

THE WHOLE BIBLE: 66 BOOKS IN 10 WEEKS

Job – Song of Solomon

INTRODUCTION TO PSALMS

- an anthology of Israel’s songs | worship song book in Bible

Importance of Singing

- singing is not ornamental but central to Christian faith
- Augustine – “to sing is to pray twice”

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

The psalms teach us the full range of godly emotions

- praise, thanksgiving, joy, fear, anger, doubt and depression

Features of Hebrew Poetry – imagery and parallelism

Reading Psalms in light of the New Testament

- 4 levels: David | Israel | Jesus | Church
- Jesus sang psalms, at last supper, and on cross (Ps. 22 and 31)

Psalm 22

TO THE CHOIRMASTER: ACCORDING TO THE DOE OF THE DAWN. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- ¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?
- ² O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest.
- ⁶ I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.
- ⁷ All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;
- ⁸ “He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”

- ¹² Many bulls encompass me;
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
- ¹³ they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.

- ¹⁴ I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;

- ¹⁵ my strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

- ¹⁶ For dogs encompass me;
a company of evildoers encircles me;
they have pierced my hands and feet –

- ¹⁷ I can count all my bones –
they stare and gloat over me;

- ¹⁸ they divide my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.

- ¹⁹ But you, O LORD, do not be far off!
O you my help, come quickly to my aid!

Introduction to Wisdom literature

- wisdom in Bible is art of godly living
- Proverbs 1:7 – “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge”
- Psalm 14:1 – “the fool says in his heart, ‘there is no God.’”
- wisdom is living constantly before face of God | not successful life
- wisdom is multi-dimensional: Proverbs-Job-Ecclesiastes in tension

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS

- 2 ways to live – wisdom and folly
- personified by 2 women – both beckoning a young man
- wisdom is like marriage | not abstract truths, but relationship
- wisdom is not simple maxims – but complexity and paradox

Proverbs 15:6 – In the house of the righteous there is much treasure,
but trouble befalls the income of the wicked.

Proverbs 28:6 – Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity
than a rich man who is crooked in his ways.

Proverbs 31

- ¹⁰ An excellent wife who can find?
She is far more precious than jewels.
- ¹¹ The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will have no lack of gain.
- ¹² She does him good, and not harm,
all the days of her life.
- ¹³ She seeks wool and flax,
and works with willing hands.
- ¹⁴ She is like the ships of the merchant;
she brings her food from afar.
- ¹⁵ She rises while it is yet night
and provides food for her household
and portions for her maidens.
- ¹⁶ She considers a field and buys it;
with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.
- ¹⁷ She dresses herself with strength
and makes her arms strong.
- ¹⁸ She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.
Her lamp does not go out at night.
- ¹⁹ She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her hands hold the spindle.
- ²⁰ She opens her hand to the poor
and reaches out her hands to the needy.
- ²¹ She is not afraid of snow for her household,
for all her household are clothed in scarlet.
- ²² She makes bed coverings for herself;
her clothing is fine linen and purple.
- ²³ Her husband is known in the gates
when he sits among the elders of the land.
- ²⁴ She makes linen garments and sells them;
she delivers sashes to the merchant.
- ²⁵ Strength and dignity are her clothing,
and she laughs at the time to come.
- ²⁶ She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.
- ²⁷ She looks well to the ways of her household
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
- ²⁸ Her children rise up and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:
- ²⁹ Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all.
- ³⁰ Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.
- ³¹ Give her of the fruit of her hands, / and let her works praise her in the gates.

INTRODUCTION TO JOB

- book is meditation on suffering
- because seemingly meaningless suffering challenges our faith in God
 - why does it happen? what meaning of it? where is God?
- seems in tension with Proverbs – “righteous prosper, wicked perish”
- 3 friends argue suffering comes from sin | but Job protests innocence

Ultimate answer to suffering is Jesus

- Jesus is true innocent sufferer – “my God, my God, why forsaken me?”
- God is not distant from our suffering, but taken into heart

Job 38

- ¹ Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:
- ² Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?
- ³ Dress for action like a man;
I will question you, and you make it known to me.
- ⁴ Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell me, if you have understanding.
- ⁵ Who determined its measurements – surely you know!
Or who stretched the line upon it?
- ⁶ On what were its bases sunk,
or who laid its cornerstone,
- ⁷ when the morning stars sang together
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Job 42

- ¹ Then Job answered the LORD and said:
- ² I know that you can do all things,
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
- ³ Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.
- ⁵ I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye sees you;
- ⁶ therefore I despise myself,
and repent in dust and ashes.

