
a *Grace Notes* course

Foundations 200

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Foundations 204

Old Testament Survey: Job to Song of Solomon

Grace Notes

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The Poetical Books

Introduction

The previous survey of the first seventeen books (Law and History), Genesis through Nehemiah, covered the whole history of the Old Testament. All the remaining books, Poetical and Prophetical, fit into the history of those seventeen books. The next section to be covered, the Poetical, is a much smaller section consisting of five books-Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Before examining them, we should note certain characteristics possessed by all of these five books.

The student needs to clearly understand that the term “poetical” refers only to their form. They are not simply the product of human imagination. These books portray real human experience.

Relationships

While the seventeen books which we have already seen are historical, these five poetical books are experiential. They describe events that happened to individuals. While the historical books were concerned with a nation, the poetical books are more concerned with the attitudes and feelings of the people. The historical books dealt with the Hebrew race. The poetical books deal with the human heart.

The poetical books are not the only poetry in the Old Testament Scriptures. There are large portions of poetry in the writings of the prophets, which we shall see later.

The Old Testament divides into four major sections which relate to the nation of Israel as God’s chosen people from the standpoint of their major characteristics or focus

1. The Law-Relates To Israel’s Moral Life.
2. The Historical-Relates To Israel’s National Development And Life.
3. The Poetical-Relates To Israel’s Spiritual Life.
4. The Prophetical-Relates To Israel’s Future Life As Fulfilled In The Messiah.

The five Poetical Books can also be viewed in their relationship to each other.

1. The Book of Job-Blessing Through Suffering.
2. The Psalms-Praise Through Prayer.
3. The Proverbs-Wisdom Through Precept.
4. Ecclesiastes-Truth Through Reality.
5. Song of Solomon-Joy Through Union.

Periods Of Hebrew Poetry

While Hebrew poetry occurred throughout Old Testament history, there were three primary periods of poetic literature

1. The Patriarchal Period-Job (around 1750 BC).
2. The Davidic Period-Psalms (around 1050 BC).
3. The Solomonic Period (around 950 BC).
 - A. Song of Solomon-a young man’s love.
 - B. Proverbs-a middle-aged man’s wisdom.
 - C. Ecclesiastes-an old man’s sorrow (around 950 BC).¹

Christ In The Poetical Books

As noted previously, Christ, the Messiah, is the heart of all the Bible. With the two disciples on the Emmaus road who were so saddened and confused over the events of the previous days as the crucifixion, death, and reports of the resurrection, the resurrected Savior came alongside and explained the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures (Luke 24:27). Then later when he appeared to the eleven and He said: ***“These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled”*** (Luke 24:44).

With this in mind, before beginning the overview of each of these poetical books, it would be well to get their Christological perspective. Regarding this element, Norman Geisler writes

¹ Norman L. Geisler, *A Popular survey of the Old Testament*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1977, p. 180.

Whereas the foundation was laid for Christ in the Law and preparation was made for Christ in the books of History, the books of Poetry reveal the aspiration (need) for Christ in the hearts of the people. They encouraged a life fulfilled in Christ in both an explicit and an implicit way, both consciously and unconsciously.²

Job shows the need for mediation by Christ. Psalms shows the need for communion with Christ. Proverbs shows the need for wisdom in Christ. Ecclesiastes shows the need for an ultimate satisfaction. Song of Solomon shows the need for a love union with Christ.

Hebrew Poetry

The Nature Of Hebrew Poetry

Hebrew poetry is unlike English poetry which emphasizes rhyme and meter. Hebrew poetry relies on **other characteristics** for its impact. Parallelism (which is a comparison of the content of the different lines) is the chief characteristic of Biblical poetry. Hebrew poetry also contains many “figures of speech.”

The Three Kinds Of Hebrew Poetry

There are three kinds of Hebrew poetry: (1) Lyric poetry, which was originally accompanied by music on the lyre (the Psalms); (2) Didactic (teaching) poetry, which, using statements of truth, was designed to communicate basic principles of life (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes); (3) Dramatic poetry, which used conversation to communicate its message (Job and the Song of Solomon).

The Two Key Elements Of Hebrew Poetry

Parallelism is the first key element. Hebrew poetry repeats and rearranges thoughts. Parallelism refers to the comparison of those thoughts. There are several types of parallel arrangement of thoughts

- A. Synonymous-The thought of the first line is basically repeated in different words in the second line (Psalm 2:4; 3:1; 7:17).
- B. Antithetical-The thought of the first line is emphasized by a contrasting thought in the second

line (Psalm 1:6; 34:10). They are often identified with “but.”

- C. Synthetic-The second line explains or further develops the idea of the first line (Psalm 1:3; 95:3).
- D. Climactic-The second line repeats with the exception of the last terms (Psalm 29:1).
- E. Emblematic-One line conveys the main point, the second line illuminates it by an image (Psalm 42:1; 23:1).

Figures of Speech is the second key element. A Figure of Speech occurs when one thing is used to represent another. Hebrew poetry uses figures of speech to communicate thoughts and feelings.

For example, “*one who delights in the Law of the Lord*” will be “*like a tree firmly planted*” (Psalm 1:2-3). The “*one who delights*” is not a literal “tree” but is compared to a tree. You find the words “like” or “as” in these kinds of sentences. (Psalm 5:12; 17:8; 131:2).

