it within this genre are: Psalm 34; 37; 112; Prov. 31:10-31.

3.1.4 Numeric sayings (Prov. 6:16-19; 30:15-16, 18-19, 21-23, 24-28, 29-31; Job 5:19). These

typically take the form of "There are [n] things... that...; [n+1] that..." The writer then lists the n+1 things. For example: "Three things are too wonderful for me; four I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a girl." (Prov. 30:18-19). (30:24-28 is an exception to the general pattern as it does not use n). Numerous reasons have been put forward to explain the purpose of such an arrangement: a) As an aid to memorisation; b) to point to the open-ended nature of the list (Goldsworthy, 1995: 84).

3.1.5 Personification of Wisdom. The personification of wisdom serves to make the poetic imagery more vivid. Proverbs begins and ends with a personification of wisdom as the ideal wife (1:20-33; 8:1-9:6; 31:10-31). Lady wisdom provides for all aspects of life and an example by which to live by. She is contrasted with the adulterous Dame Folly, whose ways lead to death (9:13-18).

3.2 Wisdom and the Law. A further distinctive feature of wisdom literature is the lack of references within it to critical historical events in Israel's history, such as the Patriarchs, the Exodus and the Conquest. There is also a dearth of references to the law, but as Table 3 (below) shows these references were not altogether absent. However, much of the subject matter would not be considered unique to Israel, strictures against murder, adultery, stealing, lying and cheating being universal in the Ancient Near East, as the comparison with the Law Code of Hammurabi shows.

Table 3: Allusions to the Law Within the Wisdom Books Compared With the Law Code of Hammurabi

Allusion	Proverbs	Law Code of Hammurabi
6th commandment (murder)	1:11, 16; 6:17; 28:17	
7th commandment (adultery)	2:16; 5:3-6; 6:24-29, 32-35; 7:5-27; 23:27	Law 129
8th commandment (theft) (Exod. 22:1-9 - "five fold")	6:30-31	Law 6, 7, 8, 14, 22
9th commandment (false testimony)	3:30; 10:18;	Law 1, 4, 11, 127
Firstfruits & offerings (Exod. 23:19; Deut. 18:4)	3:9	
Dishonest scales (Lev. 19:35-36)	11:1; 16:11; 20:10, 23	Law 108
Bribery condemned (Deut. 16:19)	15:27; 17:23; 29:4	

Kindness to the poor (Deut. 15:7-11)	19:17; 29:7	
Cursing father or mother punishable by death (Lev. 20:9)	20:20	
Do not move an ancient boundary (Deut. 19:14)	15:25; 22:28	
Do not show partiality in court (Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17; 16:19)	18:5; 24:23	

4 Wise Men & Women of the Old Testament

The Old Testament refers to numerous individuals as receiving or possessing a special endowment of wisdom. A brief survey of these characters demonstrates the breadth of meaning that "wisdom" had in that period.

4.1 Joseph. Joseph's advice to Pharaoh was to find a wise and discerning man to prepare Egypt for the coming famine. In response Pharaoh selected Joseph on the basis of his ability to correctly interpret his dreams (Gen. 41:33, 39-40). Such skill was seen as evidence that he was the man for the job. In his new role Joseph's skills of administration and leadership, demonstrated first in the house of Potiphar (39:2-7), proved equal to the task he was set. In the New Testament Stephen refers to God's gift of wisdom to Joseph (Acts 7:10).

It has been argued that the Joseph narrative originally existed as a wisdom novel (von Rad, 1966). Although there are certain themes that the account has in common with the wisdom literature (e.g. Joseph's flight from the adulteress - Gen. 39:6-12; cf. Prov. 2:12-16; 6:20-24) (von Rad, 1966: 295), the wisdom novel theory is not convincing (Goldsworthy, 1995: 117-118, 179).

4.2 Bezalel, the son of Uri. As Moses made preparations to construct the tabernacle, the Lord gave him a specific command to call upon all the men that He had endowed with wisdom. The wisdom referred to was skill in making the garments for Aaron (Exod. 28:3). A little later we learn that Bezalel, son of Uri was to be in charge of the craftsmen, assisted by and Oholiab, son of Ahisamach (31:1-6; 35:30 - 36:2). It is interesting to note that Bezalel's special endowment included being filled with the Spirit of God (31:3; 35:31), knowledge and skill in crafts (31:3-5; 35:31-33, 35-36) and the ability to teach others (35:34).

4.3 Joshua, son of Nun. Joshua received a special gift of wisdom when Moses laid his hands upon him and declared him his successor (Deut. 31:14, 23; 34:9). The results of Joshua's leadership and success in conquering Canaan would seem ample proof of the effectiveness of this anointing (Goldsworthy, 1995: 55).

4.4 The Women of Tekoa and Abel Beth Maacah. Two women are given special mention during the reign of David, both being referred to as wise women of their respective cities. The woman of Tekoa acts as the mouthpiece of Joab in his attempts to get Absalom reinstated (2 Sam. 14:1-20). The woman of Abel Beth Maacah averted the destruction of her city by advising the execution of the rebel leader Sheba (2 Sam. 20:16-22). According to this woman her city was noted specifically for the wisdom of its inhabitants (20:18).

