The Book of Proverbs

Programmed Syllabus

Bruce K. Waltke Th.D., Ph.D.
Professor of Old Testament
Reformed Theological Seminary and Regent College

Updated 2006
Syllabus

Course Description

“Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding” (Proverbs 3:13). In this course learners discover the role of wisdom in the Book of Proverbs by doing an exegetical study of its contents in their cultural, historical, and literary settings. The course begins with an analysis of the book’s structure and purpose, focusing on the forms of wisdom literature as seen in the literary structure of Proverbs. Dr. Waltke then moves to poetic analysis and finally to the prominent theme of wisdom that permeates the book. Students are encouraged to apply wisdom themes to life.

Course Objectives

1. Understand the Book of Proverbs in its historical, canonical, and contemporary contexts.
2. Recognize the forms of wisdom literature in the Book of Proverbs in light of Ancient Near Eastern collections of sayings and admonitions.
3. Define “wisdom” and understand the relationship of God and man to wisdom.
4. Understand the interpretive issues in the Book of Proverbs.
5. Know God by doing His will as expressed in this book.

Required Readings

Required Reading: The following readings are listed in alphabetical order, not in the order, which will be followed in the course. Daily requirements will be specified at the beginning of each lecture’s assignment sheet.


Syllabus


*The Teaching of Amenemope* (found in either ANET, pp. 421-425; or DOTT, pp. 172-186).


**Suggested Reading:** See Lecture notes for readings relative to specific topics.

---

**COLLABORATIVE LEARNING**

Whether you sit in a traditional classroom or study from a distance, you will benefit from interaction, collaboration, and spiritual formation (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 10,3,3,3; 10.3.4.3). In order to meet this need in distance theological education, ITS is developing structures and resources to encourage spiritual formation and community interaction in our courses. In this course, we have included three collaborative learning features:

1. **ITS Online Interactivity Forum** (see course requirements) – fosters peer-to-peer interaction in a global, threaded discussion (required for all students)
2. **Spiritual Formation Project** (see course requirements) – fosters mentor-to-learner interaction in a mentor-guided reflection, discussion and application (required for all students)
3. **Learning Community Assignments** (see end of syllabus) – fosters peer-to-peer collaboration in a group approach to assignments (optional but recommended where possible)

Go to [www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/](http://www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/) for the most up-to-date ITS resources.
Syllabus

Course Requirements

1. **Required Time:** In order to receive three semester or four quarter hours of academic credit, the student must complete the course requirements within a one-year period unless otherwise specified by the institution granting credit. During this time, the student is expected to devote at least 120 hours to the completion of the course.

2. **Required Reading:**
   
a. **Book of Proverbs:** Every chapter of the Book of Proverbs should be read at least three times, preferably once in the King James Version, and once in each of the New International Version and the New American Standard Version.

b. **Additional readings:** The students will be expected to read at least 1200 pages from the assigned required as well as suggested readings, listing the author, book, and pages read.

3. **Assignments:** The individual lecture assignments (see “Assignments” section of this syllabus) must be turned in at the end of the course.

4. **ITS Online Interactivity Forum:** Participate with other students worldwide in an ongoing asynchronous threaded discussion of two major course topics. Go to [www.ITScourses.org/interactivity](http://www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/) to register for and enter the ITS On-Line Forum. In order to get the fullest benefit from the Forum, complete the assignment after you have listened to all the lectures. Be sure to return to the forum after finishing the course to see how others respond. Follow these steps to complete the assignment:

   - Post an original answer to each question for your course (75 word min.).
   - Post your response to any previous answer given to each question (75 word min.).
   - Submit a document to your proctor that contains the original questions, your postings, and the postings to which you responded.