Another Figure of Speech compares one thing to another by use of the word “is.” In Psalm 23:1, David says, “*The Lord is my Shepherd.*” David is not a shaggy haired, four-footed animal, but is cared for by the Lord as a shepherd would care for his sheep. (Psalm 84:11; 91:4).

At times an exaggeration or overstatement is used to emphasize a point. In Psalm 6:6, David says that “*Every night I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with tears.*” This statement emphasizes his sadness. David does not cry enough to make his bed float. (Psalm 78:27; 107:26).

Sometimes a question is used to confirm or deny a fact rather than to make an inquiry. When David asks, “*Who is like You*” in Psalm 35:10, his desire is to emphasize the greatness of God, not simply to receive an answer of “no one” (Psalm 56:8; 106:2).

The final example of a figure of speech is to use some part of an animal to describe God’s Person. This is designed to convey certain truths about God. For example in Psalm 17:8 we find David asking the Lord to “*hide him in the shelter of His wings.*” God is not a bird, but David is asking God for protection like a mother bird would give its young. (Psalm 91:4).

² Ibid., p. 181.

Job

(Blessing Through Suffering)

[Read Job]

Author and Name of the Book

While we know the title of this book obviously comes from its main character, Job, and that he was an historical person (Ezekiel 14:14, 20; James 5:11), the author is unknown and there are no textual claims as to the author's identify. Commentators have suggested Job himself, Elihu, Moses, Solomon, and others.

Set in the time of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, the Book of Job derives its name from its chief character, a man named Job, who, experiencing extreme suffering (the loss of wealth, family and health), struggles with the question of why?

Date of Writing

Since we are not able to identify the author, it is not possible to establish the time in which it was actually written. However, we are able to establish that the time frame of the story took place before the giving of the Mosaic Law (1445-1405 BC). Prior to the giving of the Law and the establishment of the Levitical Priesthood, the head of the family was the priest. Job is seen offering up sacrifices as the family priest (Job 1:5). This indicates a date prior to the giving of the Law. It most likely took place during the time of Abraham.

Theme and Purpose

The book is a vindication of God's goodness, justice, and sovereign character in the face of the existence of suffering and evil. As such, the book wrestles with the question: Why do righteous men suffer, if God is a God of love and mercy? It clearly teaches the sovereignty of God and the need for man to acknowledge such. Job's three friends gave essentially the same answer. They said that all suffering is due to sin. Elihu, however, declared that suffering is often the means of purifying the righteous. God's purpose, therefore, was to strip away all of Job's self-righteousness and to bring him to the place of complete trust in

Him.³ Gleason Archer gives an excellent summary of the theme

This book deals with the theoretical problem of pain and disaster in the life of the godly. It undertakes to answer the question, Why do the righteous suffer? This answer comes in a threefold form: (1) God is worthy of love even apart from the blessings He bestows; (2) God may permit suffering as a means of purifying and strengthening the soul in godliness; (3) God's thoughts and ways are moved by considerations too vast (extensive) for the puny (small) mind of man to comprehend. Even though man is unable to see the issues of life with the breadth (extent) and vision of the Almighty; nevertheless God really knows what is best for His own glory and for our ultimate good. This answer is given against the background of the views of Job's three "comforters," Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.⁴

A further purpose is certainly to demonstrate the conflict of the ages between God and Satan and to show the relationship of suffering to this conflict. In the end, it demonstrates the truth of Romans 8:28.

Key People

Job, a blameless and upright man, Satan, Job's accusers, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zopher, and Elihu, the younger and wiser of Job's friends who sought to give Job counsel.

Christ as Seen in JOB

Christ is seen in several ways in Job. Job acknowledges a Redeemer (19:25-27) and prays for a Mediator (9:33; 33:23). He knows he needs someone who can explain the mystery of "suffering" which is answered only in Christ who identifies with our suffering and ultimately both answers Satan's accusations, which are ultimately against God, and defeats him (Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15; Romans 8:32-34).

³ Ryrie, p. 777

⁴ Archer, Electronic Edition.

Outline

1. The Prologue: The Disasters (Afflictions) Of Job. (1:1-2:13)

- A. His Circumstances And Character. (1:1-5)
- B. His Problems And Their Source-Satan. (1:6-2:10)
- C. His Comforters. (2:11-13)

2. The Dialogues Or False Comfort Of The Three Friends. (3:1-31:40)

- A. First Cycle Of Debate. (3:1-14:22)
 - 1). Job’s Lament. (3:1-26)
 - 2). Eliphaz’ Reply. (4:1-5:27)
 - 3). And Job’s Reply. (6:1-7:21)
 - 4). Bildad’s Reply. (8:1-22)
 - 5). And Job’s Reply. (9:1-10:22)
 - 6). Zophar’s Reply. (11:1-20)
 - 7). And Job’s Reply. (12:1-14:22)
- B. Second Cycle Of Debate (15:1-21:34)
 - 1). Eliphaz’ Reply (15:1-35)
 - 2). And Job’s Reply. (16:1-17:16)
 - 3). Bildad’s Reply. (18:1-21)
 - 4). And Job’s Reply. (19:1-29)
 - 5). Zophar’s Reply. (20:1-29)
 - 6). And Job’s Reply. (21:1-34)
- C. Third Cycle Of Debate. (22:1-31:40)
 - 1). Eliphaz’ Reply. (22:1-30)
 - 2). And Job’s Reply. (23:1-24:25)
 - 3). Bildad’s Reply. (25:1-6)
 - 4). And Job’s Reply. (26:1-31:40)