4.5 Ahithophel & Hushai. Ahithophel was one of David's most trusted advisors and his words were held in the highest regard (2 Sam. 16:23). Twice his counsel is recorded in 2 Samuel. First he tells Absalom to sleep publicly with his father's concubines (16:21-22) and shortly afterward that Absalom should pursue his father and attack his forces while they were unprepared and weary (17:1-4). Hushai the Arkite was another of David's advisors, sent to undermine Ahithophel and frustrate his counsel (15:32-36). Hushai succeeded in his purpose and sent messengers to David to warn him of his danger (17:5-16). Ahithophel could foresee that Absalom was doomed and he would shortly lose his life condemned as a traitor, so he went home and hung himself (17:23). For these two wise men their wisdom took the form of accurately foreseeing the outcome of a certain course of action.

4.6 David. David himself was held in high regard by his people as a wise man, as is clear from the flattering speech of woman of Tekoa (2 Sam. 14:17, 20). It is fitting that the father of Solomon should himself be considered wise in his own right. David's wisdom took the form of wise leadership, his refusal to advance God's timetable by his own efforts (e.g. 1 Sam. 24:1-22; 26:1-25) and probably included his selection of a previously neutral site for his new capital (2 Sam. 5:6-11) (Goldsworthy, 1995: 54).

4.7 Solomon. The Old Testament chroniclers present Solomon as the wise man *par excellence*, a man who asked not for riches or power, but for the ability to govern God's people wisely (1 Kings 3:4-15; 2 Chron. 1:2-11). The Lord granted Solomon's request (2 Kings 5:12) and his wisdom became internationally renowned (1 Kings 4:34; 2 Chron. 2:12). His ruling concerning the two prostitutes and the child convinced the people that he was going to be a wise and just king (1 Kings 3:16-28). The writer of 1 Kings provides us with a great deal of information about the benefits of Solomon's wisdom. His reign is seen as a fulfilment of the promises given to Abraham (4:20-21; cf. 15:18-21), a time of unrivalled peace (5:12) and prosperity (10:27; 2 Chron. 1:15; 9:20), when all of Israel "lived in safety, each man under his own vine and fig tree." (1 Kings 4:25; cf. 2 Kings 18:31; Micah 4:1-4; Zech. 3:10).

1 Kings 4:29-34 supplies some further details of Solomon's wisdom. He is compared with the wise men of Egypt and all the surrounding nations and said to have surpassed them all. He is credited with 3 000 proverbs, 1 005 songs and an encyclopaedic knowledge of plants and animals. Although Proverbs contains only a small selection of his work, the number of references to the natural world is noteworthy (e.g. 1:17; 5:19; 6:5-8; 26:6, 11, 17; 27:8, 18, 23-27; 28:1, 3, 15).

The greatest of Solomon's achievements in the eyes of the chroniclers was his construction of the temple and reuniting of the sacrifices and the ark of the covenant in one structure (1 Kings 5-

8; 2 Chron. 3-7), fulfilling the plans of his father David (2 Sam. 8:10-11; 1 Kings 7:51; 1 Chron. 26:26-27; 2 Chron. 5:1). Solomon recognised that God could not be contained by any building made by men, but prayed still that His presence would be specially manifested in the temple (2 Chron. 6:18-21). The account of Solomon's wisdom is crowned with the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Jerusalem. The account is noteworthy for close connection it makes between wisdom and wealth, a common theme in the Proverbs (1 Kings 10:1-9).

Despite the praise of his wisdom Solomon remains an enigma. How could one so wise act so foolishly? The dark side of Solomon's character is evidenced by his marriage alliances with neighbouring countries (1 Kings 3:1; 11:1-6), disregarding the clear commands in the Law not to do so (Exod. 34:11-16; Deut. 7:1-4). In later life these foreign wives turned him from serving the Lord and into idolatry and bringing judgement upon him and his people (1 Kings 11:7-13). Solomon undermined his good relationship with the King of Tyre by giving him worthless towns as a surety on the expenses he had incurred during his twenty years of intense building activity (1 Kings 9:10-14). His introduction of forced labour (5:13) proved to be a major factor in the division of the kingdom in the days of his son Rehoboam (12:3-15). In the days of Solomon God's promise in Deuteronomy 4:6 was fulfilled, but as a result of his foolishness this situation was about to be reversed and Israel became a byword and an object of ridicule (1 Kings 9:7) instead of a place to find wisdom (Goldsworthy, 1995: 61-67).

Whilst Solomon is credited as the author of much of the book of Proverbs (Prov. 1:1; 10:1; 25:1), the book of Ecclesiastes indirectly points to him as its author (Eccl. 1:1, 12), as does the Song of Solomon (Song 3:9; 8:11-12). The association of these latter two books with Solomon is thought to have contributed significantly to their being accepted into the Jewish canon. In the Intertestamental Period the *Wisdom of Solomon* claims Solomonic origin, although it dates from the first century BC. Finally, in the New Testament Jesus Christ declared himself greater than Solomon as one who fully embodies wisdom (Matt. 12:42; Luke 11:31). (see 4.9)

4.8 Daniel and his friends. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were selected from amongst the exiles from Judah to be trained to serve in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 1:3-4). These four the Lord "gave knowledge and skill in every aspect of literature and wisdom; Daniel also had insight into all visions and dreams." (1:17 *NRSV*) and as a result they surpassed all the other servants of the king in wisdom. Because of his ability to interpret dreams Daniel eventually became head of all the wise men of Babylon (2:48). Daniel himself had no illusions about the source of his wisdom and repeatedly ascribed it to a divine gift (2:30; cf. 2:20-23), a gifting recognised by the Babylonians (5:10-14).