**NOTE:** Please read the “Assignment Instructions” in the Forum for details.

Objective: to develop critical thinking skills through personal interaction with the content of the course and the responses of others within a diverse community of learners.
5. **Spiritual Formation Project:**

**RATIONALE:** Ministry preparation and the Christian life require more than academic exercises. Learners also need personal, spiritual formation, which involves theological reflection and critical thinking on their current practices and assumptions. This process occurs as learners engage in self-reflection and interaction in a community of learning. **With this in mind,** ITS includes in all courses a capstone project addressing these issues and facilitating interaction beyond the formal learning environment (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 4.1.1; 10.3.3.3).

Write a **five-to-six page reflective essay** and **interview a mentor,** discussing the spiritual impact of this course on your life. **Identify your mentor early in the course,** and submit the essay to your grader when you take the final exam. This last project should not be a summary of course content, but an application of course principles. Complete the following:

1. **Personal Reflection and Evaluation:** **Reflect on the course** – To integrate your academic studies with your walk of faith, reflect on the content of the course and evaluate your life in light of what you learned.

   a. Follow these steps in your reflection:

   **Step 1:** What **one** theme, principle, or concept in the course is the most significant to you personally? Why is it significant?

   **Step 2:** What portion(s) of the course brought this theme/principle/concept to light?

   **Step 3:** Think about your past. Why is it vital now for you to deal with and apply this theme/principle/concept?

   **Step 4:** How should this affect your thoughts and actions, and what **specific steps** should you take to **concretely** apply what you have learned?

   b. Write your answers to the above questions in full paragraph form. (Recommended length for this reflection: **approximately three pages**)

   c. Give a copy of this reflection to your mentor (see #2).

2. **Community Reflection and Interaction:** **Interview a mentor** – Since the Holy Spirit uses the input of others to guide and form His people, interview a mentor according to the following guidelines:
a. **Who should you interview?** (1-3 are required; 4-6 are recommended)

1. Someone with whom you have a reasonably close relationship.
2. Someone who is a mature Christian ministry leader (i.e. a pastor).
3. Someone who is **not** your grader or a family member.
4. Someone who values the spiritual formation process.
5. Someone who is familiar with and values the subject of the course.
6. Someone who has experience using the content of the course in ministry.

**NOTE:** Identify your mentor early in the course, and give him/her the page entitled “Guidelines for Mentors.”

b. **Focus of the interview** – Your interview should focus on the issues and questions you raise in your essay. For example:

- What feedback can your mentor give in response to your essay?
- In light of the course content, are the conclusions you made appropriate? Why or why not?
- What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications might he/she suggest from his/her own life and ministry?

**NOTE:** Conduct this interview either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do **not** use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc). Suggested length: 45 minutes.

3. **Synthesis and Application:** *Draw your final conclusions* – Having reflected on the course and the discussion with your mentor, synthesize what you have learned in these **three sections**:

a. **Section 1:** Begin your essay with the personal reflection from #1 above. This should be exactly what you gave your mentor for the interview.

b. **Section 2:** Comment on your interview, explaining what you discussed and the insights you gained from your mentor. Include the following:

- What were the mentor’s comments regarding your essay?
- What advice did he/she give?
- How did his/her comments expand or correct your application of the course?
- Include the person’s name, occupation, and the length of the interview.

c. **Section 3:** Conclude with a synthesis of what you have learned. Answer the following:
If your mentor corrected any thoughts in your “Personal Reflection and Evaluation”, how do you feel about these corrections? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Synthesizing your thoughts from section one and your mentor’s insight in section two, what final conclusions have you reached? How is this different from section one?

In light of the interview and further reflection, what additional, specific changes need to occur in your life and what concrete steps will you take to implement them?

**NOTE TO STUDENTS:** Your effort in this assignment will determine its benefit. If by the end of this course you have not yet reflected critically on your life in light of what you have studied, allow this assignment to guide you in that process. The instructor for this course will not score your essay based on the amount of spiritual fruit you describe; so do not exaggerate (or trivialize) what you have learned. **The primary grading criteria is that you have thoughtfully considered the principles of the course and realistically sought to apply them to your life.** If you have done this and met the minimal requirements (as noted above), you will earn the full points for this assignment.

