



Studies in the Book of Proverbs by [John T Polk II](#)
For [The Fellowship Room](#)

(#1) What are "Proverbs"?

"Proverbs" (Hebrew "*mashal*") which means "dominant meaning," but which may not be obvious unless it is pointed out. The New Testament word "parable" means "cast alongside" so that a fact of life helps illustrate a spiritual truth. The English word "proverb" ([John 10:6; 16:25](#)) carries the sense of "original, deeper meaning." The first time the word occurs ([Numbers 21:27](#)), the first proverb made ([I Samuel 10:12](#)), the first proverb of experience quoted ([1 Samuel 24:13](#)), all speak of observation(s) of life.

Jesus Christ is known for teaching in "parables" ([Matthew 13:3-53](#)), which are true statements of life that illustrate a spiritual truth from God. Parables needed an explanation "because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand" ([Matthew 13:13](#)). In [Matthew 7:21-17](#), Jesus divided the human race between those who hear and obey ("wise"), and those who do not ("fools"). "Proverbs" are true statements of human behavior that are explained by the God Who made us. Solomon divided the human race between those who hear and understand ("wise"), and those who do not ("fools").

Though Solomon "spoke three thousand proverbs" ([1 Kings 4:32](#)), those that have been written down are in [Proverbs 1:1-29:27](#); [Ecclesiastes](#); and [Song of Solomon](#). Of about 915 proverbs, Solomon wrote about 800, many in the Book of Proverbs ([Proverbs 1:1; 10:1; 25:1](#)). In [1 Kings 3:5-15](#), Solomon had asked God for "an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil" (**verse 9**), which God granted (**verse 12**), and that made Solomon the wisest man in the history of mankind, until Jesus Christ, "a greater than Solomon" ([Matthew 12:42](#)).

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