3. The Words Of Elihu. (32:1-37:24)

- A. First Speech: God’s Instruction To Man Through Affliction. (32:1-33:33)
- B. Second Speech: God’s Justice And Prudence Proved. (34:1-37)
- C. Third Speech: The Advantages Of Pure And Consistent Holiness. (35:1-16)
- D. Fourth Speech: God’s Greatness And Job’s Guilt In Accusing God Of Unfairness. (36:1-37:24)

4. God’s Revelation From The Whirlwind. (38:1-42:6)

- A. The First Revelation. (38:1-40:5)
 - 1). God’s Omnipotence Proclaimed In Creation. (38:1-39:30)
 - 2). Job’s Self-Condensing Confession. (40:1-40:5)
- B. The Second Revelation: God’s Power And Man’s Weakness; Job’s Humble Response. (40:6-42:6)

5. Final Comments. (42:7-17)

- A. God’s Rebuke Of The False Comforters. (42:7-9)
- B. Job’s Restoration And Reward. (42:10-17)

The Psalms

(Praise Through Prayer)

[Read Psalms]

Author and Name of the Book

The Book of Psalms is the longest book of the Bible and perhaps the most widely used book in Scripture because of the way it speaks to the human heart in all of our experiences in life. Again and again sighing is turned into singing through prayer and praise. For the most part, though the texts of the Psalms do not designate their authors, the titles do often indicate their author. The following chart designates the authors of these Psalms as they are found in the titles:⁵

Authorship of the Psalms		
David	73	Book 1, Book 2, 18, Book 3, 1, Book 4, 2; Book 5, 15
Asaph	12	Psalms 50, 73-83
Korahites	12	Psalms 42-49; 84; 86; 87; 88
Solomon	2	Psalms 72, 127
Moses	1	Psalms 90
Ethan	1	Psalms 89

⁵ Ryrie, p. 831.

In the Hebrew language, The Book of Psalms is titled, "Praise" or "Book of Praises." Only one Psalm (145) is designated by the word "praise," but praise is the heart of the Psalms. Psalms are "songs or poems sung with musical accompaniment." The word "psalms" comes from a Hebrew word which means "to pluck a stringed instrument" as an accompaniment to singing.

Date of Writing

With their very broad chronological range, the wide variety of themes, and the many different audiences living under a variety of conditions, the Psalms reflect a multitude of moods and experiences that make them extremely important to the reader regardless of the day in which he lives. Regarding the date of the various Psalms, Gleason Archer writes

Of these, the earliest would naturally be Psalm 90, by Moses, presumably composed about 1405 BC. The Davidic Psalms would have originated between 1020 and 975 BC; those of Asaph from approximately the same period; Psalm 127 from the period of Solomon's reign, possibly 950 BC. It is hard to date the descendants of Korah and the two Ezrahites who are mentioned; presumably they were pre-exilic. Of the Psalms not carrying titles, some were undoubtedly Davidic (e.g., 2 and 33) and the others date from later periods all the way up to the return from exile (such as 126 and 137, the latter of which is at least as late as the Exile). No convincing evidence, however, has been offered for the dating of any of the psalms later than approximately 500 BC⁶

Theme and Purpose

The Psalms provide us with a message of hope and comfort through the common theme of worship. They are, in essence, an antidote to fear and complaining through a personal response to the person and work of God. They are an expression of the worship, faith, and spiritual life of Israel. In the Psalms we have a mirror of the heart of God's people recording the simple, universal human experiences of man in the light of God's person, promises, plan, and presence.

⁶ Archer, Electronic Media.

In the collection of the 150 psalms there occurs a great variety of feelings, circumstances and themes. This means it is difficult to make any generalizations about a theme or purpose, but it is safe to say that all the Psalms involve a personal response on the part of the believer toward the goodness and grace of God. Often they include a record of the psalmist's own inner emotions of discouragement, anxiety, or thankfulness even when faced with the opposition of God's enemies or in view of God's varied providences (actions). But whether the psalmist is occupied with a mournful or a joyous theme, he is always expressing himself as in the presence of the living God. There are a few psalms, of course, which mostly contain the thoughts and revelations of God Himself, such as Psalm 2, but these are most exceptional.⁷

Many of the Psalms survey the Word of God, His attributes, and are Messianic in their scope in anticipation of the coming Messiah.

Divisions Of The Psalms

The Psalms are really five books in one. Each of the following book divisions conclude with a doxology (an expression of praise to God) while Psalm 150 occupies the place of the doxology and forms an appropriate conclusion to the entire collection.

Epiphanius said, "The Hebrews divided the Psalter into five books so that it would be another Pentateuch." The Midrash of Psalm 1:1 states, "Moses gave the Israelites the five books of the Law, and to correspond to these David gave to them the Book of the Psalms in five books."⁸

The correspondence to the Pentateuch may be seen in the following outline:⁹

1. Psalms About Man And Creation (1-41)- Corresponds To Genesis.

⁷ Adapted from Archer's *Survey of the Old Testament*, Electronic Media.