Job’s greatest need isn’t an explanation but God himself

- to demand an explanation is to put yourself in place of God
- but peace and joy comes from trusting in God’s sovereign care

INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES

- explores life without God – meaningless | contrast to Proverbs
- “James Dean” of Bible | Proverbs – teacher’s pet | Job – tears
- highlights cruelty and injustice of this life | proverbs are not promises
- longing for final redemption of world, and only resolution in Christ
– Romans 8:20, “creation was subjected to futility

Ecclesiastes 1

¹ The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

² Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher,
vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

³ What does man gain by all the toil
at which he toils under the sun?

⁴ A generation goes, and a generation comes,
but the earth remains forever.

⁵ The sun rises, and the sun goes down,
and hastens to the place where it rises.

⁶ The wind blows to the south
and goes around to the north;
around and around goes the wind,
and on its circuits the wind returns.

⁷ All streams run to the sea,
but the sea is not full;
to the place where the streams flow,
there they flow again.

⁸ All things are full of weariness;
a man cannot utter it;
the eye is not satisfied with seeing,
nor the ear filled with hearing.

⁹ What has been is what will be,
and what has been done is what will be done,
and there is nothing new under the sun.

¹⁰ Is there a thing of which it is said,
“See, this is new”?

It has been already
in the ages before us.

¹¹ There is no remembrance of former things,
nor will there be any remembrance
of later things yet to be
among those who come after.

Ecclesiastes reminds us – not to put our hope in this world

- this world is cruel, arbitrary, full of injustice | circumspect

INTRODUCTION TO SONG OF SOLOMON

- erotic love poetry of Bible
- celebration of the ecstasy and profound joy of sex
- takes us back to Eden – man and women both naked, felt no shame
- “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine”
- ultimately about Christ and his church (Ephesians 5:32)

Song of Solomon 7

⁶ How beautiful and pleasant you are,
O loved one, with all your delights!

⁷ Your stature is like a palm tree,
and your breasts are like its clusters.

⁸ I say I will climb the palm tree
and lay hold of its fruit.

Oh may your breasts be like clusters of the vine,
and the scent of your breath like apples,

⁹ and your mouth like the best wine.

Song of Solomon 5:2-5

“Open to me, my sister, my love,
my dove, my perfect one,
for my head is wet with dew,
my locks with the drops of the night.”

³ I had put off my garment;
how could I put it on?

I had bathed my feet;
how could I soil them?

⁴ My beloved put his hand to the latch,
and my heart was thrilled within me.

⁵ I arose to open to my beloved,
and my hands dripped with myrrh,
my fingers with liquid myrrh,
on the handles of the bolt.

Notes:

Introduction

- so far, looking at historical books | look at Psalms and Wisdom
- ahistorical, feeling of timelessness – applicable to all times

Introduction to Psalms

- most quoted OT book in the NT
- anthology of Israel's worship songs – from Moses to Exile
- worship song book in middle of Bible | history, laws, prophetic

Importance of singing in Christian faith

- singing is not ornamental but central to Christian faith – why?
 - not something happen to do, or aesthetic decoration
- because singing engages the whole body
 - mechanics: not throat, but whole body (mind and emotions)
- Augustine – “to sing is to pray twice”
 - Psalms are prayers | to sing prayers is to go another level
- something very powerful about music and song
 - first time heard “Oh Shenandoah,” I cried – so beautiful

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Psalms teach us full range of godly emotions | emotional depth

- positive/good emotions | negative/dark emotions
- praise, thanksgiving, joy | fear, anger, doubt, depression, anxiety
- normal and good to feel these things – part of human experience
- not good or bad emotions | but what do w/ them, process w/ God
- Psalms teach us emotional health | often, scared of strong emotions
 - godly person isn't stoic, but feels deeply

Psalms expands our emotional range

- intense emotions – deepest anger, depths of depression, ecstatic praise
- psalmist invites us to sit, sympathetically experience
- teaches us, prepares us – how to deal w/ emotions in godly manner

Features of Hebrew Poetry

- applies to all poetry – Psalms, Wisdom, and Prophets
- English poetry: metre and rhyme
 - roses are red / violets are blue / sugar is sweet / and so are you
- Hebrew poetry:
 - density of imagery (lots of metaphors)
 - parallelism (two lines logically connected)
 - same, opposite, intensification, logical next step

Example – Psalm 22

- ¹² Many bulls encompass me;
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
¹³ they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.

