

Old Testament Walk Through, Job-Song of Solomon

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Job Bible Walk Undeserved Suffering and Free Will in the Angelic Conflict

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There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil. Job 1:1

Introduction: suffering without knowing why, the angelic conflict, and 1 Peter 5

Theme

Undeserved Suffering and Free Will in the Angelic Conflict—Sovereignty, Suffering, Repentance, Restoration. A believer may not know why everything is going wrong. Sometimes, as with Job, God allows Satan or Satan's ministers to bring suffering into a believer's life, but in these cases God is in control and has a reason. Satan wants to discourage the believer's faith while God is demonstrating His own goodness and mankind's free will and faith. Furthermore, other people—whether family, friends, believers, or unbelievers—may view the sufferer through self-righteous and know-it-all eyes and give bad advice instead of mercy, prayer support, and encouragement. When this kind of suffering and testing come, the believer needs to trust God, God's wisdom, and God's plan. God is just, gracious, and compassionate. He will work all the things together for good for the believer.

History Overview. The book of Job is poetic wisdom literature. Job lived many years ago, likely during Abraham's era. The book was probably written soon after the events.

1. Location: Uz is mentioned in Job 1:1; Jeremiah 25:20; and Lamentations 4:21. It is SE of the Dead Sea, adjacent to Edom in North Arabia. According to Gleason Archer (ASOTI 454), Job was from North Arabia and the book has an Arabic setting.
2. Job was a real person who lived at a specific time in Middle East history. Both Ezekiel and James accept Job as a real person (Ezekiel 14:14, 20; James 5:11).
3. Job was his family's priest (Job 1:5), just like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The patriarchal family clan was the basic family unit.
4. Job counted his wealth in livestock (Job 1:3), which was similar to Abraham's time.

5. Job lived 142 years after he was restored (Job 42:16). This length of life fits with the patriarchal age.
6. The divine name Shaddai (Almighty) is used 31 times. This, too, is similar to Abraham's time (Exodus 6:3). It is used only 10 times in post-patriarchal Old Testament books.
7. The book seems to be unaware of the Mosaic Law. At the least, it has no clear references to that law.

Author: We do not know who authored Job.

1. The book was written soon after the events or by someone familiar with the history and culture of Job's life and times.
2. Moses may have written the record of Job's suffering. This is the view of the.
3. Others suggest that the book was written in Solomon's time; and a few favor Manasseh's time, Jeremiah's time, or later.

Key Verses

Job 13:15 "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him.

Job 37:23-24 "The Almighty—we cannot find Him; He is exalted in power And He will not do violence to justice and abundant righteousness. ²⁴ "Therefore men fear Him; He does not regard any who are wise of heart."

Job 42:5-6, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You; therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes."

Key People and Satan

1. Satan (Genesis 3:1-7; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7; Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 4:1-11; Matthew 25:41; John 8:44; 12:31; John 16:11; John 17:15; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 6:10-20; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; 1 Peter 5:8-11; Jude 9; Revelation 20; and others). Satan was God's highest creation. He is an angel who rebelled against God and therefore condemned with those angels who followed him to the lake of fire. Satan is the temporary ruler of this present world system. As rebel and temporary ruler he accuses believers before God, blinds the minds of unbelievers, instigates and dominates the present non-biblical worldview, heads up his demon organization, and seeks to destroy the spiritual life of believers.
2. Job. Job lived in the patriarchal times, somewhere east of the Jordan River, probably in the area around Edom. He was a real person. Job was wealthy and righteous. Satan claimed that Job followed God because God had prospered him. God allowed Satan to remove everything from Job but his life. Job suffered undeservedly. Three friends gave him advice as to why he was suffering. They concluded that he had sinned. Elihu, a younger man gave better advice: God is just and wise; Job was wrong to critically question God. After the men had their say, God taught Job through rhetorical questions about creation, life, wisdom, righteousness, and sovereignty. In the end, Job recognized that he had spoken without understanding; he retracted and repented. God restored Job's fortunes.
3. Eliphaz. Eliphaz is the first of Job's acquaintances to speak (Job 4, 5, 15, 22). He concludes that Job has sinned and God is disciplining him.
4. Bildad. Bildad is the second acquaintance to speak (Job 8, 18, 25). He concludes that Job that God does not pervert justice; Job is wrong to question his plight; Job has sinned.
5. Zophar. Zophar is the third to speak against Job (Job 11, 20). He concludes that God recognizes false men, and their triumph is short; Job is obviously guilty of sin.
6. Elihu. Elihu is the final advisor to speak (Job 32-37). He is younger than the three advisors and Job. He waited until the others had exhausted their arguments. Elihu's message is much closer to the truth: God is greater than man; he is always just; Job should consider God's creation and listen to God.

Key Words and Phrases Used

1. Sons of God (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7), refers to angels.
2. Wisdom, 21X (e.g. Job 4:21; 11:6; 26:3; 28:18, 28; 38:36).
3. Fear of God (Job 4:6), Fear of the Almighty (Job 6:14), and fear of the Lord (Job 28:28).
4. Worthless physicians (Job 13:4)
5. Proverbs of ashes (Job 13:12)

6. Windy knowledge (Job 15:2)
7. Sorry comforters (Job 16:2)

Overview Outline of Job

1. Job's status, Satan's accusation, God's verdict, and the test (Job 1-3).
2. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar argue with Job. They say all suffering, including Job's, is because Job sinned (Job 4-31).
3. Elihu speaks to Job. He says that God is infinitely greater in all ways than man. God is right in whatever He does (Job 32-37).
4. God then speaks to Job; Job finally understands that God is indeed just and infinite; after that God restores Job to temporal prosperity (Job 38-42).