⁸ Charles L. Feinberg, *Class Notes*, Dallas Theological Seminary, p. 3, 1960's.

⁹ Geisler, pp. 195-196.

2. Psalms About Israel And Redemption (42-72)-Corresponds To Exodus.
 3. Psalms About Worship And The Temple (73-89)-Corresponds To Leviticus.
 4. Psalms About Our Sojourn On The Earth (90-106)-Corresponds To Numbers.
 5. Psalms About Praise And The Word Of God (107-150)-Corresponds To Deuteronomy.
- Another way of looking at the book divisions

Book	Psalms	Author	General Content
I	Psalms 1-41	David	Songs of worship
II	Psalms 42-72	David & Korah	Hymns of petition
III	Psalms 73-89	Mainly Asaph	Hymns of petition
IV	Psalms 90-106	Mainly Anonymous	Anthems of praise
V	Psalms 107-150	David & Anonymous	Anthems of praise

Categories Or Types Of Psalms

As to their types, the following illustrates a generally agreed upon set of categories

1. **Lament** (Sorrow) or **Petition**, either individual (Psalm 3) or communal (Psalm 44);
2. **Thanksgiving** or **Praise**, either individual (Psalm 30) or communal (Psalm 65);
3. **Trust** in God (Psalm 4);
4. **Enthronement** hymns of Yahweh: Psalms concerning Jerusalem (Psalm 48), and Royal Psalms (some of which are Messianic; Psalm 2, 110);
5. **Didactic (teaching)** and **Wisdom** Psalms (Psalms 1, 37, 119).
6. **Theme** Psalms: The Psalms may also be classified according to special themes as: Creation Psalms (Psalm 8, 19), Nature Psalms (Psalm 19; 104), Acrostic or Memory Device Psalms (Psalm 111, 112, 119), the Exodus (Psalm 78),

Repentance (Psalm 6), Pilgrim Psalms (Psalm 120), and Messianic Psalms, and those that include prophecies about Messiah like Psalm 2, 8, 16, 22, 40, 45, 72, 110, 118.

Key People

Though the titles to the Psalms do sometimes point to the subject or author of the Psalm, like David or Korah, the text of the Psalms does not. Rather, the focus seems to be more on the people of God in their worship and walk with the Lord.

Christ as Seen in PSALMS

Many of the Psalms are Messianic and speak of the person and work of Christ. They fall into the following categories

- (1) **Typically Messianic:** these Psalms are less obviously Messianic. The Psalmist in some way is a type of Christ (cf. 34:20; 69:4, 9), but other aspects of the passage do not apply. Perhaps, in this case Jesus and the apostles were applying familiar psalmic expressions to their experiences (e.g., 109:8 in Acts 1:20).
- (2) **Typological-Prophetic:** though the Psalmist describes his own experience, the language is such that points beyond his own life and becomes historically true only in the person of Christ (22).
- (3) **Indirectly Messianic:** when the Psalm was written it referred to the house of David or a specific king, but will find its final and ultimate fulfillment only in the person of Christ (2, 45, 72).
- (4) **Purely Prophetic:** refers directly to Christ without any reference to any other person or son of David (110).
- (5) **Enthronement:** these are Psalms that anticipate the coming of the Lord and the establishment of His Kingdom as fulfilled in the person of Messiah, Christ (96-99).

SPECIFIC PROPHETIC FULFILLMENTS APPLIED TO CHRIST

Prophecy	Psalms	New Testament Passage
1. Birth	104:4	Hebrews 1:7
2. Humiliation	8:4	Hebrews 2:6
3. Deity	45:6	Hebrews 1:8
4. Ministry	69:9	John 2:17
5. Rejection	118:22	Matthew 21:42
6. Betrayal	41:9	John 13:18
7. Crucifixion events	22	Matthew 27:39, 43, 46; Luke 23:35
8. Resurrection	2 and 16	Acts 2:27
9. Ascension	68:18	Ephesians 4:8
10. Reign	102:26	Hebrews 1:11

Psalm 13: A Prayer For Help In Trouble.
 Psalm 14: A Description Of The Folly And Wickedness Of Man.
 Psalm 15: A Description Of The Godly Man.
 Psalm 16: The Lord As The Refuge Of The Saints.
 Psalm 17: A Prayer For Deliverance Through God's Justice.
 Psalm 18: A Prayer Of Praise For Deliverance.
 Psalm 19: God's Revelation In His Creation Work And Written Word.
 Psalm 20: Prayer For Victory Over Enemies.
 Psalm 21: The Lord As The Strength Of The King.
 Psalm 22: A Portrait Of The Cross: A Psalm Of Anguish And Praise.
 Psalm 23: A Portrait Of The Divine Shepherd: A Psalm Of The Goodness Of God.
 Psalm 24: A Psalm Of The King Of Glory.
 Psalm 25: An Acrostic Psalm: A Prayer For Deliverance, Guidance, And Forgiveness.
 Psalm 26: The Plea Of Integrity And For Redemption.
 Psalm 27: A Prayer Of Fearless Confidence In The Lord.
 Psalm 28: Prayer For Help And Praise For Its Answer: The Lord My Rock.
 Psalm 29: The Powerful Voice Of God.
 Psalm 30: A Prayer Of Thankfulness For God's Faithfulness In A Time Of Need.
 Psalm 31: A Prayer Of Complaint, Petition, And Praise.
 Psalm 32: The Blessing Of Forgiveness And Trust In God.
 Psalm 33: Praise To The Lord As The Creator And Deliverer.
 Psalm 34: Praise To The Lord As The Provider And Deliverer.
 Psalm 35: A Prayer For Justice And Rescue From Enemies.
 Psalm 36: The Wickedness Of Men Contrasted With The Loving Kindness Of God.
 Psalm 37: A Plea For Resting In The Lord.