Note on confidentiality: Perhaps the Holy Spirit is dealing with you in some very personal areas of your life. Because of this, your grader will keep your essay entirely confidential and either return or discard it.

Objective: to stimulate reflection and interaction on course principles in order to enhance personal spiritual formation.

**Revised 10/05**

6. **Examination:** There will be one final examination.

**Course Grading**

- Lecture Assignments........................................................................40%
- ITS Online Interactivity Forum.......................................................5%
- Spiritual Formation Project..............................................................15%
- Final Examination............................................................................40%

Total........................................100%
Guidelines for Mentors

(Students, give this sheet to your mentor for the Spiritual Formation Project.)

Thank you for your involvement in this student’s ITS coursework. We believe the Christian life is more than an academic exercise, so we encourage students to critically reflect on their life in light of what they learn and then apply those insights to the daily life of faith.

Therefore, students taking ITS courses are required to complete a final assignment called the “Spiritual Formation Project.” This assignment involves two parts: an essay and an interview:

The ESSAY: After completing their coursework, students reflect on the content of the course, evaluate their lives, and discuss the one theme, principle or concept that is most significant to them and why. Students are to identify specific ways this theme/principle/concept should apply to their lives and what action steps they plan to take in order to make these changes a reality.

The INTERVIEW: After writing this reflection, students give a copy to their mentor and meet with him/her to discuss their thoughts and get feedback. The goal of this interview is to facilitate the student’s growth through interaction with a mature believer.

NOTES ON THE INTERVIEW:

• You do not need to be familiar with the course to participate in this interview. You will primarily respond to the thoughts of the student. (However, general knowledge of the subject matter of the course and/or experience applying it to ministry is valuable.)
• Prior to meeting with the student, read his/her “Personal Reflection and Evaluation” and prepare to discuss the following:
  1. What feedback can you give the student in response to his/her essay?
  2. Are the student’s conclusions from the course appropriate? Why or why not?
  3. What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications would you suggest from your own life and ministry?
• Meet with the student either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do not use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc.).
• Suggested length of the interview: 45 minutes

Thanks again for participating in this project! You have a real opportunity to guide this student in the application process and to help him/her connect academics to life – a valuable process for all who wish to grow in Christ.

NOTE: If the student’s school makes any changes to this assignment, their requirements should replace those described here.

© 2005 The Institute of Theological Studies™
Course Bibliography


© 1988 by The Institute of Theological Studies™
The Book of Proverbs ◆ Programmed Syllabus
Syllabus


Syllabus


Syllabus


Assignments

Lecture I

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE


Note these two typographical errors: on page 32, line 6 and on page 42, line 4 “that” should read “than”.

2. “In any attempt to outline a discussion of Biblical faith, it is the wisdom literature which offers the chief difficulty because it does not fit into the type of faith exhibited in the historical and prophetic literature.” (G.E. Wright quoted in Lawrence E. Toombs, “Old Testament Theology and the Wisdom Literature” in *Journal of the Bible and Religion*, 23, 1955.)

In what ways does Kidner see the distinctive emphases of the wisdom literature complement the other Old Testament traditions?

3. What “expansions” accompanied the reign of Solomon that gave impetus to the flowering of the wisdom movement?

4. While reading chapter 3, “Proverbs and Modern Study,” pay particularly close attention to Kidner’s assessment of McKane and Crenshaw. Both of these authors will be read first-hand later in this course.

5. In concise fashion, identify the issues raised by the following topics, which have spawned scholarly debate:

   a. The evolution of the proverb genre

   b. The dating of chapters one through nine

   c. The identity of Lady Wisdom in Proverbs 8

   d. The relation to Amenemope

   e. The role of Solomon
INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK (Proverbs 1:1-7)

It is actually impossible to study without have [sic] one’s own beliefs and framework of thinking and being influenced by them. Indeed, we need some framework, if we are to make coherent sense of the data we examine. What is important is to be open to recognizing our presuppositions, and then to be prepared for the material we are studying to challenge them and to modify the perspective with which we approach it. (John Goldingay, *Approaches to Old Testament Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1981), p. 18).