Job Chapter Titles

1. Chapter 1: Satan: Does Job fear God for nothing? (Job 1:9)
2. Chapter 2: Satan: Skin for skin; Lord: only spare his life. (Job 2:4,6)
3. Chapter 3: Job cursed his birth. (Job 3:1)
4. Chapter 4: Eliphaz: Now it has come to you. (Job 4:5)
5. Chapter 5: Eliphaz: Don't despise God's reproof. (Job 5:17)
6. Chapter 6: Job: How have I erred? (Job 6:24)
7. Chapter 7: Job: Have I sinned? (Job 7:20)
8. Chapter 8: Bildad: If you are upright. (Job 8:6)
9. Chapter 9: Job: God is not a man. (Job 9:32)
10. Chapter 10: Job: Let me know why. (Job 10:2)
11. Chapter 11: Zophar: God knows false men. (Job 11:11)
12. Chapter 12: Job: Lord has done this. (Job 12:9)
13. Chapter 13: Job: You are worthless physicians. (Job 13:4)
14. Chapter 14: Job: Man is short-lived. (Job 14:1)
15. Chapter 15: Eliphaz: Your mouth condemns you. (Job 15:6)
16. Chapter 16: Job: You are sorry comforters. (Job 16:1)
17. Chapter 17: Job: The grave is ready for me. (Job 17:1)
18. Chapter 18: Bildad: You hunt for words. (Job 18:2)
19. Chapter 19: Job: God has struck me. (Job 19:21)
20. Chapter 20: Zophar: Triumph of the wicked is short. (Job 20:5)
21. Chapter 21: Job: The wicked live on. (Job 21:7)
22. Chapter 22: Eliphaz: Your great wickedness. (Job 22:5)
23. Chapter 23: Job: When He has tried me...gold. (Job 23:10)
24. Chapter 24: Job: God ignores folly. (Job 24:12)
25. Chapter 25: Bildad: How can man be just with God? (Job 25:4)
26. Chapter 26: Job: These are the fringes of His ways. (Job 26:14)
27. Chapter 27: Job: My integrity...you act foolishly. (Job 27:5,12)
28. Chapter 28: Job: Where is wisdom and understanding? (Job 28:12,28)
29. Chapter 29: Job: As in months gone by. (Job 29:2)
30. Chapter 30: Job: Taunt and byword, dust and ashes. (Job 30:9,19)
31. Chapter 31: Job: If I have..., then let him weigh me. (Job 31:5-6)
32. Chapter 32: Elihu: Elihu's anger burned. (Job 32:2-3)
33. Chapter 33: Elihu: God is greater than man. (Job 33:12)
34. Chapter 34: Elihu: God will not act wickedly or pervert justice. (Job 34:12)
35. Chapter 35: Elihu: The case is before God. (Job 35:14)

36. Chapter 36: Elihu: More to be said in God's behalf. (Job 36:2)
37. Chapter 37: Elihu: Consider the wonders of God. (Job 37:14)
38. Chapter 38: Lord: I will ask you, and you instruct Me! (Job 38:3)
39. Chapter 39: Lord: Do you know? (Job 39:1)
40. Chapter 40: Lord: Gird up and instruct me. (Job 40:7)
41. Chapter 41: Lord: What about Leviathan? (Job 41:1)
42. Chapter 42: Job: I repent and retract. (Job 42:6) Lord restored fortunes.

Trace the Theme:

Undeserved Suffering and Free Will in the Angelic Conflict—Sovereignty, Suffering, Repentance, Restoration

1. The events begin in chapter 1 with Satan challenging God that Job only follows Him because of what God gives him.
2. The events then move to earth where Satan causes Job's world to fall apart (Job 1) and then attacks Job's health (Job 2). God allows Satan to test Job, and Job through his free will eventually demonstrates to Satan that he accepts and trusts God in spite of all his undeserved suffering. The entire story of Job is meaningless to God, to Satan, to Job, to Job's acquaintances, and to the world if Job and mankind do not have free will.
3. Job has three acquaintances. Eliphaz (Job 4, 5, 15, 22); Bildad (Job 8, 18, 25); and Zophar (Job 11, 20) give him lots of advice—essentially their conclusion is that Job suffers because he has sinned.
4. The last acquaintance to speak is younger Elihu (32-37), who more accurately advises Job.
5. After Job has responded to all these men, God steps in and through a series of questions demonstrates that only He is trustworthy, holy, all powerful, and sovereign (Job 38-41).
6. Job gets the point. He repents of his faltering faith and criticism of God (Job 42).
7. The book ends with God disciplining the advisors and blessing Job.
8. Satan has seen, much to his dislike, that Job and mankind can and will choose to believe God and submit to God from their individual free will.

Key Doctrines

1. Angelic conflict (Job 1:1-2; Ephesians 3:10; 6:10-20; 1 Peter 5:8-9).
2. Free-will (Job 1-3; 42; Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Jonah; Matthew 4:5; 23:37; John 7:17; Acts 17:29-31; James 4:7-17; Revelation 22:7, 17).
3. Undeserved suffering (Job; 2 Corinthians 1:3-11; 1 Peter 4:12-19; James 1:2-12).
4. God's character or divine attributes (Exodus 3:5-7; Deuteronomy 32:1-4; Hebrews 13:8; 1 John 1:5; 4:8).
5. Self-righteous friends (Job).
6. God's faithfulness (Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 119:89-90; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; Hebrews 10:23; 1 John 1:9).

Lessons for Us Today

1. How do I think about God while I suffer and do not know the exact reason why?
2. When I am suffering or under great pressure, am I confident in God's character—that God is my comforter, strengthener, and restorer?
3. Do I give quick and unsympathetic answers to people who are suffering; do I criticize and judge them; or am I available to encourage, support, and pray for them without interfering?
4. What is my part in the angelic conflict?
5. Am I thankful for my free-will and do I seek to make right choices?

Psalms Bible Walk

Sepher Tehillim "Book of Praises"
Israel praises, prays to, and ponders God,
Or, Man responds to God and His work

Tod Kennedy

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Psalms 150:6. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!

Theme

Israel praises, prays to, and ponders God.

1. The Psalms were Israel's God-inspired temple hymnal and poetry book. They were religious lyric poetry. Lyric poetry employed images, symbols, figures of speech, and emotional language that expressed the authors deep feelings. Furthermore, the word pictures used help the reader to experience the same feelings that the author had (e.g. Psalm 22; 23; 32; 42; 46; 91; 121).
2. The Psalms reveal on the one hand God's character, His lovingkindness, His plan for history, and His acts in history; and on the other hand they reveal Israel's loyalty, faith, emotion, worries, sins, confessions, and pleas directed to the Lord God, the creator of heaven and earth.
3. The Psalms represent the experiences of Israel's struggles to survive and prosper as God's people and her struggles to witness to God and to God's redemption. She was an agricultural nation, a military nation, and the priest nation. Her history was laden with wars to conquer her land and to preserve her freedom, her land, and her spiritual heritage. She often failed, and sometimes succeeded. The Psalms reflect this.
4. Israel wrote, recited, and sang of God's past deliverances and blessings, of God's word as her source of comfort, strength, and guidance, and of her future. This psalm writing, singing, and reciting was a part of the day to day life of the Hebrew people. The Bible records Moses' psalm of praise in Exodus 15. Deborah praised God with a psalm about the defeat and death of Commander Sisera of the Canaanite forces (Judges 5). Hannah praises God for her son Samuel. Mary did the same, in Luke 1:46-55, about the coming birth of the Savior.

