



**Reading the Bible  
in a Year  
—chronologically**

JUNE

## SONG OF SOLOMON

Since *1 Kings*, which we continue reading this month, outlines the reign of *King Solomon*, it is appropriate to slot in here this short book that bears his name. It is an eastern *love story*, sometimes named the *Song of Songs*. It is a celebration of sexual love in marriage, and can also be interpreted as a picture of Christ's love for his bride, the Church.

Just who is speaking, when, is not always clear. Most Bibles will suggest it in subheadings.

## PROVERBS

PROVERBS		
A.	Chapters 1-9	The way of wisdom
B.	Chapters 10-24	The main collection of Solomon's proverbs
C.	Chapters 25-31	Further proverbs of Solomon, Agur and Lemuel

Here we have a collection of mostly short, pithy sayings about life in general, and some of its contradictions, many of them spoken or compiled by that wisest of men, *Solomon*. They are written in poetic form.

The book sets out some 'black and white' principles of life. For instance, it notes that the righteous prosper and the wicked, by contrast, suffer and perish. Some of the other 'wisdom books' of the Bible complement this with a more 'shades of grey' approach. Job, for example, was righteous, yet he suffered terribly.

## ECCLESIASTES

The key phrase in this short book is 'under the sun', which appears 29 times. It is shorthand for 'life that fails to take God (who is *above* the sun) into account'.

The author, either *Solomon* himself or someone adopting his style, tries to grasp the purpose of life and concludes that, if we limit our outlook to things 'under the sun', life is without meaning. Only if we 'remember our Creator' (12:1) do things begin to make sense.

## KINGS AND CHRONICLES

*1 Kings* continues as the historical baseline, with *2 Chronicles* slotting in alongside it and covering much of the same ground.

After the *division of the kingdom* in *1 Kings* chapter 12, the writer has to record events in two parallel kingdoms. His method is to deal with the whole reign of one king, from his accession to his death, then to go back and deal with the kings of the other kingdom who reigns *began* during that period.

In general, Israel (north, 10 tribes) fell away from God more rapidly than Judah (south, 2 tribes).