2. List the seven distinctives of the wisdom literature which Clements describes.

3. Briefly summarize the major contributions to the study of the wisdom literature made by the following scholars:
   
   a. H. Schultz
   b. J. Wellhausen / B. Duhm
   c. H. Gunkel
   d. J. Gressmann
   e. G. Von Rad

4. Characterize the hypothetical contrast between “old” wisdom and “later” wisdom as proposed by such scholars as Fichtner, Rylaarsdam, and McKane.
Assignments

Lecture III

DETAILED EXEGESIS OF PROVERBS 1:2-4

Wise refers to skill in living. It does not mean, primarily, the person who knows the right answer to things, but one who has developed the right responses (relationships) to persons, to God. The wise understand how the world works; know about patience and love; listening and grace; adoration and beauty; know that other people are awesome creatures to be respected and befriended, especially the ones that I cannot get anything out of; know that earth is a marvelously intricate gift to be cared for and enjoyed; know that God is an ever-present center, a never-diminishing reality, an all-encompassing love; and know that there is no living being that does not reach out gladly and responsibly to him and the nation/kingdom/community in which he has placed us. (Eugene Peterson, Earth and Altar (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), p. 117).

1. Read these various sources on Proverbs 1:1-8:

2. Read the entire Book of Proverbs in a modern English translation (preferably The New International Version) at one sitting. Count on approximately one and a half hours for this exercise.
Lecture IV

DETAILED EXEGESIS OF PROVERBS 1:2-8


2. What four considerations contribute to Crenshaw’s attempt to define wisdom? Elaborate briefly on what he refers to as “world view.”

3. What are the four main facets of Crenshaw’s argument for this existence of a special class of sages in Israel?

4. According to Crenshaw, what is the nature of the connection between the wisdom movement and Solomon? What is the basis of his assessment? (It might be interesting to recall what Kidner had to say about Crenshaw; cf. *The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes*, p. 51.)

5. Where does the basis of wisdom’s authority lie, according to Crenshaw? (In this, Crenshaw represents the scholarly consensus. This is not the viewpoint explained in the lectures.)
Lecture V
FORMS OF WISDOM: Structure, Proverbs of Solomon and Parallelism


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORM</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs 1:9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs 10-22:16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs 22:17-24:22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs 25-29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs 24:23-34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs 30:1-9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs 30:10-33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs 31:1-9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs 31:10-31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FORMS OF WISDOM: Parallelism, Topics and Hermeneutical Intention

Attempt to label the following verses of Proverbs 7 according to Alter’s “categories.” Use the following symbols: “=” for synonymity; “>” for focusing; “( )” for complementarity; and “- >” for consequentiality. The following translation is set up to reflect the wording of the Hebrew. The numbering does not represent verse numbers but rather the verses’ structure.

PROVERBS 7

1. My lad, keep my sayings, my precepts store up by you.
2. Keep my precepts and live my teaching like the apple of your eye.
3. Bind them on your fingers, write them on the tablet of your heart.
4. Say to Wisdom, you are my sister, call Understanding a kinsman.
5. To keep you from a foreign woman, from an alien woman who talks smoothly.
6. When in the window of my hour, through the lattice I peered.
7. I saw among the fools, I made out among the lads a witless fellow.
8. Passing through the market, by the corner, on the way to her house he strides.
9. At twilight, at eventide, in the dark of night and gloom.
10. And look, a woman to meet him whorish attire and devious aims.
11. Bustling and restless, in her house her steps do not dwell.
12. Now outside, not in the squares, at every corner she lurks.
13. She seizes him and kisses him, impudently she speaks:
Assignments