Overview Outline of the Psalms

1. Book 1: Psalms 1-41 ends with "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel" (Psalm 41:13).
2. Book 2: Psalms 42-72 ends with "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel" (Psalm 72:18).
3. Book 3: Psalms 73-89 ends with "Blessed be the Lord forever (Psalm 89:52).
4. Book 4: Psalms 90-106 ends with "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel" (Psalm 106:48).
5. Book 5: Psalms 107-150 "Praise the Lord" (Psalm 150:6).

History and Organization

The 150 different Psalms were written over approximately 1000 years. Moses lived from 1520 to 1440; he wrote Psalm 90. The last Psalms were likely written and collected during the Ezra and Nehemiah era (400s BC). Psalms is in the third section of the Hebrew OT, the writings. The history and organization is technical, but demonstrates that the Hebrews took their hymn book seriously and used it often.

1. The name "Psalms" comes from Codex Vaticanus, a fifth century copy of the Greek translation of the OT. The Hebrew word is *mizmor*, (מִזְמוֹר) which indicates lyrics accompanied by stringed instruments. It is found in 57 Psalm titles (e.g. Psalm 30; 31; 75).
2. The Psalter was formed over a period of a thousand years through gradual stages. One can see principles of arrangement throughout the Psalter: same author, similar or contrasting life situations, words and phrases linking psalms.
 - a. Individual authors, (Moses (90) and David (105), wrote poems. Some were then used in the worship by Israel. First Chronicles 16:4 indicate that Levites in David's time prepared psalms for worship services.
 - b. Next, there would have been some type of collection in groups and these were included in the books that we now have. Psalm 72:20 indicates an older collection of David's prayers. Second Chronicles 29:30 suggest that Hezekiah had two collections of poems for singing. The Qumran scrolls have the same five book division as our present Hebrew text.
 - c. These smaller collections were likely arranged into the books that we now have.
 - d. An editor apparently arranged the books in the present order. Psalms 1 and 2 are fitting beginning to the Psalter and Psalms 145-150 are the "grand finale" to the Psalter.
3. The Psalms have been organized into five books. Each book ends with a doxology, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel" or a slight variation of that. Psalm 150 then is the doxology for the entire Psalter.
 - a. Book 1: Psalms 1-41 ends with "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel" (Psalm 41:13).
 - b. Book 2: Psalms 42-72 ends with "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel" (Psalm 72:18).
 - c. Book 3: Psalms 73-89 ends with "Blessed be the Lord forever (Psalm 89:52).
 - d. Book 4: Psalms 90-106 ends with "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel" (Psalm 106:48).
 - e. Book 5: Psalms 107-150 "Praise the Lord" (Psalm 150:6).
4. The headings of the individual chapters are part of the Hebrew text and as such are inspired and accurate (e.g. 23, 49, 72, 90, 92, 100, 102, 120-134, 145). Fourteen Psalm titles refer to some historical event. Some of the historical references are clear and some are not so clear as to the specific event or events referred to.
 - a. Psalm 3 has Absalom's rebellion against David recorded in 2 Samuel 15-18 as the history.
 - b. Psalm 7 possibly goes back to 1 Samuel 23:24-29 where Saul was chasing David in the wilderness of Maon, but Saul had to turn back because the Philistines raided his own land.
 - c. Psalm 18 is almost the same as 2 Samuel 22. David sings to the Lord because God delivered him from Saul.
 - d. Psalm 34 goes with 1 Samuel 21:10-22:2. David escaped from Gath and went to the cave of Adullam.
 - e. Psalm 51 is David's prayer of confession after he admits his sin with Bathsheba to Nathan recorded in 2 Samuel 11-12.

- f. Psalm 52 has its history in 1 Samuel 22:9. Doeg told Saul that David went to Ahimelech, the priest.
 - g. Psalm 54 goes with 1 Samuel 23:15-23. David was in Ziph and the Ziphites tried to surrender him to Saul, but failed.
 - h. Psalm 56 has its history in 1 Samuel 21:10-15 where David went to Gath and acted like a madman.
 - i. Psalm 57, like Psalm 142, likely refers to 1 Samuel 22 and 1 Samuel 24. David hides in a cave at Adullam and En Gedi.
 - j. Psalm 59 has 1 Samuel 19:11-17 in mind. Michal helped David escape from Saul.
 - k. Psalm 60 finds its history in 1 Chronicles 18:9-12 and 2 Samuel 8:8, and 13. David defeated Hadadezer of Zobah, the Arameans, and the Edomites.
 - l. Psalm 63 may have its background in 2 Samuel 8:13 (David's battles with the Arameans), 2 Samuel 15:23 (Absalom rebellion), or 1 Samuel 22 and 23 (David's troubles while Saul pursued him).
 - m. Psalm 30 may have its background when David wrongly numbered the people, then bought the threshing floor from Ornan the Jebusite and built an altar to the Lord on it as recorded in 1 Chronicles 21 and 22.
 - n. Psalm 142, like Psalm 57, likely refers to 1 Samuel 22 and 1 Samuel 24. David hides in a cave at Adullam and En Gedi.
5. The Psalms have technical names that identify the kind of psalm or that refer to some event or use of the psalm.
 - a. Psalm (mizmor), 57 psalms, is a "song accompanied by the plucking of the strings of an instrument."
 - b. Song (shir), 12 psalms, means a song.
 - c. Maskil, 13 psalms, is a contemplative poem.
 - d. Miktam is in the heading of six psalms. The original meaning is unknown, but it was later known as an epigram, an inscribed poem, or a poem with pithy sayings.
 - e. Prayers (tepillah), is used for five psalms and Habakkuk 3.
 - f. Praise (tehillah) heads Psalm 145.
 - g. A song of Ascents (Psalm 120-134) likely were psalms sung or used when Israel went up to Jerusalem for her festivals (Exodus 23:17; Psalm 42:4; Isaiah 30:29). These could be classified with the thanksgiving, praise, declaration psalms.
 6. The numbering of the Psalms varies a little, with the Greek and the Vulgate slightly different from the Hebrew. The English translations that depend more on the Greek and Latin differ from the English translations that depend on the Hebrew text. For example, Psalm 131 in the Greek text is Psalm 132 in the Hebrew and English.
 7. The verse numbers also differ between the Greek and the Hebrew texts because the Hebrew superscriptions or titles are not numbered in the Greek and English versions, and therefore the Hebrew verse numbers will often be one or more numbers higher than the English or Greek.
 8. The Psalms have at least three text types—Massoretic Hebrew, Septuagint Greek which is inferior to the Hebrew, and a text type found among the Dead Sea Scrolls (11QPs^a), also inferior.
 - a. The Massoretic Text (MT) is the Hebrew text; it is the best text. This is the text of the standard published Hebrew Bible.
 - b. The Septuagint text is the Greek text. This is inferior to the Hebrew text. It became the basis for two of Jerome's translations-revisions of the Old Latin Psalter. The Latin Vulgate also follows the Greek text.