4.9 The Messiah. Given the value ascribed to wisdom in the Old Testament it should be of little surprise that the Messiah was predicted to be specially endowed with the spirit of wisdom (Isa. 11:2). The New Testament makes clear how this was fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ (see 7.1.1).

4.10 Summary. Wisdom is not restricted to the great and the powerful or limited to one gender. The Old Testament examples above do demonstrate that wisdom is a necessary part of leadership. Those who reject wisdom (like Rehoboam - 1 Kings 12:1-17) will fail.

5 Canonical Wisdom Literature

The production of Wisdom literature is thought to have taken place in three distinct stages. Stage 1 was the production of wisdom sayings from the observations of everyday life within families and clans (see 1.1.2). Stage 2 took place within the royal court of Solomon and his successors as Israel interacted freely with its neighbours and exchanged collections of wisdom sayings (see 1.1.4). Finally, after the EXILE, these sayings were given their final canonical form. It was then amidst the new situations that faced the exiles that wisdom came into its own as a means of interpreting and dealing with the challenges of daily life, separated as it was from the worship associated with the now ruined temple in Jerusalem. The emphasis was shifted from the cult to the order established at creation by the exercise of wisdom (Clements, 1992: 23-32). This in turn explains the lack of references to the temple, law, sacrifices or allusions to the Patriarchs or to the Exodus in the wisdom books.

5.1 Proverbs. The book of Proverbs is the product of the work of a number of writers. Much of its content is ascribed to the hand of Solomon (Prov. 1:1; 10:1), some of which were part of a later collection compiled in the time of Hezekiah (25:1). Other sections of the book ascribe the material to "the wise" (24:23), Agur the son of Jakeh (30:1) and King Lemuel (31:1). The general theme behind the book of Proverbs is that the world that God created is knowable and follows certain general principles that can be discerned by careful observation. Granted it is a world corrupted by sin, filled with those who will not acknowledge God (the fools - Psalm 14:1; 53:1). Nevertheless, the writers of Proverbs are positive in their attitude towards God's creation. The reader is continually challenged to make a decision - will he/she side with the wise man or with the fool? Who is in control of the universe, man or God? (Goldsworthy, 1995: 85-86).

Proverbs is often said to teach a doctrine of retribution, that is, good deeds result in good results, but evil deeds bring bad results. (Table 4 below shows some of the benefits of wise living as described in Proverbs). Such a conclusion is not necessarily justified, however, as the book was formed over a long period of time as the result of generations of observation and experience. It describes what *generally* happens in a given situation. For example, Proverbs 22:6 would accurately describe the result of the training of the majority of children, but it is not a guarantee that all children will listen to guidance. In other situations the book simply sets two apparently contradictory statements side by side, for example:

Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Or you will also be like him. (Prov. 26:4)

Answer a fool as his folly deserves, That he not be wise in his own eyes. (Prov. 26:5)

Obviously there are times when both of these statements would be true.

Table 4: The Benefits of Wisdom as Described in the Book of Proverbs

Benefit	Reference
---------	-----------

Discernment of what is right	2:9
Deliverance from the ways of evil men	2:12
Deliverance from the adulteress (evil woman)	2:16
Security in the land	(2:21-22
Longevity	3:2, 16
Prosperity	3:2; 8:18, 21; 19:8
Health	3:8
A treasure beyond gold, silver or precious stones	3:13-14; 8:10-11, 19
Blessedness	3:18
Safety	3:23-26; 28:26

5.1.1 Fear of the Lord. Wisdom had a unique starting point for the Israelite: the fear of the Lord (1:7; 9:10; 10:27; 14:27; 15:16; 16:33; 19:23; 23:17-18; cf. Job 28:28). The fear of the Lord is inseparable with God's self-revelation and true wisdom was impossible without the acceptance of the divine perspective (1:29; 2:5). As Lawrence E. Toombs put it:

Wisdom is to be found with God, and nowhere else; and unless the quest for wisdom brings man to his knees in awe and reverence, knowing his own helplessness to make himself wise, wisdom remains for him a closed book. (Toombs, 1952: 195).

5.1.2 Wisdom and Creation. Uniquely among the peoples of the Ancient Near East, the people of Israel saw the world as a single unified system under the Sovereign control of its Creator (Kidner, 1985: 12-13). It followed naturally that because order existed then it must therefore be possible to order human life in such a way so as to live in harmony with that order. This recognition of order in creation is a central of the Book of Proverbs and an essential element of true wisdom.