14. I had to make peace-sacrifices, today I fulfilled my vows.
15. So I came out to meet you, to seek your presence, and I found you.
16. With coverlets I’ve spread my couch, dyed cloths of Egyptian linen.
17. I’ve sprinkled my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
18. Let’s drink our fill of love till dawn, let us revel in love’s delights.
19. For the man is not in his house, he’s gone on a far-off way.
20. The purse of silver he took in his hand, at the full moon, he’ll come back to his house.
21. She draws him aside with all her talk, with her smooth speech she lures him.
22. He goes after her blithely like an ox coming to the slaughter, like a fool trotting off to the stocks.
23. Till an arrow splits his liver, as a bird hurries to the trap, not knowing it will be fatal.
24. And so, lads, listen to me, hearken to my mouth’s sayings.
25. Let your heart swerve not to her ways do not stray on her paths.
26. For many are the victims she has felled, innumerable all she has killed.
27. Through her house are the ways to Sheol, going down to the chambers of death.
Lecture VII

FORMS OF WISDOM: Intention, Structure, and Setting

... the purpose of the book of Proverbs is to correct us and instruct us, to give us insight and an understanding of the experiences of life, to thus equip us to make the right choices in the midst of those experiences ... (J. R. Wilson, The Place of Proverbs in Old Testament Theology, M.C.S. Thesis, Regent College, 1980, p. 36.)


2. What is Von Rad’s solution to the idea of a secular/sacred dichotomy in Israel’s thought?

3. What significance and function does the concept “the fear of the Lord” play in the sages’ instruction?

4. Why is the following true? “The acquisition of wisdom is always accompanied by the deepening of humility.”
Assignments

Lecture VIII

FORMS OF WISDOM: Authority, Function, and Criticism
and
THE THIRTY SAYINGS: Introduction, Poetry, and Substance

On the relationship between Proverbs and Amenemope, "... if Proverbs is the borrower here the borrowing is not slavish but free and creative. Egyptian jewels, as at the Exodus, have been re-set to their advantage by Israelite workmen and put to finer use." (Derek Kidner, Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary, p. 24.)


2. Outline Bryce’s pro and con arguments concerning the emendation of slsym as “thirty” based on an Egyptian numerical catchword.


4. What are the four proposed scholarly alternatives for the relationship between the Teaching of Amenemope and Proverbs 22:17-24:22?
Lecture IX

THE THIRTY SAYINGS OF THE WISE: Setting, Authority, And Function

One must put oneself into the times and into the surroundings in which (biblical authors) wrote, and one must see (concepts) could arise in the souls of those who lived at the time. (J.A. Turretinus quoted in Edgar Krentz, The Historical-Critical Method, Guides to Biblical Scholarship (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975) p. 18).


2. Support or refute Ruffle’s conclusions.
Lecture X

EGYPTIAN WISDOM INSTRUCTION: Introduction, Texts, and Criticism

1. Read Bruce Waltke, “The Book of Proverbs and Ancient Wisdom Literature” in Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. 136 (1979), pp. 221-238. This article is a helpful review and overview of the materials covered in the recorded lectures.

2. How does the unique contribution of the Israelite concept of wisdom undermine the understanding of the mindset of Proverbs as expressed in the following?

At some moment in remote antiquity God had created the universe orderly, bestowing upon that creation the necessary clues to assure its continued existence. From then on the Creator left human survival to its own devices. Those who used their intelligence to learn the universe’s secrets and to live in accord with those secrets fared well; those who refused to do so suffered grievous consequences. In such a world, grace played no role; indeed, to ask for special consideration approached blasphemy, since individuals had the necessary equipment to assure their well-being.
Lecture XI

EGYPTIAN BACKGROUND: Authorship, Religious Ideas, and Comparisons

Only rarely does one still meet men for whom a remembered stock of proverbs is more than a rhetorical flourish, whose life and thought are so rooted in such aids to living that they serve as indispensable signposts in making decisions large and small. The question is obvious enough, whether we moderns have not lost, with the disappearance of the maxim, a whole dimension of specific knowledge about the world. (Gerhard Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993), p. 26)


2. How else might you explain the substitution of terms seen in 13:14 and 14:27 (Whybray, p. 222)?
EGYPTIAN BACKGROUND: Arrangement of Solomonic Proverbs

... there are details of character small enough to escape the mesh of the law and the roadsides of the prophets, and yet decisive in personal dealings. Proverbs moves in this realm. (Derek Kidner, *Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary*, p. 13.)