Outline

Book I: Songs Of Worship. (Psalms 1-41)

Psalm 1: The Blessed Man: Two Ways Of Life Contrasted: The Word And The World.
 Psalm 2: The Messiah King: The Confederacy Against God And Christ.
 Psalm 3: Quietness Amid Troubles: Protection In Danger.
 Psalm 4: An Evening Prayer Of Trust In God.
 Psalm 5: A Morning Prayer Of God's Confidence In God's Presence.
 Psalm 6: A Prayer Of A Soul In Deep Anguish.
 Psalm 7: A Prayer For Refuge.
 Psalm 8: The Glory Of The Creator And Man's Dignity.
 Psalm 9: A Prayer Of Thanksgiving For God's Justice.
 Psalm 10: A Prayer For The Overthrow Of The Wicked.
 Psalm 11: The Lord As A Refuge And Defense.
 Psalm 12: A Prayer For Help Against Lying Tongues.

Psalm 38: A Prayer For Reconciliation Acknowledging The Heavy Burden Of Sin.

Psalm 39: A Prayer Acknowledging The Frailty Of Man.

Psalm 40: Praise For The Joyful Experience And Expectation Of Salvation.

Psalm 41: Praise For God's Blessings In Adversity.

Book II: Hymns Of Petition. (Psalms 42-72)

Psalms 42-43: Longing For God And Hoping In The Lord's Salvation.

Psalm 44: National Lament And Prayer For Redemption.

Psalm 45: The Wedding Song Of A Son Of David.

Psalm 46: God Is Our Refuge And Strength.

Psalm 47: The Lord Is The Victorious King.

Psalm 48: Praise For Mount Zion, The Beautiful City.

Psalm 49: The Emptiness Of Riches Without Wisdom.

Psalm 50: The Sacrifice Of Thanksgiving.

Psalm 51: Confession And The Forgiveness Of Sin.

Psalm 52: The Futility Of Boastful Wickedness.

Psalm 53: A Portrait Of The Godless.

Psalm 54: The Lord As Our Help.

Psalm 55: The Lord Sustains The Righteous.

Psalm 56: Trust In The Midst Of Our Fears.

Psalm 57: The Exaltation Of The Lord In The Midst Of Isolation.

Psalm 58: The Righteous Shall Surely Be Rewarded.

Psalm 59: Prayer For Deliverance From Enemies.

Psalm 60: Prayer For Deliverance Of The Nation.

Psalm 61: Prayer From A Fainting Heart.

Psalm 62: Waiting On The Lord.

Psalm 63: Thirsting God's Love.

Psalm 64: Prayer For Protection.

Psalm 65: God's Bounty For Earth And Man.

Psalm 66: Remember What God Has Done.

Psalm 67: A Call For All To Praise God.

Psalm 68: God Is A Father To The Oppressed.

Psalm 69: Prayer For Deliverance According To God's Compassion.

Psalm 70: Prayer For The Poor And Needy.

Psalm 71: Prayer For The Aged.

Psalm 72: The Glorious Reign Of Messiah.

Book III: Hymns Of Petition. (Psalms 73-89)

Psalm 73: Prayer For An Eternal Perspective

Psalm 74: Plea For Help In A Time Of National Adversity.

Psalm 75: Justice Is The Lord's.

Psalm 76: The Victorious Power Of The God Of Jacob.

Psalm 77: In The Day Of Trouble, Remember God's Greatness.

Psalm 78: Lessons From Israel's History.

Psalm 79: A Plea For The Lord To Remember The Sheep Of His Pasture.

Psalm 80: Israel's Plea For God's Mercy.

Psalm 81: A Plea For Israel To Listen To The Lord.

Psalm 82: Unjust Judges Rebuked.

Psalm 83: Prayer For Judgment On Israel's Enemies.

Psalm 84: A Deep Longing For The Presence Of God.

Psalm 85: Prayer For Revival.

Psalm 86: Prayer For Mercy On The Nation.

Psalm 87: The Joy Of Living In Zion.

Psalm 88: A Prayer In The Darkness Of Despair.

Psalm 89: Claiming God's Person And Promises In Affliction.

Book IV: Anthems Of Praise. (Psalms 90-106)

Psalm 90: Teach Us To Number Our Days.

Psalm 91: In The Shelter Of The Most High.

Psalm 92: In Praise Of The Lord.

Psalm 93: Yahweh Reigns Gloriously.

Psalm 94: Yahweh Is The Judge Of The Earth: Vengeance Is His.

Psalm 95: Let Us Kneel Before Our Maker: A Call To Worship.

Psalm 96: Worship The Lord Who Will Judge The World In Righteousness.

Psalm 97: Rejoice! The Lord Reigns.

Psalm 98: Sing A New Song To The Lord.