In Proverbs 8:22-31 wisdom is vividly personified as the instrument of God's creation of the world, thus emphasising God's immanence an involvement with his creatures. Personifications of this kind are common in the Old Testament (Job 25:2; Psalm 43:3; 45:4; 57:3; 85:10; 96:6; Isa. 51:9) and should not be seen as evidence that the Hebrews ever saw wisdom as a some form of deity (Dunn, 1980: 170, 174-176). This passage has a long history of misinterpretation and figured prominently in the Christological debates of the fourth century (see further Hanson,

1988: 8, 227, 424).

5.1.3 Wisdom and Health. Modern readers of Scripture, particularly those in developed countries with access to sophisticated medical facilities, find it difficult to appreciate the threat of disease in the ancient world. There sickness could strike without warning and sweep away entire families - an event that was invariably interpreted as divine judgement on sin or uncleanness. Table 5 (below) lists several examples of the close connection between sin and sickness taught in the Old Testament. Israel's faith held the promise that obedience would result in long life, fertility and productivity and this is reflected in Proverbs (Clements, 1992: 65-93).

Table 5: Examples of Disease as a Sign of Judgement / Healing as a Sign of God's Blessing

Example	Reference
God promises the Israelites that if they are obedient to His decrees none of the diseases inflicted upon the Egyptians will be brought upon them	Exod. 15:26
Miriam temporarily afflicted with leprosy for challenging Moses	Num. 12:1-15
Moses dies at age 120, but not because of disease.	Deut. 34:7
Saul afflicted with madness by the Lord.	1 Sam. 16:14-23; 18:10
The Lord struck down Nabal for his actions against David	1 Sam. 25:36-38
Jeroboam I crippled for attempting to harm God's prophet and healed when he repented	1 Kings 13:4, 6
Asa afflicted with a disease of the feet for his brutal treatment of his subjects and putting the prophet Hanani in prison. Even in his suffering he did not seek the Lord's help.	2 Chron. 16:10-12.
Jehoram struck down with an incurable bowel disease because he served the Ba'als.	2 Chron. 21:12-20
Uzziah struck with leprosy for usurping the office of a priest	2 Chron. 26:16-23
Hezekiah healed and given 15 more years of life after seeking the Lord	2 Kings 20:1-6
Herod struck down for accepting the honour that belonged to God alone	Acts 12:21-23

5.1.4 Wisdom & Leadership. As noted above it is unlikely that Proverbs were originally composed within the Royal Court. Nevertheless, they contain many references that relate to government (14:28; 20:8, 28; 25:1-5; 29:14; 30:31) and how to act in the presence of a king (14:35; 16:12-15; 19:12; 20:2; 22:11; 23:1-3; 25:6-7). Proverbs recognises that rulership is divinely instituted (8:15-16; 21:1), but also notes that they too are fallen and capable of evil (28:3, 15-16, 28; 29:2, 4; 30:21-23).

5.2 Job. If Proverbs can be thought of as presenting the traditional understanding of how the Lord deals with his creation then both Job and Ecclesiastes both present variant views. These should be thought of as complimenting rather than contradicting Proverbs. For its part the book of Job challenges the assumption that suffering is always the direct result of sin. Its main character is innocent and yet is still allowed to endure all kinds of undeserved woes. The book points to the hiddenness of God's purposes as none of the main characters have any knowledge of the initial scene in the heavenly court, nor is that ever referred to even in the divine speech as a solution to the problem (Goldsworthy, 1995: 90). The book of Job has had more commentaries written on it than any other book of the Bible (with the exception of Psalms), a fact that should indicate its complexity and the variety of differing views that are held about it.

5.2.1 The Characters & their Speeches. The book of Job consists for the most part of a series of speeches made by characters: the Narrator, Job, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Naamathite, Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite and finally, God himself. Each of the human characters presents a different explanation for Job's suffering but ultimately only the reader of the finished work has all the information about what is really happening. The speeches can be summarised as follows:

a) Narrator. The Narrator introduces and closes the story of Job's sufferings, enclosing the poetic body of the work in a prose narrative frame. The Narrator assumes the acceptance of a doctrine of retribution and presents Job as a righteous man whom God has blessed because of his righteousness (Job 1:1-5). Destruction and suffering break into Job's peaceful life when, at the instigation of Satan (1:6-12; 2:1-6), he loses his children, his servants, flocks and herds (1:13-19), his health and his good reputation (2:7-9). Job, who knows nothing about the previous activity in the heavenly court is now the victim of the other side of the doctrine of retribution: if a person suffers he does so because he deserves it. Job, knowing himself to be innocent, must seek another explanation for what has befallen him. Job's three friends each have their own ideas about why Job had suffered such a reversal of fortune (2:11-13).

b) Eliphaz. Job's friend Eliphaz speaks first. Eliphaz affirms his belief in the doctrine of retribution (4:8-9; 15:20-35), supporting his observations by claiming direct revelation in a dream (4:12-21). He held that everyone has sinned before God (15:14-16) and will be disciplined by Him for a short time (5:17-18) and advises Job to appeal to the Almighty in humility (5:8, 19-26; 22:23-30). Faced with Job's continued denial of wrongdoing Eliphaz accuses him of carrying out acts of cruelty on the poor, which explain his present situation (22:5-11; cf. 29:7-17).