David surrounded by enemies

- experience is like surrounded by angry bulls w/ horns
- aren't just ordinary bulls, but bulls of Bashan (fertile valley)
- layers on imagery – bulls open mouths, like roaring lions

Hebrew poetry is very dense – lot of meaning packed in

- can't read quickly, like historical prose
- unpack imagery, think about logical flow of parallelism

Reading Psalms in light of the New Testament

- 4 levels: David – author, imagine David's situation
- Israel sang this song – Israel surrounded by enemies
- Jesus sang Psalms as devout Jew
 - in Mark 14:26, sang psalms after last supper
 - on cross, Jesus quotes 2 psalms: 22 and 31
- Psalms are ultimately fulfilled in Jesus' life
 - major theme is coming Messiah | most quoted OT book in NT
- finally, NT church sings Psalms (Col. 3:16)
 - church is surrounded by demonic forces

Psalm 22

TO THE CHOIRMASTER: ACCORDING TO THE DOE OF THE DAWN. A PSALM OF DAVID.

- ¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? **[Jesus on cross]**
Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?
- ² O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest. **[forsakenness – common to believers]**
- ⁶ I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.
- ⁷ All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;
- ⁸ “He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; **[it will seem like faith in God]**
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!” **[is for nothing]**
- ¹² Many bulls encompass me;
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
- ¹³ they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.
- ¹⁴ I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;
- ¹⁵ my strength is dried up like a potsherd, **[suffering of this adversity is intense]**
and my tongue sticks to my jaws; **[thinking about Christ | also believers]**
you lay me in the dust of death. **[all life is drained out – all vitality gone]**
- ¹⁶ For dogs encompass me;
a company of evildoers encircles me;
they have pierced my hands and feet –
- ¹⁷ I can count all my bones –
they stare and gloat over me;
- ¹⁸ they divide my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots. **[this is Jesus on cross]**
- ¹⁹ But you, O LORD, do not be far off!
O you my help, come quickly to my aid! **[teaches us what to do]**

Introduction to Wisdom literature

- wisdom in Bible is art of godly living
- Proverbs 1:7 – “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge”
- Psalm 14:1 – “the fool says in his heart, “there is no God.””
- wisdom is living constantly before face of God
 - not tips on how a successful life | make friends and influence ppl

Wisdom is multi-dimensional

- Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes are in dynamic tension

Introduction to Proverbs

- thesis: 2 ways to live – wisdom and folly
- personified by 2 women | Wisdom prudent and godly, Folly adulteress
 - both women are beckoning the young man
- profound insight – wisdom is not abstract, intellectual truths
- but like marriage
 - deep transformation, ultimately a relationship with a person
 - 1 Cor. 1, “we preach Christ crucified...wisdom of God”

Wisdom is not simple maxims – but complexity and paradox

Proverbs 15:6

In the house of the righteous there is much treasure,
but trouble befalls the income of the wicked.

Proverbs 28:6

Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity
than a rich man who is crooked in his ways.

Truth is complex and paradoxical

- no easy answers in Proverbs

Proverbs 31 – ideal woman

- multi-talented, boundless energy, financially savvy, domestic goddess, super strong and capable, and deeply godly
- read it as “this is who marry”
- but shallow and moralistic reading | impossibly high ideal
- women read – depressed | men read – no such woman
- instead this is Jesus – Lady Wisdom | beckoning deep relationship
- gives us guidance in choose spouse
 - notice, no description of physical appearance
 - but focus on character and inner qualities
- women should aspire to these qualities

Proverbs 31

- ¹⁰ An excellent wife who can find?
She is far more precious than jewels.
- ¹¹ The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will have no lack of gain.
- ¹² She does him good, and not harm,
all the days of her life.
- ¹³ She seeks wool and flax,
and works with willing hands. [industrious]
- ¹⁴ She is like the ships of the merchant;
she brings her food from afar.
- ¹⁵ She rises while it is yet night [wakes up before dawn]
and provides food for her household
and portions for her maidens.
- ¹⁶ She considers a field and buys it;
with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. [business savvy]
- ¹⁷ She dresses herself with strength
and makes her arms strong. [not delicate, but tough]
- ¹⁸ She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.
Her lamp does not go out at night. [wakes before dawn, stays up night]
- ¹⁹ She puts her hands to the distaff,
and her hands hold the spindle.
- ²⁰ She opens her hand to the poor [not greedy, but generous to poor]
and reaches out her hands to the needy.
- ²¹ She is not afraid of snow for her household,
for all her household are clothed in scarlet.
- ²² She makes bed coverings for herself;
her clothing is fine linen and purple.
- ²³ Her husband is known in the gates
when he sits among the elders of the land. [brings out best in husband]
- ²⁴ She makes linen garments and sells them;
she delivers sashes to the merchant.
- ²⁵ Strength and dignity are her clothing,
and she laughs at the time to come. [forward planning]
- ²⁶ She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. [full of wisdom and kindness]
- ²⁷ She looks well to the ways of her household
and does not eat the bread of idleness. [never lazy]
- ²⁸ Her children rise up and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her: [good mother and wife]
- ²⁹ Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all.
- ³⁰ Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. [most of all, loves God]
- ³¹ Give her of the fruit of her hands, / and let her works praise her in the gates.