Psalm 99: Exalt The Lord Who Reigns.

Psalm 100: Serve The Lord With Gladness: He Is The Lord And He Is Good.

Psalm 101: Commitment To A Holy Life.

Psalm 102: Prayer Of A Saint Who Is Weighed Down.

Psalm 103: Bless The Lord: His Compassions Never Fail!

Psalm 104: The Lord's Care Over All Creation.

Psalm 105: The Lord's Faithful Acts In Salvation History.

Psalm 106: A Remembrance Of Yahweh's Love And Israel's Disobedience.

Book V: Anthems Of Praise. (Psalms 107-150)

Psalm 107: Praise For God's Deliverance From Manifold Troubles.

Psalm 108: Praise And Prayer For Victory.

Psalm 109: A Prayer For Vindication And Judgments Against Enemies.

Psalm 110: Messiah Pictured As The Priest King Warrior.

Psalm 111: Celebration Of God's Faithfulness.

Psalm 112: The Triumph Of Faith.

Psalm 113: Praise To The Exalted Lord Who Comes Down To The Lowly.

Psalm 114: Praise For The Exodus.

Psalm 115: The Impotence Of Idols And The Greatness Of The Lord.

Psalm 116: Praise To The Lord For Deliverance.

Psalm 117: The Praise Of All People.

Psalm 118: Praise For The Lord's Saving Goodness.

Psalm 119: In Praise Of The Scriptures.

Psalm 120: Prayer For Deliverance From Slanderers.

Psalm 121: The Lord Is My Guardian.

Psalm 122: Pray For The Peace Of Jerusalem.

Psalm 123: Plea For Mercy.

Psalm 124: Our Helper Is The Maker Of Heaven And Earth!

Psalm 125: Peace Be On Israel.

Psalm 126: Praise For Restoration.

Psalm 127: Praise For Children, A Gift From The Lord.

Psalm 128: The Family Blessed By The Lord.

Psalm 129: The Prayer Of The Persecuted.

Psalm 130: Waiting For God's Redemption.

Psalm 131: Childlike Trust In The Lord.

Psalm 132: Prayer For The Lord's Blessing On Zion.

Psalm 133: The Blessedness Of Brotherly Unity.

Psalm 134: Praise To The Lord In The Night.

Psalm 135: Praise For The Wondrous Works Of God.

Psalm 136: Praise For God's Mercy Which Endures Forever.

Psalm 137: Tears Over Captivity.

Psalm 138: The Lord Answers Prayer And Delivers The Humble.

Psalm 139: The Lord Knows Me.

Psalm 140: Prayer For Deliverance: You Are My God.

Psalm 141: May My Prayer Be Like Incense.

Psalm 142: No One Cared But The Lord; He Alone Is My Portion.

Psalm 143: Prayer For Guidance; Lead Me On Level Ground.

Psalm 144: The Lord Is My Rock And My Warrior.

Psalm 145: Praise For The Lord's Greatness And Wonderful Works.

Psalm 146: Praise To The Lord, An Abundant Helper.

Psalm 147: Praise To The Lord Who Heals The Brokenhearted.

Psalm 148: Praise To The Lord, The Wise Creator.

Psalm 149: Praise To The Lord Who Delights In His People.

Psalm 150: Praise To The Lord.

Proverbs

(Wisdom Through Precept)

[Read Proverbs]

Author and Name of the Book

According to 1 Kings 4:32, Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs. And while he wrote most of the proverbs in this book, later chapters indicate that he was not the only author of the book. Three sections of the Proverbs are ascribed to Solomon; Chapters 1:1-9:18; 10:1-22:16, and 25:1-29:27. However, the proverbs in the latter section (25:1-29:27) were selected from Solomon's collection by King Hezekiah's committee (25:1). Proverbs 22:17 refers to the "sayings of the wise," and 24:23 mentions additional "sayings of the wise." Proverbs 22:17-21 serves as an introduction which suggests that these sections stem from a circle of wise men, not from Solomon himself. Chapter 30 is specifically attributed to Agur, son of Jakeh, and 31:1-9 to King Lemuel.

Proverbs obviously gets its name from its contents—short sayings or principles that convey truth in a pointed way. The Hebrew word for proverb means "parallel," "similar," or "a comparison." It refers to a comparison that underlies the moral principle. Not only can a proverb center in a comparison of similar concepts but also in a comparison of opposites called an antithesis.

The title comes from the fact that this writing is a summary of moral and spiritual instruction designed to enable one to live wisely.

Date of Writing

950-700 BC

As a book of wisdom, Proverbs is not an historical book but rather the product of the school of wisdom in Israel. Solomon's proverbs were

written before his death in 931 BC, and others were collected by Hezekiah's scribes around 700 BC

Theme and Purpose

As suggested by the name of the book and the meaning of the term "proverb," the theme and purpose of the Book of Proverbs is wisdom for living. It therefore offers special instruction on every issue of life: sin, goodness, wealth, poverty, the tongue, pride, humility, justice, family (parents, children, discipline), vengeance, strife, gluttony, love, laziness, friends, life, and death. No book is more practical in terms of wisdom for daily living than Proverbs.

The fundamental theme is "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge*" (1:7a). The absence of a fear of God leads to a foolish life. To fear the Lord is to stand in awe of His holy character and power. At the same time, Proverbs shows that true wisdom leads to the fear of the Lord (2:1-5).