- c. The Dead Sea Scrolls is the third major text type and demonstrates the accuracy of the MT.
9. The Psalm headings (superscriptions) have notes that indicate author, music, director, and instruments.
- a. Ninety Psalms name their author, while 60 Psalms are anonymous.
 - i. Moses wrote Psalm 90.
 - ii. David wrote 73 Psalms, mainly in Books I and II.
 - iii. Asaph wrote 12 Psalms: Psalm 50 and 73-83.
 - iv. Heman the Ezrahite wrote Psalm 88
 - v. Ethan the Ezrahite wrote Psalm 89.
 - vi. Solomon wrote Psalm 72 and 127.
 - b. Many of the Psalms have beginning notes to indicate the director or performer.
 - i. For the choir director in 55 Psalms (e.g. 4, 5, 6, 20, 22).
 - ii. For the sons of Korah were likely the musical performers (42, 44-49, 84, 87-88).
 - iii. Jeduthun, who was one of David's music directors in 1 Chronicles 16.41 (39, 62, 77).
 - iv. Alamoth possibly means "maidens" or a song sung by female voices (46).
 - c. Some Psalms have beginning notes about the instruments. I have listed important ones.
 - i. Stringed instruments or instrument (4, 6, 54-55, 67, 76).
 - ii. Eight stringed lute, lyre, harp (6, 12).
 - iii. Flute (5).
 - iv. Gittith may mean wine song or an instrument from Gath (8, 81, 84).
 - d. Melody indicators are also placed in the superscription or heading and indicate "to the tune of."
 - i. To the lily or lilies, shoshannim (45, 60, 69, 80).
 - ii. To the doe of the morning, Aijeleth Hashshahar (22).
 - iii. To the silent dove of the distances, Jonath elem rehokim (56).
 - iv. Do not destroy, Al-tashheth, (57-59, 75).
 - v. The meanings of the tunes of 9, 53, and 88 are disputed. Psalm 9, Muth-labben means the death of the son.
 - vi. One exception is Selah, which is found 71 times in the Psalms, but not in the heading. It may be a pause to tell the worshippers to lift up their voices. It was an editorial addition.
10. The Psalms were written with meter (rhythm) and parallelism. The meter has not been determined with any confidence. Most scholars simply count the accented words or groups of words to arrive at a meter. Parallelism in the Psalms is parallelism of expression or ideas. Most parallelism refers to ideas within a verse. There are a number of kinds of parallelism.
- a. Synonymous parallelism. The two consecutive lines are very close in thought or a term. Examples include 1:2, 3:1, 7:17, 22:18, and 105:23.
 - b. Antithetical parallelism. The two consecutive lines contrast thought. Examples include 1:6 and 90:6.
 - c. Emblematic parallelism. One line is a truth and the other line pictures the truth or gives an emblem clarifying the truth. Examples include 1:3, 23:1, 42:1, and 103:13.
 - d. Synthetic parallelism. Here the second line develops or expands the first line. Examples include 1.1 and 95:3
 - e. Climactic parallelism. The first line makes a statement and the second line repeats the statement and completes the thought. Psalm 29:1 and 96:7 are examples.
 - f. Alphabetic or acrostic Psalms. In these psalms each line begins with a letter of the alphabet in order from aleph (the first Hebrew letter) to tav (the last Hebrew letter).

Psalms 119 has each section divided according to letter. For example, 119:1-8 is the aleph section and each line begins with aleph. There are 22 sections corresponding to the 22 letters (sin and shin count as the same letter, so 22 sections, not 23) of the Hebrew alphabet. This alphabetizing aids in memory. The acrostic psalms are 9-10 (taken together), 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, and 145.

11. There are different categories of psalms based upon their themes. The Chronicler wrote that David appointed some Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, to celebrate and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel (1 Chronicles 16:4). There are also different kinds of Psalms. The classification varies with different scholars. This is a simplified classification. As a note of caution regarding what are called messianic psalms, we must be careful not to read into a psalm more than the author understood or meant. The NT author under inspiration used psalms for his purpose, but this use was often different than the original author understood.
 - a. Imprecatory psalm in which the author asks God (not man) to judge sin, condemn the wicked, and show his righteousness (e.g. 7, 35, 55, 58, 59, 69, 79, 109, 137, 139).
 - b. Lament psalms, individual and national, in which a person or the nation asks God for help during a failure, testing, or disaster (e.g. 3, 12, 13, 44, 85).
 - c. Messianic psalms, in which the psalmist speaks in some way of the coming messiah (110). Messianic predictions are based in the hoped for ideal Davidic king. Some refer to the historical scene at the time of writing but apparently also have a clouded reference to the coming messiah. These do have historical reality, but the Messiah is the one through whom the ideal Davidic ruler is completely realized (2, 22, 45, 72, 69, 132).
 - d. Penitential psalms, in which one confesses sin to God and desires forgiveness and blessing (e.g. 6, 32, 51).
 - e. Royal psalms proclaim God the king (e.g. 2, 72, 93, 97, 99, 132).
 - f. Thanksgiving, praise, and declaration psalms (e.g. 19, 92, 103-106, 112, 113, 135, 136, 145-150).

Key Words and Phrases

There are many. I have selected some.

1. Anoint, anointed. = messiah. 12x. Noun mashiyach 10x, 2:2; 18:50; 20:6; 28:8; 84:9; 89:38; 89:51; 105:15; 132:10, 17. Verb mashach 2x, 45:7; 89:20. Psalm 23:5 is a different word.
2. Bless, blessed, blessing(s), 108x. 1:1; 5:12; 32:1
3. Enemy, 75x. 3:7; 23:5; 83:2; 92:9; 143:9.
4. God's Power, 21x. 21:3; 54:1; 59:11; 62:11; 63:2; 78:26; 106:8; 145:6, 11.
5. Heart, 130x. 4:4, 7; 13:5; 14:1; 19:8; 40:8; 73:26; 111:1; 139:23.
6. Israel 62x. 14:7; 68:35; 78; 81; 98:3; 103:7; 105; 114:1-2; 135; 147.
7. King, 68x. 2:6; 5:2; 10:16; 47:7; 74:12; 145:1
8. Praise, 166x. 7:17; 9:11; 48:1; 69:34; 89:5; 113:1, 3; 148:13; 150:6 "halelu yah"
9. Prayer, 28x. 17:1; 54:2; 66:19; 102:17. Pray, 4x. 5:3; 32:6; 122:6.
10. Righteous, 66x. 7:11; 11:7; 19:9; 32:11; 68:3; 119:137; 148:8.
11. Salvation, 61x. Noun yeshu`ah Strong's 3444. 3:8; 9:14; 118:2. Noun Yesha` Strong 3468, 27:1; 51:12; 79:9; 95:1. Noun teshu`ah Strong 8668, 146:3.
12. Thanks, 52x. 9:1; 52:9; 100:4.
13. Trust, 47x. Verb batach Strong 982, 4:5; 9:10; 37:5; 44:6; 56:11; 115:11; 146:3. Noun mibtach Strong 4009, 40:4.