c) Bildad. Bildad spoke next, relying not on spiritual experience, but on the experience of the ages (8:8-10). He believed that Job was suffering because of his sin (8:11-22; 18:5-21), because no man can be pure (25:4-6). Job's wickedness was not as great as that of his children (8:4), because he was still alive. His only course now was to repent and call upon God to restore him (8:5-7).

d) Zophar. Job's third friend Zophar is the most rigid and dogmatic in his affirmation of the doctrine of retribution (20:4-29). God has not even punished Job for all the sins he has committed, because some have already been remitted for mercies sake (11:6). Job is not beyond redemption, like most of the wicked (11:12), if he repents and turns back to God (11:13-19).

f) Elihu. Elihu, a young man (32:4), speaks only when the three friends fall silent. His view is slightly different from the others, but is still a doctrine of retribution (34:21-29). Suffering is not simply a means of punishment, but is in itself a means of revelation of the divine will to man (33:14-22). The purpose of suffering is to bring about confession, which brings about restoration (33:23-30).

g) Job. Job's initial response to the loss of his family was to worship God and accept it as His will (1:20-21). After he has been struck down by illness he is less positive about his experience and wishes that he had never been born (3:1-26). Job accepts that his suffering comes from God (3:23; 6:4), but refuses to accept that he has done anything to deserve it. In his distress he finds himself utterly alone and his friends recitation of the doctrine of retribution useless (6:14-30). He reminds God how short his life is (7:7-10) and foresees no hope of restitution after death (14:7-15), therefore his speeches increasingly demand that God himself would answer and vindicate him (7:17-21; 9:14-35-10:2; 13:3, 15-23; 19:7, 25-27; 31:1-40). Job points out that the doctrine of retribution does not always appear to work in practice, just as he, an innocent man suffers, so also many of the wicked prosper (21:7-21; 24:1-25). The case of Job proves an exception to the doctrine of retribution, one that cannot be accounted for by the conventional wisdom represented by Job's four companions.

h) The Lord. The Lord speaks to Job out of the storm, but does not answer his questions and challenges as the reader might expect Him to. The divine speech points out that Job had no part in the process of creation (38:4-11), nor in its day-to-day operation (38:12-38). He did not even understand the ways of those animals that were not domesticated and played no part in their lives (38:39-39:1-30). Finally, the Lord asks Job if he can tame the chaos monsters Behemoth and Leviathan (40:15-41:34). The purpose of these speeches was not to browbeat Job, but to make him realise that there were many things about the divine plan that were beyond his understanding. Job accepts this and finds it a satisfactory reply (42:1-6).

The epilogue by the Narrator appears to renew the principle of the doctrine of retribution, as Job is restored to prosperity once again (42:12-17) and his friends must seek forgiveness for their error (42:7-11). The doctrine was still generally applicable, but the case of Job demonstrated that there could be exceptions (Clines, 1989a: xxxix-xlix; Goldsworthy, 1995: 93-94).

5.2.2 Wisdom and Health. As was noted above Job presents a different view of sickness to that

of Proverbs. It presents the possibility of suffering that is not the result of sin, an occurrence that is found only rarely in the Old Testament (Elisha's sickness being a notable exception - 2 Kings 13:14). The book does not suggest that suffering should be accepted without questioning and poses the question "how can God be righteous and still allow people to suffer?" Unlike many who would see suffering as evidence of God's non-existence, the book of Job forces the reader to grapple with the reality of His existence and struggle to find true wisdom in the light of that knowledge and accept that finite man cannot expect to comprehend the infinite (Isa. 55:8-9).

5.3 Ecclesiastes. The third of the canonical wisdom books is perhaps the most enigmatic. Its repeated message "everything is meaningless" (Eccl. 1:2, 14; 2:1, 17, 21, 23, 26; 3:19; 5:7; 6:2, 9; 7:6; 12:8) is neither positive nor encouraging and yet it was accepted into both the Jewish and Christian canons (Murphy, 1992: xxiii). This explains the commonly held view that Ecclesiastes presents the views of Solomon as an old man, disillusioned with the pursuit of pleasure and realising at last that the highest purpose man can aspire to is to "fear God and keep his commandments" (Eccl. 12:13). This view has a long history, yet it sets out more to explain potential contradictions with a high view of Scripture than to accurately exegete the text. Nor can the critical view be accepted that the book is heavily influenced by Greek philosophy (Murphy, 1992: xxii, xlili-xliv).

A more accurate understanding of Ecclesiastes would be that it moves a step further down the road that Job has already taken. The writer is fully convinced of the existence of God and that he is in control of the universe. What he is reacting against is the dogmatic acceptance of traditional wisdom which tended to see everything in black and white terms (Goldsworthy, 1995: 106-114). He does this by often expressing himself in terms of extremes that must be kept in tension and not simply "evened out" (Murphy, 1996: 53).