1. Read Gerhard Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, pp. 113-143.

2. Provide some further examples of the concept of the “ambivalence of phenomena” evident in the Book of Proverbs.

3. List some examples of the different mindset of modern man and ancient man that come to the fore in the whole discussion of the wisdom enterprise.

4. Attempt to summarize briefly Von Rad’s distinction between the two approaches to the “appropriate time” ideal: first, that of Proverbs, and then that of Ecclesiastes.
ARRANGEMENT OF SOLOMONIC PROVERBS AND HERMENEUTICS

The world we see is the mirror image of our hearts. We perceive reality as we conceive it to be. We are always experiencing two landscapes at the same time: the landscape before our eyes — the phenomenal world — and the landscape in our minds, what the poet Gerald Manley Hopkins has called “inscape.” (James M. Houston, *I Believe in the Creator* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 15.)


2. How does the divine world order make demands on men?

3. What element does Von Rad fail to appreciate in his description of the sage’s apprehension of the world order? (Hints: the quote above and lecture three if necessary.)
Assignments

Lecture XIV

THE ARRANGEMENT OF PROVERBS 26:1-12: THE FOOL

Man is certainly stark mad. He can’t make a worm, but he makes gods by the dozen. (Walker Percy, *The Last Gentleman* (Canada: Avon Bard Books, 1966), p. 84).


2. Analyze Von Rad’s discussion of the basis of the sages’ teachings (pp. 190-195).

3. List the different definitions or insights (sometimes contradictory) given for the crucial Hebrew term ‘aharit in the following sources:

   a) Von Rad.

Assignments

Lecture XV

THE LAST THREE PERICOPES OF CHAPTER 1

Rewards of Wisdom (Proverbs 1:8-9)
Avoiding Evil Company (Proverbs 1:10-19), and
No Second Chance (Proverbs 1:20-33)

“The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword” (Heb. 4:12), for it pierces both mind and conscience. Like a hammer it can break stony hearts, and like fire it can burn up rubbish. It illuminates our path, shining like a lamp on a dark night, and like a mirror it shows us both what we are and what we should be. It is also likened to seed causing birth, and milk causing growth, to wheat which strengthens and honey which sweetens, and to gold which immeasurably enriches its possessor.” (John R. W. Stott, Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 7).

1. Read Gerhard Von Rad, Wisdom in Israel, pp. 263-319.

2. How does this quote relate to the Israelite pursuit of wisdom?

The motive that impels modern reason to know must be described as the desire to conquer and to dominate. For the Greek philosophers and the Fathers of the church, knowing meant something different: it meant knowing in wonder. By knowing or perceiving one participates in the life of the other. Here knowing does not transform the counterpart into the property of the knower: the knower does not appropriate what he knows. On the contrary, he is transformed through sympathy, becomes a participator in what he perceives. (Jurgen Moltmann, The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 9).
Assignments

Lecture XVI

NO SECOND CHANCE AND SAFEGUARDS AGAINST EVIL
(Proverbs 1:20-33; 2:1-22)


2. Evaluate these words concerning the authority which stands behind the wisdom instruction:

   It is not a religious authority which is claimed here. Parents have a natural claim on the obedience of their children, which they can reinforce by an appeal to a richer experience of life, and the wisdom teacher distills the sagacity of many generations for the benefit of his pupils, basing his authority on what has proved best in the past and on his own judgment.

   (Hints: How is he using the term “religious”? Is authority merely a matter of the seniority of parents and the longevity of tradition?)

3. Between the lecture and the reading, list the various alternatives for identifying Wisdom in 1:20.
SAFEGUARDS AGAINST EVIL (continued)

Let us cultivate the habit, in each religious exercise, of bowing reverently in silence before God, to give the Spirit the recognition that is His due, and keep down the will of the flesh that is so ready with its service of God. (Andrew Murray, The Spirit of Christ, p. 84.)