14. Word, 87x. 12:6; 33:6; 56:4; 119:11; 119:50; 138:2. Also law 35x, testimony 31x, precepts 24x, commandment 41x, and judgments 29x as in Psalm 19.
15. Worship, 14x in NASB; 17x by Hebrew word chavah in the eshtaphal stem, to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to worship. Strong's 7812 says from shachah. New research based on the Ugaritic language has corrected this. 5:7; 22:27; 29:2; 66:4; 72:11; 99:5, 9. Psalm 2:11 has `bad, to serve.

Key Doctrines with example Scripture

1. War against God and God's people, 2; 59
2. Dispensation of Israel, 78; 114
3. Divine attributes, 19, 33, 139, and 145
4. Encouragement, 13, 23, and 31
5. Faith and rest, 37, 91
6. Fellowship with God, 27, 34, 40, 42,
7. Forgiveness, 32, 38, 86, and 51
8. God's faithfulness, 23, 91
9. God's word, 19 and 119
10. Messiah, 110
11. Praise, 145-150
12. Suffering, 22, 86
13. Worship, 66, 99

Lessons for Us Today

1. God is the **creator, sustainer, and redeemer**. He alone is unique. We ought to listen to God, believe him, praise him, worship him, and serve him. Psalm 115
2. God is **trustworthy and faithful** to his word and to his people. We ought to trust him and obey him. Psalm 91
3. God's **word is the truth**. It is the ultimate source of knowledge about God, man, sin, salvation, righteousness, blessing, and the future—about whatever is important. We ought to study it, meditate in it, and delight in it. Psalm 119
4. Mankind sins. **Sin has consequences**—directly from God or simply from bad choices—**and God forgives**. God disciplines his people to correct and to bless them, and to honor himself. God also freely forgives sin. The psalms give case histories of sin, consequences of sin, confession of sin, and forgiveness. We ought to listen to the psalms and experience the forgiveness, blessing, comfort, refreshment. Psalm 51
5. God has created, chosen, blessed, and covenanted with **Israel** that they are his people and they have a wonderful future through the Messiah. God will bless and rule the world through Israel. We ought to bless Israel and pray for her restoration. Psalm 78
6. The world is at **war with God** and with God's people, Israel and the Church. Satan leads his forces against God, Israel, Jesus Christ, and the Church. The angelic conflict plays out through God's will verses man's will, sin verses righteousness, grace verses works, Israel verses anti-semitism, God's Word and the biblical worldview verses human viewpoint or the non-biblical worldview. The psalms clearly depict this constant warfare with the pitfalls, defeats, sources of strength and encouragement, and the short term and long terms victories. We ought to be informed, prepared, and fight with God's power and God's weapons. Psalm 2
7. The psalmist desires and seeks **Fellowship** with God. We find this scattered throughout the Psalms. It is especially noted when sin has interrupted fellowship with God, when adversity has struck and the psalmist longs for God's fellowship or presence, and when the psalmist is especially aware of God's greatness. We also ought to desire close fellowship with God every day of our lives—to live as friends of God. Psalm 42

Proverbs Bible Walk
Theme: God's wisdom for living in God's world
 Tod Kennedy, April 24, 2005

Proverbs 1:7, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Theme of Proverbs: God's wisdom for living in God's world

1. Think of someone who has seen and experienced much in his life—godly people and ungodly people, hard workers and lazy people, those who think and plan ahead and those who have no motivation and initiative, poverty and wealth, fame and dishonor, failure, success, discouragement, those who listen, think, and learn, and those who care nothing about learning, and everything in between. The OT book of Proverbs is the God-inspired record or notebook of accumulated experiences with all kinds of people and in all kinds of events.
2. A Proverb is a short, clear, and often picturesque statement of a truth, and this statement takes the place of a long explanation. A Proverb is a recommendation of what works or what will cause harm.
3. Proverbs that are statements of human action and inaction, of human attitudes and speech are dependent upon man. These are not absolutes for every case, but they are true, all things being equal.
4. A proverb that depends upon God is absolute if man meets the requirement. This kind of proverb depends upon God's nature and character, e.g. Proverbs 3:5-6.
5. Proverbs was written and compiled to provide general instructions and wise statements that would promote godly living. We can summarize the purpose by saying that Proverbs encourages clear thinking and right choices. The clear thinking begins with a "fear of the Lord" or we might say a "believing reverence of the Lord."
6. Wisdom, the central theme of Proverbs.
 - a. Wisdom refers to **skill** gained through 1) knowledge and understanding, plus 2) experience gained from the application and use of that knowledge and understanding. A wise person is a sensible person—one who lives skillfully because he has learned right and wrong through learning, observation, and experience (e.g. Proverbs 1:2, 7; 2:2, 6, 7, 10; 3:13; 8:11).
 - b. The word wisdom, chokmah **חִכְמָה**, is found 42 times in Proverbs.
 - i. Read each of the 42 wisdom (chokmah) verses in Proverbs.
 - ii. Read through selected wisdom (chokmah) verses in the Old Testament.
 - c. True wisdom begins with right relationship with God. The sequence is fear of the Lord → instruction, knowledge, instruction for wisdom → wisdom. The fear of the Lord is a learned volitional faith following of the Lord. Practically, all of this means that one has a right relationship with the Lord—a faith motivated biblical reverence and receptiveness to the Lord and his word. From there one gains a desire to know the Lord better by believing him, by learning from him and about him, and by faith obeying him. Instruction, knowledge, and wisdom result.
 - i. Proverbs 1:7, "The fear of the Lord (yira'th yehovah יִרְאַת יְהוָה) is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom (chokmah) and instruction." Beginning is re'shith **רִאשִׁית** first, beginning, best.