5.3.1 The Confusion of Order. The writer of Ecclesiastes, who identifies himself as Qoheleth, the son of David, systematically examines all areas of life: wisdom (1:12-18; 2:12-16); pleasure (2:1-2); wine (2:3); wealth and wives (2:4-9); toil (2:17-23). Qoheleth's advice appears to be to enjoy each day as it comes and to try to please God (2:24 - 3:14; 3:22; 8:15; 9:4-10; 12:1, 13-14), for eventually God will bring all deeds to judgement (3:15-17; 11:9). Qoheleth has himself witnessed the reversal of the doctrine of retribution (7:15-18), but is absolutely convinced that God is active in the world. He seeks to instil in his readers a sense of awe that speaks of God's total otherness (7:13-14; 11:5). The Creator is not to be taken lightly or treated with careless familiarity (5:1-7). Riches might appear to offer security, but he who possesses them finds in the end that they really possess him (5:10-15). They do not guarantee happiness (6:2-6) and the results of a lifetime's toil to gain them will be at the disposal of others (2:18-21). It is far better to be satisfied with what one has (5:12, 18-20; cf. 1 Tim. 6:6). Death is the common end of the wise and foolish (2:14), the rich and the poor (6:6).

Although Qoheleth is often critical of the judgements of wisdom he himself stands within that tradition and not outside of it (12:9-10). Wisdom is better than folly as light is better than darkness, and has many benefits (7:5, 11-12, 19; 8:1-29:13-18), yet ultimately both end in death (2:12-16; 9:1-3). Qoheleth set himself to pursue wisdom, even though he realised that he would

never attain it because God alone understands His own purposes (7:23-25; 16-17). Qoheleth might be thought of as attempting to add a greater depth to the wisdom tradition by expressing the mystery that surrounds the purposes of the Almighty.

5.4 Wisdom Psalms. The number of Psalms classed a "Wisdom Psalms" is somewhat subjective and lists vary from scholar to scholar. Roland Murphy has attempted to formulate a classification to aid their recognition:

1. A sharp contrast between the righteous and the wicked.
2. Advice about conduct that results in either welfare or misfortune.
3. The premise that "the fear [reverence] of Yahweh" is the starting point of wisdom.
4. Comparisons and admonitions that are used to exhort one to good conduct.
5. Alphabetical acrostic pattern.
6. "Better than" sayings (cf. Prov. 17:1; 19:1).
7. The address "my son" customary in wisdom schools
8. The approving word "blessed" (happy, fortunate) (cited by Anderson, 1983: 218).

Murphy himself classed only Psalms 1; 32; 34; 37; 49; 112; 128 as wisdom (Murphy, 1996: 103).

5.5 Other Suggested "Wisdom" books. Numerous other parts of the Old Testament have been claimed by scholars as showing the distinctive features of wisdom literature. These include the Joseph narrative of Genesis 37, 39-50, the succession narrative (2 Sam. 6-20 & 1 Kings 1-2), the Deuteronomic literature, Esther, Isaiah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah and especially the book of Amos (Emerton, 1979: 221-226).

6 Wisdom in Intertestamental Judaism

6.1 Ecclesiasticus. Also known as the Wisdom of Jesus, son of Sira or Sirach, this work dates from about 180 BC. It follows the style of Proverbs and develops many of the same themes, including personification (1:9-20) and the "fear of the Lord", which is elaborately described as glory and exultation, gladness, a crown of exultation, a delight, joy and long life (Sirach 1:11-12), the beginning (1:14), and fullness (1:16), crown (1:18) and root (1:20) of wisdom. In Ecclesiasticus Law and Salvation History become an expression of wisdom amongst God's people Israel and a means of attaining wisdom (6:37; 15:1; 19:20; 21:11; 33:2; 41:8) (von Rad, 1972: 245-246). The "fool" is now synonymous with "sinner" (1:25; 2:12; 3:27; 6:1; 11:21-22; 12:7, 14; 15:9; 27:30; 28:8-9; 29:16, 19; 32:17) and he is contrasted with the godly and devout (12:4; 13:17; 16:13; 27:11; 33:14; 39:26-27). This identification of Law as an expression of

wisdom is not found in the canonical wisdom books where the tendency was to separate the events of salvation history and the content of the Torah from wisdom (Goldsworthy, 1995: 127).

6.2 Wisdom of Solomon. The Wisdom of Solomon originated in the Hellenistic era sometime in the first century BC. The author never claims to be Solomon, but the allusions to his person are clear enough in the text (Wisdom 7:1-22; 9:1-10; cf. 1 Kings 3:5-14). Pseudo-Solomon develops a concept which occurs only rarely elsewhere in the Old Testament (cf. Dan. 12:2-3), the immortality of the righteous. This concept explains some of the sufferings of the righteous in terms of process of God's testing (Wisdom 3:1-6). Immortality is seen as the reward of righteousness and wisdom (5:15-16; 8:13) and this fresh understanding makes childlessness (4:1) and premature death explicable in the light of eternity (4:7-9, 16-17). The book is notable for the way that it fuses Wisdom with Salvation History (10:1-19:22).