Key People

The Proverbs were written for everyone, so no individual is mentioned.

Christ as Seen in PROVERBS

In Chapter 8, wisdom is viewed as a person and seen in its perfection. It is divine (8:22-31), it is the source of biological and spiritual life (3:18; 8:35-36), it is righteous and moral (8:8-9), and it is available to all who will receive it (8:1-6, 32-35). This wisdom came in the flesh in the person of Christ "*in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*" (Colossians 2:3). "*But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption*" (1 Corinthians 1:30 cf. 1 Corinthians 1:22-24).¹⁰

Outline

1. Introduction: The Purpose Of Proverbs. (1:1-7)
2. The Precepts Of Wisdom: Proverbs To Youth. (1:8-9:18)
 - A. Obey Parents. (1:8-9)
 - B. Avoid Bad Company. (1:10-19)

¹⁰ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 164.

- C. Heed Wisdom's Call And Advice. (1:20-33)
 D. Avoid The Adulteress. (2:1-22)
 E. Trust And Honor God. (3:1-12)
 F. The Blessings Of Wisdom. (3:13-20)
 G. Be Kind And Generous To Others. (3:21-35)
 H. Get Wisdom. (4:1-9)
 I. Avoid Bad Company. (4:10-19)
 J. Above All, Keep Your Heart. (4:20-27)
 K. Do Not Commit Adultery. (5:1-14)
 L. Be Faithful To Your Own Spouse. (5:15-23)
 M. Avoid Surety. (6:1-5)
 N. Shun Laziness. (6:6-19)
 O. Avoid Adultery. (6:20-35)
 P. Avoid The Adulteress. (7:1-27)
 Q. Wisdom And Folly Contrasted. (8:1-9:18)

3. The Proverbs Of Solomon. (10:1-24:34)

- A. Proverbs Contrasting The Godly And The Wicked. (10:1-15:33)
 B. Proverbs Encouraging Godly Lives. (16:1-22:6)
 C. Proverbs Concerning Various Practices. (22:17-23:35)
 D. Proverbs Concerning Various People. (24:1-34)

4. The Proverbs Of Solomon Copied By Hezekiah's Men. (25:1-29:27)

- A. Proverbs Concerning Relationships With Others. (25:1-26:28)
 B. Proverbs Concerning Actions. (27:1-29:27)

5. The Words Of Agur. (30:1-33)

- A. Personal Words. (30:1-14)
 B. Numerical Proverbs. (30:15-33)

6. The Words Of Lemuel. (31:1-9)

7. The Capable Wife. (31:10-31)

Ecclesiastes

(Truth Through Reality)

[Read Ecclesiastes]

Author and Name of the Book

There are two lines of evidence (external and internal) that point to Solomon as the author of Ecclesiastes. For the external evidence, the Jewish tradition attributes the book to Solomon. Internally, a number of lines of evidence show that Solomon was surely the author. First, the author identifies himself as "*the son of David, king in Jerusalem*" (1:1). Then, references in the book to the author's superior wisdom (1:16), extreme wealth (2:7), opportunities for pleasure (2:3), and extensive building activities (2:4-6) all suggest Solomon as the author. There is simply no other descendant of David who measured up to these descriptions.

The name Ecclesiastes comes from the title given it in the Septuagint. The Greek word means "assembly." The Hebrew title means "one who convenes and speaks at an assembly," or "a preacher."

Date of Writing

931 BC

According to Jewish tradition, Solomon wrote the Song of Solomon in his early years, expressing a young man's love. He wrote the Proverbs in his mature years, manifesting a middle-aged man's wisdom. He reportedly wrote Ecclesiastes in his declining years, revealing an old man's sorrow (cf. 12:1). Perhaps Ecclesiastes is the record of Solomon's regret for and repentance from his grave moral lapses (mistakes) recorded in 1 Kings 11. The Book of Ecclesiastes, then, would have been written just before Solomon's death and subsequent division of his kingdom that occurred in 931 BC¹¹

Theme and Purpose

The basic theme is the emptiness of life apart from God. In the development of this theme, four key purposes emerge

First, in seeking to demonstrate that life without God has no meaning, Solomon is seeking to demolish confidence in human-based achievements and wisdom; he shows that all of man's goals or the "way that seems right to man" must of necessity lead to dissatisfaction and

¹¹ Geisler, p. 214.

emptiness. Solomon recorded the emptiness of his own experiences to make his readers desperate for God. He sought to show that their quest for happiness cannot be fulfilled by man himself in the pursuits of this life.

Second, Solomon affirms the fact that much in life cannot be fully understood, which means we must live by faith, not by sight. Life is full of unexplained events. There is much in life that man cannot comprehend nor control, but by faith, we can rest in the sovereign wisdom and work of God. Much like the Book of Job, Ecclesiastes not only affirms that man is finite (limited), but that he must learn to live with mystery. Life on earth, "life under the sun," cannot provide the key to life itself. In view of this, man must have more than an earthly outlook; he must have the upward look to God, fearing and trusting Him.