- ii. Proverbs 9:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (chokmah)." Beginning is *t^cchilah* תְּחִלָּה, beginning point of time, at the start, first time in a sequence). Compare this with Proverbs 2:1-6.
- iii. Proverbs 15:33, "The fear of the Lord is the instruction for wisdom (chokmah)."
- d. Proverbs gives some spiritual requirements for gaining wisdom (chokmah):
 - i. A strong desire (free will choice, volition) to gain wisdom (Proverbs 1:29; 2:2)
 - ii. Diligence (Proverbs 8:17, 2:4-5)
 - iii. Humility (Proverbs 11:2, 15:33)
 - iv. Reverence (Proverbs 9:10)
 - v. Teachableness (Proverbs 9:9, 15:31, 19:20, 27)
 - vi. Uprightness (Proverbs 2:7)
- e. One with wisdom will then be able to make right decisions—decisions for honoring and serving the Lord and living God's way in God's world. We will see some of these right and wrong decisions in the book of Proverbs. A few examples:
 - i. Work hard or be lazy (Proverbs 6:6-8)
 - ii. Quarrel or listen to those wiser (Proverbs 18:1-2)
 - iii. Live a life of integrity or foul speech and foolish (Proverbs 19:1)
 - iv. Know when to talk and what to say (Proverbs 10:19-21).
 - v. Say no to the wrong crowd (Proverbs 4:14-16)

Author

1. Solomon (r. 971-931 BC) is the author of most of the Proverbs. The indications of his authorship are noted in Proverbs 1:1, 10:1, and 25:1. Note that King Hezekiah's scribes copied Proverbs 25-29 for inclusion in the canon (Proverbs 25:1). He was therefore the likely author of all the included material from Proverbs 1-29.
2. Solomon was famous for his wisdom (1 Kings 3:12; 4:30-31). God gave him a "wise and discerning heart" so that he was wiser than those who preceded him and those who followed him.
3. Agur wrote Proverbs 30 (Proverbs 30:1).
4. King Lemuel wrote Proverbs 31:1-9 (Proverbs 31:1), and Lemuel or an unknown author wrote the acrostic on the capable woman (Proverbs 31:10-31).

History and organization

1. Though Solomon was the wisest of all men, Israel was not the only nation to have wise men or sages. Egypt (Genesis 41:8; Exodus 7:11; Isaiah 19:11-12), Edom (Obediah 8), and Babylon (Jeremiah 50:35; 51:57; Daniel 1:20; 2:13-14; and 5:8) had their wise men.
 - a. One good source to see comparisons between the ancient near eastern texts and the Bible wisdom literature is *The Ancient Near East, An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, edited by James B. Pritchard, Princeton University Press, 1958.
 - b. "In Egypt's and Babylon's wisdom literature several works are collections of proverbs or include at least some proverbial sayings. Examples from Egypt are *The Instruction of the Vizier Ptah-Hotep* (ca. 2450 b.c.), with advice on how to be a successful state official; *The Instruction of Amen-em-Het* (ca. 2000 b.c.), a father's words to his son about how people he had favored disappointed him; *The Instruction of Amen-em-Ope* (ca. 1300-900 b.c.), a king's teachings to his son about life, using some words similar to those in Proverbs (e.g., "Listen, my

son," "path of life," "the way"). The fact that some sayings in *The Instruction of Amen-em-Ope* parallel parts of Proverbs (e.g., Prov. 22:17-24:22) has raised the question of whether Proverbs borrowed from this Egyptian writing, or the Egyptian writer borrowed from Proverbs, or whether both wrote independently about common concerns. On this question see the comments on 22:17-24:22.

- c. Samples of Babylonian wisdom literature that include proverbs are *Counsels of Wisdom* (ca. 1500-1000 b.c.), *Akkadian Proverbs* (ca. 1800-1600 b.c.), and *The Words of Ahiqar* (700-400 b.c.)." (Walvoord, J. F., R. B. Zuck, & Dallas Theological Seminary. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985. Page 904.)
2. The Proverbs were organized according to author: Solomon, Agur, Lemuel, and an unknown author if Proverbs 31:10-31 were written by someone other than Lemuel.
3. The Proverbs, like Psalms, were written in Hebrew poetry with meter (rhythm) and parallelism. The meter has not been determined with any confidence. Most scholars simply count the accented words or groups of words to arrive at a meter. Parallelism in Proverbs is parallelism of expression or ideas. Most parallelism refers to ideas within a verse. There are a number of kinds of parallelism.
 - a. Synonymous parallelism. The two consecutive lines are very close in thought or a term. Examples include 1:2; 2:11; 30:2.
 - b. Antithetical parallelism. The two consecutive lines contrast thought. Examples are 10:1; 11:1; 13:5; 14:29.
 - c. Emblematic parallelism. One line is a truth and the other line pictures the truth or gives an emblem clarifying the truth. An example is 10:26; 25:12; 28:15.
 - d. Synthetic parallelism. Here the second line develops or expands the first line. An example is 6:12; 15:3; 16:8; 28:17.
 - e. Climactic parallelism. The first line makes a statement and the second line repeats the statement and completes the thought.
 - f. Alphabetic or acrostic parallelism. In these each line begins with a consecutive letter of the alphabet in order from aleph (the first Hebrew letter) to tav (the last Hebrew letter). Proverbs 31:10-31, the efficient woman, is written in acrostic style.

Key Verses

Proverbs 1:7. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Proverbs 9:10. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Proverbs 15:33. "The fear of the Lord is the instruction for wisdom."

Overview outline of Proverbs

1. Proverbs of Solomon about wisdom, Proverbs 1-9.
2. Proverbs of Solomon about right living, Proverbs 10-24.
3. Proverbs of Solomon about relationships, Proverbs 25-29.
4. Proverbs of Agur, Proverbs 30.
5. Proverbs of Lemuel, Proverbs 31.

Chapter Titles. The nature of Proverbs makes it difficult to give a summary chapter title to each chapter. With each reading one can find a different title. Below are suggestions from each chapter to start the student.

