

ACT 1: REDEMPTION PREPARED: ISRAEL**Scene 3: The Rise and Fall of the Kingdom of Israel
Solomon's Writings: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs**

Memory Verse: *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, but fools despise wisdom and discipline* (Prov. 1:7 NIV).

Background Helps:

1 Kings 4:32 informs us that Solomon “spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five.” Many of his proverbs have been handed down to us in the Old Testament book of Proverbs (see Prov. 1:1; 10:1; 25:1). (Note: the proverbs of other wise men are also included in the book of Proverbs. See Prov. 22:17; 24:23; 30:1; 31:1.) Only one of Solomon’s songs has been preserved, ostensibly his superlative song: the Song of Songs (Song of Songs 1:1). Ecclesiastes is attributed to “the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem,” and, as another piece of Wisdom Literature, also seems to originate from Solomon.

Although these three books all belong to the so-called Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament, they are very different from one another. Proverbs is a collection of practical sayings on how to live a godly life, with the fear of the LORD commended as forming the basis of such a life (Prov. 1:7). In Ecclesiastes the writer engages in a philosophical search for the meaning of life and concludes also that this meaning is found in the fear of God (Eccl. 12:13). The Song of Songs is love poetry, celebrating the gift of marital love. All three of these ultimately books point to Jesus Christ who is the “wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:24, 30; Col. 2:3).

Lesson Helps:



The teacher may want to give a brief overview of Solomon’s writings, including their historical setting (e.g., 1 Kings 4:32) and noting the main theme of each of the three books. However, for the main body of your lesson, you will probably want to focus on just one of the books, based on the needs of your class. Here are some possible lesson aims and ideas for each book:

1. Lesson aim for Proverbs: My students will learn about godly wisdom from the book of Proverbs, so that they will choose to lead a life of wisdom based on the fear of the LORD. In this lesson you should cover the introduction to the book of Proverbs in 1:1-7, leading up to the memory verse (1:7). Then you might choose one passage from the book (such as 3:1-12 or 31:10-31 from the daily readings) or a theme from the book (such as diligence and laziness, friendship, marriage, child rearing, work, material possessions, anger, the tongue, drinking, pride and humility, etc.) and base your teaching about wisdom on this one passage or theme. Be sure to relate your instruction about wisdom to “the fear of the LORD,” and then show your students that the ultimate source of this wisdom is Jesus Christ himself (1 Cor. 1:24, 30; Col. 2:4). A study of Proverbs would a suitable lesson for all ages.

2. Lesson aim for Ecclesiastes: My students will learn about the Teacher's quest for life's meaning in the book of Ecclesiastes, so that they will find their life's meaning in the fear of God. In this lesson the teacher would need to provide an overview of the book of Ecclesiastes, including 1:1-18 from the daily readings. Climax your study with the author's conclusion in 12:1-14, showing your students that the fear of God is the only solid basis for meaning in life. Show your students that the ultimate source of meaning in life is Jesus Christ himself. He alone provides a life that is abundant and eternal (John 3:16; 10:10). This lesson would be good for high school and college age young adults who are looking for answers in life.

3. Lesson aim for Song of Songs: My students will learn about true love between husband and wife from the Song of Songs, so that they will express this kind of love in their own marriage (or, in their future marriage). Again, in this lesson, the teacher would need to provide an overview of the Song of Songs, including 1:1-17 and 8:6-7 from the daily readings. Show how the author is celebrating God's gift of love between man and woman in the context of married life. Also, show how this kind of love in marriage is a picture of the love relationship between Jesus Christ and his church (Eph. 5:22-33). This lesson would be good for married adults or for older youth who aspire to a Christian marriage.

Assignment:

-  Read about Act I: Redemption Prepared: Israel. Scene 3: Rise and Fall of the Kingdom of Israel: **The Northern Kingdom: Israel (1) (1 Kings 12–22).**
-  Memorize Jeremiah 10:10a.