

Wisdom Books Outline

Wisdom, morals, and poetry (at least one if not all three)

Job – allegory of God’s justice and evil (Patriarch setting)

OT most direct treatment of problem of evil and justice of God

Set up like a play: Prologue, Dialogues by 6 actors, Epilogue

Job 2: 9-10

Psalms – 150 sacred prayers attributed to David, basis for Liturgy

Act of praise to God

Written for prayer, worship, and instruction

Laments – prayers of suffering/crying to God for help

Thanksgiving – giving thanks to God

Hymns of praise (8, 18, 19, 24, 29, 34...)

Wisdom psalms – glory to God’s law and instruction for living good life (1, 19, 119)

Royal psalms – glorify king or thank God for placing king (2, 45, 72, 89, 110, 132)

Zion psalms – glorifying Jerusalem (46-48, 84, 132)

Messianic psalms – all royal psalms; prophecy of Messiah (22)

Imprecatory psalms – curses on enemies (137)

5 books of psalms (1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106; 107-150)

Book 1: lament, crying out to God

Book 2: more confident, glory of David, Solomon, and Jerusalem

Book 3: more laments, downfall of kingdom, very emotional

Book 4: meditative and reflective, very little about David

Book 5: Psalms of Ascent, joyful, 5 Hallelujah psalms

Mirrors story of David and his descendants

Proverbs – collection of short sayings of how to live virtuous life

Center of books of wisdom

Begins Solomon wisdom books

Different sections of proverbs: Solomon to son (1-9); words of the wise (22-34); etc.

Introduction tells what the book will contain (1:1-7)

Humble submission to God's truth and moral authority

Most proverbs are two-line verses with antithetical parallelism

Ecclesiastes – philosophical thought-experiment about meaning of life

Unique in Scripture

Thoughts of meaning of life lead to near hopelessness – very dark book

Voice of book is "Qoheleth" – "Preacher" – literally "one who calls an assembly"

Three main sections:

Vanity – 1-6

Ignorance – 6-11

Old Age and Youth – 11-12

Song of Solomon – collection of love songs/poems

Song of Songs = the greatest song

Love between Solomon and bride

Or: YHWH and Israel, Christ and Church, God and the soul

Wisdom of Solomon – theological/philosophical work on sin and death

A kind of "answer" to Ecclesiastes

Death is not the final answer, righteousness finds its reward in the next life

Two sections:

1-9: Wisdom leads to eternal kingship
10-19: how Wisdom has influenced salvation history

Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) – summation and meditation on wisdom/virtuous living

Integrates natural law, revealed law, sacred worship, and salvation history

Means “Church’s little book” because used so much in catechesis and moral instruction

Author was literary expert – scribe

Three sections:

1-23: Wisdom comes from the Lord
24-43: Wisdom will praise herself and is honored by God
44-51: Praise of famous men

From St. Athanasius (via John Bergsma)

If you are feeling...	Then read Psalms:
Happy	92, 93, 96, 97, 100, 136, 150
Downcast	42-43
Fearful	16, 23, 27, 46
Sorry, Repentant	25, 32, 51, 79
Perplexed	73, 90, 119
Sleepy	3, 4, 127
Indignant	7, 17, 82, 94, 129
Sick	6, 30, 41, 103
Romantic	45
Scared	55, 56, 91
Brokenhearted	6, 88, 137
Greedy	49, 52, 73
Weary	6, 22, 31, 63, 90

Prophets Outline

Isaiah

Second only to Psalms as most quoted book in New Testament

Often fundamental for message (Mk 1:2-3, Mt 12:18-21, Mt 13:14-15)

Most especially for prophecy of Messiah

Sometimes known as “fifth Gospel”

Two main sections: 1-39 and 40-66

First section: addressed to Jerusalem (Zion) and Judah 8th century BC

Oracles of judgment

Second section: addressed to Jerusalem and Judah during/after exile (587-537)

Oracles of consolation

Significant points:

Themes:

Judgment of Zion due to covenant infidelity (Is. 1:2-11)

Problem of hypocritical worship (Is. 1:12-17)

Repentance, Restoration, and Forgiveness of Sins (Is. 1:18-20)

Zion as bride of YHWH (Is. 1:21-26)

Judgment of the wicked (Is. 1:28-31)

6 particular judgments

Wealthy landowners (Is. 5:8-10)

Party animals (Is. 5:11-17)

Liars (Is. 5:18-19)

Those who “call evil good and good evil” (Is. 5:20)

Arrogant (Is. 5:21)

Bribeable drunkards (Is. 5:22-23)

Messianic prophecies:

Immanuel (Is. 7:13-14)

Royal child born as sign of salvation (Is. 9:6-7)

Shoot from stump of Jesse (Is. 11:1-16)

Coming of Teacher that will renew nature and restore Zion (Is. 30:19-26; 32:1-8)

“Servant Songs” (Is. 40-55)

Covenant to people and light to nations (42:1-9)

Outpouring of God’s Spirit (44:1-5)

Persecution and vindication of servant (50:4-11)

Suffering and death for many (52:13-52:12)

Triumph of monotheism Is. 44:6-8

People who worship idols are as blind and deaf as the idols (Is. 44:9-20)

Idols of other nations are nothing (Is. 46:1-3)

New Temple and New Jerusalem 62:1-5

Jeremiah

Levitical priest and prophet during Babylonian conquest – ended up in Egypt

Different types of sub-genres within including: sermons, oracles, dialogues, letters

Likens Jerusalem to wayward bride of YHWH (2-3) – broken covenant

Lamentations

Five laments about destruction of Jerusalem – written during exile

First four are acrostic poems (22 letters of Hebrew alphabet)

- 1: destruction of Jerusalem, daughter of Zion
- 2: the Lord has brought upon this destruction
- 3: lament of the man who has seen destruction
- 4: poem about fall of Jerusalem
- 5: prayer of Jerusalemites

Baruch

Israel needs to avoid idolatry and breaking covenant while patiently waiting for fulfillment of God's promises after the Babylonian exile

Not available in Hebrew (so not in Jewish Bible) but probably written in it

Bar 3:4 – probably earliest example of the dead praying for the living

Ezekiel

Prominence of priestly language and concerns

Careful literary organization

Vivid and sometimes shocking visions and allegories

Bizarre public behavior of prophet while conveying messages

Heavy influence on Book of Revelation

Promise of New Temple and liturgy

Daniel

Very influential on NT “prophetic bridge” between OT and NT

Coming of kingdom of God (2:44-45)

“Son of man” (7:13-14)

Coming and death of “a messiah” (9:25)

Destruction of Jerusalem (9:26; 12:11)

Resurrection of the dead (12:1-3)

Two major sections

“Court tales” in service of Babylonian and Persian royalty (1-6)

Prophetic dream visions of Daniel (7-12)

12 minor prophets

Habakkuk

Two dialogue cycles

1:2-12 – why do the wicked prosper?

1:13-3 – shall the more wicked judge the less?

Be patient, God will answer, justice will come to all (3:13-14)

Rejoice because God triumphs in the end! (3:18)

Hope: God reigns over all (2:20)

“The righteous live by their faith” (2:4)

Used in Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews

Next up: March 17 Synoptic Gospels/Acts