1. Proverbs of Solomon about wisdom, Proverbs 1-9.
 - Chapter 1, Beginning of knowledge, Proverbs 1:7.
 - Chapter 2, Deliver from evil, Proverbs 2:12, 14.
 - Chapter 3, Trust, fear, honor, accept the Lord, Proverbs 3:5, 7, 9, 12.
 - Chapter 4, Beginning of wisdom, Proverbs 4:1, 5, 7, 11.
 - Chapter 5, Reject the adulteress, Proverbs 5:3, 8, 20.
 - Chapter 6, Cosigner, sluggard, adulteress, Proverbs 6:1, 6, 24.
 - Chapter 7, The adulteress and the ox, Proverbs 7:5, 10, 22.
 - Chapter 8, Wisdom better than all, Proverbs 8:1, 5, 11, 12, 14.
 - Chapter 9, Wisdom calls, Proverbs 9:1, 10.
2. Proverbs of Solomon about right living, Proverbs 10-24.
 - Chapter 10, Wise and foolish, Proverbs 10:1, 14.
 - Chapter 11, Righteous and wicked, Proverbs 11:5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 18, 23, 31.
 - Chapter 12, Righteous and wicked, Proverbs 12:3, 5.
 - Chapter 13, The mouth, wealth, and poverty, Proverbs 13:2, 8, 23
 - Chapter 14, The wise, sensible, and evil, Proverbs 14:1, 8, 15.
 - Chapter 15, The tongue, Proverbs 15:1-4, 7, 14, and the heart, 13-15.
 - Chapter 16, Plans and motives, Proverbs 16:1-4, 9, 23.
 - Chapter 17, Tranquility and strife, Proverbs 17:1-2, 13, 19; the tongue, 7, 27, 28.
 - Chapter 18, Fools, wise, and humble, Proverbs 18:1-2, 6-7, 12, 15.
 - Chapter 19, Integrity, knowledge, poor, scoffers, Proverbs 19:1-2, 4, 7, 17, 22, 25, 29.
 - Chapter 20, Wine, king, sluggard, plans, gossip, Proverbs 1, 2, 4, 5, 18, 19.
 - Chapter 21, The king's heart, man's ways, contentious woman, tongue, Proverbs 21:1, 2, 9, 19, 23, 28.
 - Chapter 22: a good name, humility, train a child, trust in the Lord, do not..., Proverbs 22:1, 3, 6, 19, 22.
 - Chapter 23: consider carefully, envy, heavy drinkers, harlot, Proverbs 23:1, 17, 20, 27.
 - Chapter 24: evil men, wise men, partiality, the sluggard, Proverbs 24:1, 5, 23, 30.
3. Proverbs of Solomon about relationships, Proverbs 25-29.
 - Chapter 25: kings, neighbors, enemies, Proverbs 25:2, 8, 21.
 - Chapter 26: the fool, the sluggard, and the meddler, Proverbs 25:1, 13, 17.
 - Chapter 27: the boaster, a friend, a prudent, the naïve, the shepherd, Proverbs 26:2, 6, 12, 23.
 - Chapter 28: the wicked, righteous, poor, rich, faithful and fool, Proverbs 28:1, 3, 6, 11, 25, 26.
 - Chapter 29: the righteous, wicked, wise, rod and reproof, slaves, Proverbs 29:2, 9, 15, 19.
 - Chapter 30: Agur's wise and witty sayings.
 - Chapter 31: King Lemuel's lessons; the capable woman.

Trace the Theme

The theme can best be traced by thoughtful reading through Proverbs. The authors unveil inspired wisdom line upon line through the course of their writings. At times, certain sections emphasize certain topics. For example, Proverbs 1:1-19 contain Solomon's instructions to his

son; chapter 30 contains wisdom penned through witty sayings; Chapter 31 has advice for a king and characteristics of the wise and excellent woman.

Key People

1. King Solomon wrote most of the Proverbs. Solomon was David's son. His mother was Bathsheba. The Davidic Covenant went from David to Solomon. David told Solomon to build the temple; and David challenged him to know and serve God, to be strong and courageous, to be fearless, and to complete his task because God will be with him (1 Chronicles 22, 23, 28, 29). Solomon achieved great successes and great failures. He wrote Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. He finally realized that the only way to live was to "fear God and keep his commandments" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).
2. Agur, the son of Jakeh, is unknown (30:1)
3. Lemuel, the king. Rabbinic commentators say he is Solomon, others identify him with Hezekiah, and some say with a petty Arabian prince (31:1-9).

Key Words and Phrases for further study

1. Adulteress. 7X Strong's 5237 (e.g. 2:15; 5:3; 5:20). Adultery, verb, 1X, Strong's 5003 (6:32). Adulterous, verb, 3X, Strong's 5003 (e.g. 23:27; 27:13; 30:20). Other English words in context with same or similar meaning are stranger 2X, strange 1X, foreigner 2X. Total used 16X.
2. Discipline, instruction, punishment. 30X Strong's 4148 (e.g. 3:11; 12:1; 13:1; 19:18; 23:12-13).
3. Faithful. 4X Strong's 530 (13:17; 25:13; 27:6; 28:20)
4. Father. 26X Strong's 1 (1:8; 3:12; 13:1)
5. Fear of the Lord. 18X Strong's 3374 (1:7, 29; 2:5; 3:7; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:2, 26-27; 15:16, 33; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17; 24:21; 31:30).
6. Heart. 72X Strong's 3820 (2:2; 3:1; 3:5; 6:18; 10:8; 10:20; 14:30; 16:23; 28:26).
7. Humble, Humility. 7X, Strong's many #s (6:3; 11:2; 15:33; 18:12; 22:4).
8. Knowledge. 40X Strong's 1847 (1:7; 2:6; 9:10; 13:16; 15:14; 24:5).
9. Mother. 14X Strong's 517 (1:8; 6:20; 22:20; 29:15; 30:17).
10. Mouth. 48X Strong's 6310 (2:6; 4:24; 6:2; 10:31; 18:7); Lips 35X Strong's 8193 (7:21; 10:32; 15:7; 18:6; 24:28; 27:2).
11. Pride, Proud. 10X, Strong's many #s (8:13; 11:2; 29:23; 15:25; 16:5; 21:24).
12. Proverb. 6X, Strong's 4912 (1:1, 6; 10:1; 25:1; 26:7, 9).
13. Sin. 8X Strong's 2403, 2398, 817 (5:22; 8:36 14:34; 24:9).
14. Son. 55X Strong's 1121 (1:1, 10; 15:20).
15. Speech. 6X Strong's 8193 (4:24; 5:3; 19:1).
16. Trust. 9X Strong's 982 (3:5; 11:28; 16:20; 22:19; 28:25, 26; 29:25; 31:11).
17. Understanding. 59X Strong's 995, 998, 8394 (1:2; 2:2; 9:6; 13:15; 28:5; 28:16).
18. Wisdom. 48X, Strong's 2451 (1:2, 7, 20; 2:2, 6, 7, 10; 3:13, 19, 21; 14:33; 15:33; 24:14; 31:26).
19. Woman. 17X Strong's 802 (2:16; 6:32; 11:16; 11:22; 27:15; 31:30).
20. Work. 13X Strong's 4399, 4639, 5998 (10:4; 16:3; 18:9; 24:27).

Key Doctrines

1. Avoid sexual immorality
2. Character—good and bad
3. Fear of the Lord

4. God's Wisdom
5. Learn and use God's word
6. Learning from Parents
7. Parenting
8. Speech and sins of the tongue
9. Work
10. Capable woman

Lessons for Us Today

1. Successful life begins and progresses with a right relationship with God, called in Proverbs fear of the Lord. Because mankind was created in God's image, nothing else will bring the temporal and eternal honor to God and satisfaction to mankind.
2. Learn God's word and use God's word and you will gain wisdom for successful living in God's world.
3. The organized life is one centered on God and God's word. Proverbs repeatedly urges a person to prepare for one's life, to organize one's life, to diligently pursue life, and do one's best.
4. Parents are responsible to properly teach, to instill good character, and to train their children—about God, treating other people with respect and manners, morality, working hard at whatever one does, proper use of the tongue, avoiding the wrong people, and many others.
5. A wife and mother has great responsibility and wonderful opportunities to bless others, both in and out of the home.
6. Children and youth: respect, listen to, and learn from your parents.
7. Reject sexual immorality. The effects are devastating.
8. Watch what we say. Speech can help or hurt, build up or destroy.
9. Most of life is common sense. Do we use common sense?