2. Discuss Whybray's detailing of the identity of the 'issa zara. pp. 53-55.
DOES PROVERBS PROMISE TOO MUCH? (Proverbs 3:1-12)

The fool is so excessively self-opinionated that he is deaf to advice from any quarter and never entertains a shadow of doubt that his own courses may be wrong. (McKane, p. 442)

DOES PROVERBS PROMISE TOO MUCH? (continued)
BLESSEDNESS OF WISDOM (Proverbs 3:13-18)
WISDOM AS A WAY (Proverbs 3:19-4:27)

... the cautiousness or canni ness of the wise is contrasted with the rashness and vast self-assurance of the fool. That the sage is “fearful” does not mean that he is excessively timid and irresolute, but that he does not underrate the difficulties and dangers involved in a given course of action. His action always depends on a careful and acute balancing of the risks and rewards, and where involvement is disadvantageous and dangerous, he avoids it. (McKane, pp. 464-465)


2. When commenting on Proverbs 10:7, McKane states:

The sentence has special interest in that it extends the normal range of the “righteous-wicked” antithesis. This is, for the most part, confined to life here and now, where, according to the Yahwistic theodicy, the righteous are rewarded and the wicked punished, the righteous protected and the wicked exposed to disaster. In this sentence the continuing consequences of righteousness and wickedness beyond death are explored. (p. 423)

On Proverbs 23:18, he says:

There is here a qualitative element in 'aharit “good end”… but neither in it nor in the reference to the hope which will not be cut off is there any widening of the horizon beyond death…” (pp. 387-388)

Refute his points from material in the recorded lecture.
... choosing a wife is a chancy business and that there are no assured means of knowing beforehand how it is going to work out. It is always something of a leap into the dark, so that when a man discovers that he has been blessed with a competent and reasonable wife, he is not disposed to take all the credit for this happy state of affairs. (McKane, p. 535)


2. How does the usage of ‘aharit in verse 19:20 fit with the emphases which have been advanced in the lectures?

3. Using the classifications of Alter (given in Lecture VI), label the parallelisms in Proverbs 18:1-10.
Assignments

Lecture XXI

IDENTIFICATION OF LADY WISDOM (Proverbs 8)

The wise man never ceases to be a learner; he is amenable to instruction and open to the reception of new knowledge. (McKane, p. 550)


2. Employing Alter’s parallelism classifications, label the verses in Proverbs 22:1-16.

3. Why is the unusual practice of claiming Proverbs 22:6 as a promise a misuse of the proverb?
Assignments

Lecture XXII

THEMES IN PROVERBS: Husband/Wife; Parent/Child

It is wisdom to live in the present and to grasp what God now gives: it is folly to use the present as a means to a comfortable and assured future, for man may not presume in God’s future. (McKane, p. 608)

Assignments

Lecture XXIII

THEMES IN PROVERBS: Parenting — Wise Speech

Plain speaking may subject a friendship to great strain and appear to be a false step. Silence, it may be argued, would have been a better response (27:5), or even words of reassurance designed to please and flatter (cf. 27:14). But whoever takes the risk of speaking the truth in love is the kind of person who is worth having as a friend and ultimately this will be recognized. His words which seemed to wound will be seen to have had salutary effects, and he will rise in the regard of the one who has benefited from his integrity and courage. Complete honesty is the cement of friendship. (McKane, p. 631)


2. Review course notes.
Deep in the human unconscious is a pervasive need for a logical universe that makes sense. But the real universe is always one step beyond logic. From “The Sayings of Muad’Dib” by the princess Irulan (Frank Herbert, *Dune* (New York: Berkley Books, 1965), p. 373).


2. How does the epilogue (12:9-14) function as an interpretative compass for the rest of the book?

3. How does the following sentiment match up (compare/contrast) with the teaching of the Book of Proverbs?

So I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God’s hands, and no man knows whether love or hate awaits him (Ecclesiastes 9:1).