Introduction to Job

- deals with the question of suffering
- Job is godly man, w/ large family (10 children), great wealth
- but one day, Satan approaches God – “only loves b/c of prosperity”
- “naked I came from mother’s womb, naked return;
Lord gives, Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord
- but Satan challenges God – “you haven’t touched his body”

Then Job is sitting on ash heap, scraping boils with potsherd

- utterly devastated, utterly ruined, deep suffering
- rest of book is meditation on suffering
– seemingly meaningless suffering challenges our faith in God
- biggest question of life is about suffering:
– why does it happen? what meaning of it? where is God?

Seems in tension with Proverbs – “righteous prosper, wicked perish”

- 3 friends cite moral logic – “suffering comes from sin”
- but Job protests his innocence | truly lived righteous life
- argument about nature of suffering
- whole time, Job’s searing question – “why am I suffering?”

Ultimate answer to suffering is Jesus

- Jesus is true innocent sufferer – “my God, why forsaken me?”
- God is not distant from our suffering, but taken into heart

Job 38 | Job is demanding an audience with God

¹ Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:

² Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?

³ Dress for action like a man;

I will question you, and you make it known to me.

⁴ Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me, if you have understanding.

⁵ Who determined its measurements – surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it?

⁶ On what were its bases sunk,

or who laid its cornerstone,

⁷ when the morning stars sang together

and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

This interesting response by God

- doesn't explain Satan's challenge | allow suffer show enduring faith
- in fact, no explanation of any kind

- instead, God asserts that he is God and Job is not
- Job – “thank you, this is what I needed” | Job is helped

Job 42

¹ Then Job answered the LORD and said:

² I know that you can do all things,

and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

³ Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?

Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,

things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

⁵ I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,

but now my eye sees you;

⁶ therefore I despise myself,

and repent in dust and ashes.

Job's greatest need – isn't an explanation but God himself

- to demand an explanation is to put yourself in place of God
- put yourself as judge of God's rule of the world
- but peace and joy comes from trusting in God's sovereign care

Introduction to Ecclesiastes

- sounds very modern – what if there is no God?
- life is meaningless, there's no point in even trying, all be for nothing

- extending logic of life without God
 - if no God, then nothing lasts, therefore nothing has meaning
 - jaded skepticism: hard work and wisdom come to nothing
- seems to contradict Proverbs – righteous prosper, wicked perish

Dynamic tension between Wisdom books

- Proverbs – eager teacher's pet in front
- Ecclesiastes – cool kid, smoking in back, completely cynical
- Job – poor kid, family in disaster, pimples, crying in corner

Which perspective is true?

- all true, in dynamic tension, in dialogue with each other
- straight-forward ethic of Proverbs softened by skepticism of Ecclesiastes and suffering of Job

Ecclesiastes reminds us of cruelty and injustice of this life

- Proverbs – righteous prosper, wicked perish
- Ecclesiastes – not always | righteous suffer, wicked triumph
- gap between reality as experience and promises of Bible

- reminds this world not as should be – longing for final redemption
- ultimate resolution to gap of Ecclesiastes is Christ

Romans 8:20

For the creation was subjected to futility [same Greek word as “vanity”], not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Ecclesiastes 1

¹ The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

² Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, **[literally: vapor]**
vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

³ What does man gain by all the toil
at which he toils under the sun?

⁴ A generation goes, and a generation comes,
but the earth remains forever.

⁵ The sun rises, and the sun goes down,
and hastens to the place where it rises.

⁶ The wind blows to the south
and goes around to the north;
around and around goes the wind,
and on its circuits the wind returns.

⁷ All streams run to the sea,
but the sea is not full;
to the place where the streams flow,
there they flow again.

⁸ All things are full of weariness;
a man cannot utter it;
the eye is not satisfied with seeing,
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⁹ What has been is what will be,
and what has been done is what will be done,
and there is nothing new under the sun.

¹⁰ Is there a thing of which it is said,
“See, this is new”?

It has been already in the ages before us. **[endless loop - utterly weary of this life]**

¹¹ There is no remembrance of former things,
nor will there be any remembrance

of later things yet to be **[nothing last, nothing be remembered]**
among those who come after. **[in end, all be for nothing – everything crumble]**