Third, Ecclesiastes presents a realistic view of life that is in contrast with the Book of Proverbs. It shows that life differs from the ideals of Proverbs. Proverbs 10:16 affirms that justice is both to the righteous and the wicked, but Ecclesiastes 8:14 observes that this is not always the case, at least not in this life. Are these contradictions? No, because Proverbs is noting the general principles of God without noting the failings that occur because we live in a fallen, sinful world. Ecclesiastes points out that while a righteous order exists, as affirmed in Proverbs, it is not always evident to man as he views life "under the sun" from his finite perspective.

Fourth, Solomon showed that man, left to his own strategies will always find life empty, frustrating, and mysterious. The book, however, does not mean that life has no answers, that life is totally useless or meaningless. Meaning and significance can be found, he explained, in fearing God. Frustrations can thus be replaced with contentment through fellowship with God.

Key People

The key person is King Solomon.

Christ as Seen in ECCLESIASTES

Since Christ alone is man's means to God where man finds wholeness and satisfaction, or life and life more abundantly (John 10:10; 7:37-38), the emptiness experienced in life can only be filled

through a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus. Man's aspiration for significance and satisfaction are found only in the Savior.

Outline

1. Introduction: The Problem Stated. (1:1-3)

2. The Problem Demonstrated. (1:4-2:26)

- A. The Futility Of The Cycles Of Life. (1:4-11)
- B. The Futility Of Human Wisdom. (1:12-18)
- C. The Futility Of Pleasure And Wealth. (2:1-11)
- D. The Futility Of Materialism. (2:12-23)
- E. Conclusion: Enjoy And Be Content With The Providences Of God. (2:24-26)

3. God's Immutable Plan For Life. (3:1-22)

- A. He Predetermines The Events Of Life. (3:1-11)
- B. He Predetermines The Conditions Of Life. (3:12-13)
- C. He Judges All. (3:14-21)
- D. Conclusion. (3:22)

4. The Futility Of The Circumstances Of Life. (4:1-5:20)

- A. Evil Oppression. (4:1-3)
- B. The Emptiness Of Hard Work. (4:4-12)
- C. The Emptiness Of Political Success. (4:13-16)
- D. The Emptiness Of Human Religion. (5:1-7)
- E. The Emptiness Of Human Riches. (5:8-17)
- F. Conclusion. (5:18-20)

5. The Futility Of Life As A Whole. (6:1-1)

- A. Wealth Cannot Satisfy. (6:1-2)
- B. Children Cannot Satisfy. (6:3-6)
- C. Labor Cannot Satisfy. (6:7-12)

6. Counsel For Living With Vanity. (7:1-12:8)

- A. Counsel In View Of Man's Wickedness. (7:1-29)
- B. Counsel In View Of God's Providences. (8:1-9:18)
- C. Counsel In View Of The Uncertainties Of Life. (10:1-20)
- D. Counsel In View Of The Aging Processes Of Life. (11:1-12:8)

7. Conclusion. (12:9-14)

Song Of Solomon

(Joy Through Union)

[Read Song of Solomon]

Author and Name of the Book

Solomon is the author. He is mentioned seven times (1:1, 5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:11-12), and he is identified as the groom. Verse 1 asserts that Solomon wrote this song as one of many (in fact the best of the many) songs which he wrote (1 Kings 4:32 tells us he composed 1,005 such songs). Note that the text does not simply say, “The Song of Solomon” but “The Song of Songs, which are Solomon’s.”

Regarding the name of this book Dr. Charles Ryrie writes:

“This book has been titled several ways: the Hebrew title from verse 1, The Song of Songs, which means ‘the most superlative, or best, of songs’; the English title, also from verse 1, The Song of Solomon, which designates the author; and the Canticles, meaning simply ‘songs,’ derived from the Latin.¹²

Date of Writing

About 965 BC

Theme and Purpose

The Song of Solomon is a love song filled with figures of speech designed to portray God’s view of love and marriage: the beauty of physical love between man and woman. The book is presented as a drama with several scenes which are seen in the outline that follows.

The Song was probably written early in Solomon’s career, about 965 BC At this point, Solomon had sixty queens and eighty concubines (6:8), but later in his life, he would have seven hundred queens and three thousand concubines (1 Kings 11:3).

Key People

The bride (Shulamite), the king (Solomon), and a chorus (daughters of Jerusalem).

Christ as Seen in THE SONG OF SOLOMON

This book illustrates Christ’s love for Believers.

Outline

1. Title. (1:1)

2. Falling In Love. (1:2-3:5)

A. The Bride’s Longing For Affection. (1:1-8)

B. Expressions Of Mutual Love. (1:9-2:7)

C. Visit Of The King To The Bride’s Home. (2:8-17)

D. The Bride’s First Dream Of Separation. (3:1-5)

3. United In Love. (3:6-5:1)

A. Wedding Procession. (3:6-11)

B. Praise For The Bride’s Beauty. (4:1-15)

C. The Marriage Is Consummated. (4:16-5:1)

4. Struggling In Love. (5:2-7:10)

A. The Bride’s Second Dream Of Separation. (5:2-7)

B. Praise For The Bridegroom’s Handsomeness. (5:8-6:3)

C. Praise For The Bride’s Beauty. (6:4-7:10)

5. Maturing In Love. (7:11-8:14)

A. The Bride’s Desire To Visit Her Home. (7:11-8:4)

B. The Journey And Homecoming. (8:5-14)

¹² Ryrie, p. 1032.