



Proverbs: An Introduction & Commentary

Derek Kidner

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Derek Kidner offers a guided tour through the Old Testament's most important tract on wisdom, the Book of Proverbs. This volume is part of The Tyndale Old Testament Commentary Series which presents passage-by-passage interpretation of the text.

Proverbs: An Introduction & Commentary Details

Date : Published December 31st 1984 by InterVarsity Press (first published January 1st 1964)

ISBN : 9780877842668

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Format : Paperback 192 pages

Genre : Reference, Christian



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Nathan Albright says

It ought to come as no surprise that I am a fan of the book of Proverbs and the wisdom approach of the ancient Hebrews in general [1]. This book is, even now, a worthwhile book for those who want to understand the book of Proverbs better. Although it is a pretty old book, by the standards of biblical commentaries at least, having been published in 1964, it is still worthwhile from a textual perspective despite not having the most recent translations included among it. Indeed, its worth as a translation makes it quite a worthwhile and entertaining read. What separates this slim (slightly less than 200 page) volume from the competition is that this book actually expects that its readers will care about the insights that can be gained from Proverbs from reading about, to give an example not at random, the wisdom of the wife of Nabal in 1 Samuel 25 as well as the worth of viewing cognates to the Hebrew in other Semitic languages like Ugaritic and Akkadian. Of course, few people might be really interested in these matters, but for those who are, this book makes for a very worthwhile and scholarly read.

The contents of this book are divided into three very unequal parts. The first part of the book, which takes up a bit more than 50 pages, consists of an introduction to wisdom in Israel and the ancient world and the structure, authorship, date of the book of Proverbs and then subject studies into such issues as the relationship between God and man, the biblical view of wisdom, the fool, the sluggard, the friend, words, the family, and life and death as they appear in the book of Proverbs. The author mixes word studies with comparative language studies in related languages and also shows a sound understanding of the biblical context. The second and largest section of the book consists of a short analysis that divides the book into sections and a longer commentary that runs for almost 130 pages, giving clever and sometimes humorous and thoughtful discussions of verses and passages, words and phrases, with the author choosing between the AV/KJV, RV, and RSV in an eclectic fashion, and also consulting ancient sources like the related wisdom literature of the ancient Near East and the LXX as well, which has a slightly different organization than the version we get from the Masoretic text. The book then closes with a brief concordance that provides references to some of the more notable Proverbs that one might want to look up. The result is a text that is short and informative and clearly oriented at an audience that has a high degree of regard for both intellectual knowledge about the Bible and for the high moral tone of Proverbs as scripture worthy of reflecting on and applying in one's life.

For those readers who appreciate a combination of intellectual study and practical application, this book offers a short but powerful commentary on one of the most notable books of the Bible for practical wisdom. For this reader at least, the book hits the high notes of defending the Bible against those who would view the wisdom of Proverbs as disconnected or merely cynical and worldly wise, and demonstrates as well a subtle grasp of the semantic domains of the characteristic language of Proverbs, and contrasts the Bible's approach to wisdom with the wisdom literature of surrounding nations in a way that demonstrates the Bible's respect for the wisdom of neighbors but also the moral improvement found in Israel as a result of the blessings of divine revelation. A reader of this book, if they are prepared to translate some of the language into more familiar terms (the book's references to Accadian, for example, would be better understood among contemporary scholars of Semitic languages as Akkadian, to give but one example, albeit a common one), but although this book demands a fair amount of prior knowledge to make it fully comprehensible, it rewards those who seek it out. It would be ungenerous to ask anything more of a book than to reward those who seek to understand its contents.

[1] See, for example:

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.wordpress...>

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Mike Wagner says

Pithy, wise and scholarly...a very helpful commentary on the Old Testament book of Proverbs

Joel Rockey says

Solid commentary on Proverbs. The first section was the most helpful.

Ben Brown says

Kidner is one of my favorite commentators. This book is phenomenal, most notably Proverbs 1-9. Plenty of “one liners” in this. I want to read Waltke’s works on the Proverbs but for a short commentary, this couldn’t be better.

Jeff Short says

This is the classic commentary on Proverbs. The book is divided into two parts. The first part is a topical study where Kidner groups the relevant Proverbs passages into topics such as words, family, the sluggard, etc. He doesn’t just list the verses, but he puts them into a subgroup under the main subject.

The second part is verse commentary. The commentary is brief but very helpful. Proverbs can be challenging to study because it isn’t like most books that have one main theme and everything is building or connected to

it.

This is the one book to have on Proverbs, if you only have one. The whole book is small compared to the subject matter. It could be used in a devotional manner to much profit. I highly recommend this little volume.

Nat says

Pretty much a straight commentary. However, most of what is commented on is corrections made in translation--that many modern translations address.

This is a good book for quick-reference. His outline is probably the best I've seen.

Eric Lazarian says

I have the old IVP version, and it was on the recommended commentary list for Proverbs at CTS. Very handy and useful, but a little short on many verses.

Phil says

Very good, concise, orthodox, accessible

Gary says

I bought this commentary on a recommendation from C.J. Mahaney video I watched on line. What makes the book worth the money is the introduction. The introduction exposed me to categories and descriptions of these categories that made the book hugely edifying. It's very short, as I believe most commentaries in this series are. You won't get a huge exposition of every word or syntactical expression, rather you'll get the thrust of a passage or section of passages. If you're a laymen (like me) and not a pastor, I would whole-heartedly say start here.

Nathaniel says

I sat down one day with this book to find some information for a paper I was working on. I found myself riveted by the content and writing and ended up reading the entire commentary in one sitting (which says a lot given my attention span).