7 Wisdom in the New Testament

7.1 Wisdom in the Life & Ministry of Christ

7.1.1 Jesus the Wise Man. The Gospel of Luke in particular develops the theme of Jesus as the ideal wise man. When, at the age of twelve, Jesus visits the temple with his parents he is shown to have understanding beyond his years (2:46-47). Luke concludes the account with the words of 1 Samuel 2:26, noting that Jesus' wisdom continued to grow as he did (Luke 2:52). During his ministry Jesus declared himself to be greater than Solomon, the famed wise-man of the Old Testament (11:29-32; Matt. 12:38-42). The point of his comparison in this context is not vain boasting, but to demonstrate that those outside of Israel recognise wisdom from God, while those within cannot.

7.1.2 Jesus the Revealer of God's Wisdom. Jesus came to reveal the wisdom of God, but those who should have recognised it had substituted their own wisdom. Instead, as is represented by the teaching of the Scribes and the Pharisees. The birth of Jesus was announced by the arrival of wise men from the East (Matt. 2:1-2) and not as might have been expected by the wise within Israel. Jesus' lifestyle failed to live up to the expectations of many (Matt. 11:16-19). Even John the Baptist had doubts about him (Matt. 11:1-6), but God's purpose in Jesus was to hide the truth about Jesus from the wise and the learned and reveal it to little children (the disciples) (Matt. 11:25-26). Again and again the contrast is made between those who see and those who are blind (Matt. 15:10-14; John 9:39), the deaf and the hearing (Luke 8:8; John 10:27). However, the word that was heard had to be put into practice or it was worthless (Luke 8:15, 21; 11:27-28).

7.1.3 Wisdom in the Teaching of Jesus. Jesus' separation of his audience into two groups is never more clearly illustrated than in his use of the parable. Parables were stories with a point; they were designed to divide an audience into those who could see and those who were already blind, as Jesus himself explained (Mark 4:11-12). Those who understood them were led into a deeper understanding, but those who could not were driven even further away. Parables themselves do not originate in the wisdom literature, but in function they have much in common

with both wisdom and prophecy (Goldsworthy, 1995: 153). It is notable that Jesus is the only person in the New Testament to use parables in his teaching. The content of the parables has many parallels in the book of Proverbs (e.g. Luke 14:10 / Prov. 25:6-7; Matt. 13:44 / Prov. 2:4-5).

Wisdom themes occur explicitly in a number of Jesus' stories. In the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, it is the wise man who puts the words of Jesus into practice, conversely it is the fool who fails to act upon them (Matt. 7:24-27). Likewise in the parable of the ten virgins, the wise and identified as those whom were ready for their Master's return (Matt. 25:1-13). Foolishness is used to describe an attitude that puts the self first and relegates God to second place (Luke 12:16-21).

7.2 Wisdom in Acts. Jesus promised that his disciples would receive special wisdom to know what to say when they were put on trial for their faith (Luke 21:15). The speech of Peter to the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:8-13) is a good example of this. Stephen was selected to serve at tables because he was "full of the Spirit and wisdom" (6:3), a gift that he put to good use in proclaiming the Gospel (6:10).

7.3 Wisdom in Paul's Writings

7.3.1 Two kinds of Wisdom. Writing to the Corinthians Paul has to correct their understanding of the Gospel. Filled with a desire to rival the philosophies of their pagan neighbours the church their were in danger of misrepresenting the message of the cross. Far from being a rival to existing philosophies the Gospel turned their values on their heads, since its message (the cross - 1 Cor. 1:23), its messenger (Paul - 2:1-5) and its recipients (the Corinthian believers - 1:26-28) were all counted as foolish by those outside (1:23). So foolish was the message that only God could have thought of it (1:21, 28-31)! So, for Paul, the wisdom of God was the message of the crucified Messiah. It was (and still is) a message that cannot be comprehended like the wisdom of the world, because it requires a work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart to make it understandable (2:8-14). Ironically in pursuing worldly wisdom the Corinthians were chasing after that which failed to comprehend God's plan and was both inferior and temporary (2:7-9) (see further Fee, 1987: 63-120).

7.3.2 The Gift of Wisdom. The word of wisdom listed amongst the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Cor. 12:8 (and only in this list) should be seen in the light of Paul's earlier argument (1:17 - 2:16). A word of wisdom is therefore characterised by "...the recognition that the message of Christ crucified is God's true wisdom, a recognition that comes only to those who *have* received the Spirit." (Fee, 1987: 592).

In his other letters Paul also speaks of wisdom as being a gift from God (Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:9) revealed in the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:15). Before Christ became incarnate God's wisdom was hidden, but now it had been made plain through the church (Eph. 1:8-9; 3:8-10; Col. 2:1-3). In response believers were urged to live out their lives in the light of that wisdom (Col. 1:28; 3:16; 4:5) and urged to shun the "worldly" wisdom that did not rely upon God's grace (2 Cor. 1:12; Col. 2:23).

7.4 Wisdom in the Epistle of James. Wisdom forms an important theme in James' letter. Writing to believers who were being persecuted for their faith he advises them to seek wisdom from God, a gift which He will willingly bestow (James 1:5; cf. Luke 11:13). Trials themselves are not signs of God's displeasure, but should be seen as the means by which God allows his children to be tested and then rewards them (James 1:12). He exhorts believers to follow Job's example of patience in the face of suffering (5:10-11). The divinely bestowed gift of wisdom manifests itself in good deeds and a humble life (1:27; 3:13, 16-17) and contrasts sharply with what James refers to as earthly wisdom (3:14-15). They are different because their sources are different: one is from heaven, the other is from the earth; one is spiritual the other is unspiritual (3:15; cf. 1:16-17). Peter Davids concludes that:

James has a wisdom pneumatology, for wisdom in James functions as the Spirit does in Paul: wisdom helps one stand, delivers one from "the flesh" ... and produces the fruit of the Christian life. Davids, 1982: 55-56).

