

Poetry and Wisdom Literature (Job – Song of Songs)

Books in section:

- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Songs

Timeline of writing: UNKNOWN (JOB) 1450BC-450BC

Book	Date of Writing	Author
Job	Unknown	Unknown
Psalms	1450-450BC +/- 30 years	Several listed in Psalms
Proverbs	950-700BC	Solomon and others
Ecclesiastes & Song of Songs	970-950BC	Solomon

Timeline of events: Creation to time of exile. Creation to 430BC

Theological significance:

The Poetry and Wisdom books are not primarily narrative, they are emotive. The narratives of the Pentateuch and History Books tell the facts, the Poetry and Wisdom Books express the soul. They are a portrayal of the emotions and experiences of God's people, as they attempt to understand God's plan, motives, and nature.

These books:

- Proclaim God's wisdom to those who seek Him
- Express the joy of being loved and known by God
- Explore the deepest issues of the human heart

God's plan revealed through each book:

- Job
 - Reconciling suffering which has been allowed by a loving God
- Psalms
 - Worship songs of praise as well as songs of grief. Directing all raw emotion toward God
- Proverbs
 - God's wisdom, experienced and observed by man, is shared with youth
- Ecclesiastes
 - Futility and frustration of searching for meaning in life, without considering God's purpose and position
- Song of Songs
 - An unashamed exploration of the physical expression of love between a married couple. An allegory for God's love of Israel and Christ's love for the church

How to Interpret:

- Utilize basic interpretive principles (OICA)
 - Observation, Interpretation, Correlation, Application
- Recognize the genre of POETRY and WISDOM literature
 - Figurative language is IMPLICIT when the literal meaning would be absurd, impossible, immoral, etc.
 - Simile, metaphor, hyperbole, anthropomorphism, etc.
 - Parallelism is used heavily in Hebrew Poetry, not so much in English
 - Instead of rhyming words, Hebrew Poetry “rhymes” thoughts.
 - Thoughts or phrases are compared, contrasted, built upon.
- Figurative language expresses literal reality in a memorable, thought provoking, or attention-grabbing way.
 - Understand what literal reality the figurative language is expressing.

Analyze and apply a passage:

- Psalm 1
 - What terms are literal and ordinary and what terms are figurative?
 - Hint, which terms would not make literal sense?
 - What do the figurative terms refer to?
 - Within the context of the Psalm, what literal truth is the figurative language discussing?
 - What is the overall point of the Psalm is expressing?
 - What do you observe or learn about man?
 - What do you observe or learn about God?
 - How is this relevant to man today?
 - Is this Psalm in any direct way connected to the Gospel?
 - In what ways are you challenged or caused to think by this Psalm?