James also has much to say about other themes found in OT wisdom books. Concerning the tongue James warns his readers that it gives direct expression to what is inside a man, whether that is good or bad and so must be kept under strict control (1:26; 3:3-12). Good words on their own are not sufficient, but must be accompanied with good deeds (2:14-26; cf. Eph. 2:8-10). Riches and wealth are also discussed and, although poverty is not praised as such, James is clear about the dangers and deceptiveness of possessions (1:9-12; 2:1--7; 5:1-5). As James saw wisdom as a gift from God it is not surprising that he ended his letter as he started it on that subject (5:13-18).

7.5 Wisdom in the Believer's Life. The subject of wisdom is intimately connected with the doctrines of creation, revelation and redemption. Wisdom is revealed in God's creation and true wisdom is only possible when someone comes into a new relationship with the Creator through Jesus Christ. As wisdom is fully incarnate in Jesus Christ, who became wisdom for us (1 Cor. 1:30), obedience to His commands and purposes for His church should be the priority for all his followers.

Rightly understood biblical wisdom provides the believer with a framework within which to work when making decisions. Scripture does not provide answers to every situation that one faces each day, but does provide enough information to allow the believer to make intelligent choices (Goldsworthy, 1995: 182-185).

8 Conclusion. The close relationship between "Spirit" and "wisdom" noted in the Scriptures is significant (Exod. 31:3; 35:31; Isa. 11:2; Dan. 5:11, 14; 1 Cor. 12:8). This indicates that true wisdom is never a purely intellectual exercise, although the intellect is involved in putting wisdom into practice. Wisdom can perhaps best be summarised as the right way of living before God, dependent upon His grace, continually filled with his Spirit (Eph. 5:18) and obedient to His revelation in the Scriptures.

Bibliography

- Blenkinsopp, Joseph. 1992. *Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament: The Ordering of Life in Israel and Early Judaism*, 1983. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Clements, R.E. 1976. *A Century of Old Testament Study*. Guildford & London: The Lutterworth Press.
- Clements, R.E. 1992. *Wisdom in Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan / Carlisle: Eerdmans / The Paternoster Press.
- Clines, David J.A. 1989a. "Job 1-20," *Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 17. Dallas: Word Books.
- Clines, David J.A. 1989b. "The Wisdom Books," Stephen Biggar (editor), *Creating The Old Testament: The Emergence of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Currid, John D. 1987. *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
- David, Peter H. 1982. "The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text," *New International Greek Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Emerton, J.A. 1979. "Wisdom," G.W. Anderson, editor, *Tradition and Interpretation: Essays by Members of the Society for Old Testament Study*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Fee, Gordon D. 1987. "The First Epistle to the Corinthians," *New International Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Goldsworthy, Graeme 1995. *Gospel And Wisdom: Israel's Wisdom Literature in the Christian Life*, 1987. Carlisle: The Paternoster Press.
- Hallo, William W., James C. Moyer & Leo G. Perdee 1983. *Scripture in Context II: More Essays on the Comparative Method*. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns.
- Harrison, R.K 1970. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. London: The Tyndale Press.
- Hanson, R.P.C. 1988. *The Search For The Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993 reprint.
- Hart, George. 1986. *A Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Kidner, Derek 1985. *Wisdom To Live By: An Introduction to the Old Testament's Wisdom Books of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes*. Leicester: IVP.
- Lambert, W.G. 1960. *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Lasor, William Sanford, David Allan Hubbard & Frederic William Bush 1996. *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*, 2nd edn. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Mackenzie, R.A.F. 1963. *Faith and History in the Old Testament*. London: Collier-MacMillan, Ltd.
- Martin, Ralph P. 1998. "James," *Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 48. Waco, Texas: Word Books.
- Murphy, Roland E. 1992. "Ecclesiastes," *Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 23A. Dallas: Word Books.

Murphy, Roland E. 1996. *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, 2nd Edn. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Pritchard, James B. (ed.) 1958. *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

Rad, Gerhard von 1962. *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 1, English Translator D.M.G. Stalker. Edinburgh & London: Oliver & Boyd.

Rad, Gerhard von 1966. "The Joseph Narrative and Ancient Wisdom," *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, English Translator Rev. E.W. Trueman Dickson. Edinburgh & London: Oliver & Boyd: 292-300.

Rad, Gerhard von 1972. *Wisdom in Israel*, English Translator James D. Martin. London: SCM Press Ltd.

Toombs, Lawrence E. 1952. "Old Testament Theology and the Wisdom Literature," *Journal of Bible and Religion*, Vol. 23.

Vaux, Roland de 1965. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.

Walton, John H. 1989. *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context: Surveys of Parallels Between Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Texts*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