Ecclesiastes Bible Walk

Theme: Man, alone, cannot figure out life

Or, Right relationship with God is the only answer

Tod Kennedy, May 22, 2005

Key Verses

Ecclesiastes 1:2, "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity."

Ecclesiastes 12:13, "The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person."

1. Fearing God was the attitude of Abraham (Genesis 22:12), Job (Job 1:1, 8, 9; 2:3), and the Egyptian midwives (Exodus 1:17, 21). God commanded his people to learn his word and to fear him (Deuteronomy 17:19; 31:13). Fearing God or fearing the Lord is not dread of God, but a believing reverential awe and respect and it produces obedience.

Theme

Man alone cannot figure out life.

1. Ecclesiastes is Solomon's notebook prepared from what he discovered about himself, a person who had intelligence, wealth, honor, and success and yet lived out of fellowship with God for a time—he tried to live without God. Ecclesiastes, then, is wisdom literature—Solomon's wisdom gained in his life and written as poetry.
2. It is Solomon's own story, the record of a very wise man viewing life without God and God's revelation as his guide; he goes through life apart from God's viewpoint. Furthermore, this wise man recognizes that life is very fleeting, and that man must make the best of what he has.
3. Solomon demonstrates from his observations that life lived without God as the central person and God's word as the controlling viewpoint has no satisfactory answers or lasting meaning. Another way to express this is that even if one has everything life can offer, he still cannot understand life and find satisfying answers and lasting meaning.
4. Remember that Solomon speaks as a "man in the street" apart from God's revelation. His human conclusions are simply human viewpoint, but he comes to realize again the purposelessness and hopelessness of man living apart from God's revelation. God is necessary because he is the creator and because he is the source of absolute knowledge for living.
5. He concludes that only relationship and fellowship with God—Solomon calls this "fear God and keep his commandments"—provides the satisfactory and lasting answers.

Author

The author is Solomon (Ecclesiastes 1.1; 1.12; 1.16; 2.4-9).

1. "The preacher" (qohelet, a speaker in an assembly, Ecclesiastes 1.1-2, 12; 7.27; 12.8-10) is the title that characterizes Solomon as the one who collects wise sayings and preaches them (1 Kings 4:32). The assembly in this context refers to the entire covenant community of Israel.

2. His purpose was to leave a Biblical (divine viewpoint) legacy so that believers know what is most important in life, and what is of lesser importance. If you confuse the priorities, then you will confuse your life (Ecclesiastes 12:9-14).

History

1. Solomon was the last king over Israel before the civil war and division into the northern kingdom, Israel, and the southern kingdom, Judah.
2. This was a time of Israel's expansion of wealth, prestige, and power. Some have said that the glories of Solomon's kingdom were romantic and exaggerated. Such was not the case; research has shown that surrounding kingdoms were in decline and that the Israel of Solomon's time was indeed a great kingdom just as the Bible depicts (1 Kings 3-11; Matthew 6:29; 12:42).

Overview Outline

1. The problem: Our fleeting life is meaningless without God, Chapters 1-2.
2. Man's attempt to understand life, Chapters 3-11.
3. The answer: Fear God and keep his commandments, Chapter 12

Chapter Titles

1. The problem: Our fleeting life is meaningless without God, Chapters 1-2.
 - a. Chapter 1: Life is empty when based upon human wisdom.
 - b. Chapter 2: Life is empty when based upon pleasure and hard work.
2. Man's attempt to understand life, Chapters 3-11.
 - a. Chapter 3: There is a time for everything. Do what you can with your time.
 - b. Chapter 4: Oppression, rivalry, wealth, people.
 - c. Chapter 5: Religious ritual, power and wealth, eat, drink, enjoy.
 - d. Chapter 6: Wealth, children, long life, wisdom, words.
 - e. Chapter 7: Wise sayings, excess, man cannot master wisdom, women.
 - f. Chapter 8: Man's wisdom has limitations.
 - g. Chapter 9: Everything is in God's hand, so live fully.
 - h. Chapter 10: Wisdom and foolishness: wisdom is better.
 - i. Chapter 11: Live, rejoice, do not worry.
3. The answer, Chapter 12
 - a. Fear God and keep his commandments, Chapter 12

Key People

Solomon, this book is autobiographical.

1. Solomon was the son of David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 5.14; 12.24) and became the third king of Israel, 971-931 BC (1 Kings 1.28-31).
2. He asked God for wisdom to rule the nation; God granted his request (1 Kings 3.5ff; 4.29ff; Proverbs 10-22, 25-29, Psalms 72 and 127).
3. His most noteworthy accomplishment was the construction and dedication of Yahweh's temple as predicted by God through Nathan the prophet (1 Kings 8).
4. God warned him about spiritual failure, and Solomon surely failed (1 Kings 9 and 11). God also gave him great prosperity (1 Kings 10.23-29), but he lost this through spiritual failure. He finally recovered from spiritual failure when he was in old age (1 Kings 11.41-43).
5. Solomon was established as king (1 Kings 2.12) in 970 BC. He brought Israel to her greatest fame and wealth; yet at his death the kingdom tore itself into two because he allowed

details of life (his were mainly wealth and foreign wives) to control him, resulting in spiritual failure. Judah and Israel and their kings that followed Solomon were characterized by revolution, bloodshed, and paganism and idolatry.

6. Solomon was not a warrior like his father, and he did not need to be. He faced no serious threat from external enemies, though he was harassed by Edom and Syria; nor did he have to enlarge his nation. His job was to consolidate and hold the nation together. Solomon concentrated on forming alliances, and he did this by marrying foreign nobility, hence his large harem (1 Kings 11.1-8). Tyre was his most important alliance (1 Kings 5.1-12).
7. Though not a warrior, he did establish military bases to protect his territory (1 Kings 9.15-22), and developed a chariot corp in his army (10.26). He developed his industry and international trade (1 Kings 10.1-15, 28). The highpoint of his construction was the temple (1 Kings 7), though he built many other sites. Solomon wrote enduring literature: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon (1 Kings 4.29-34; 11.41).
8. But Solomon's reign also brought extensive bureaucracy (1 Kings 9.23), high state expenditures, and repressive taxes (1 Kings 12.1-7). In his personal life, he went through a period when he chose details of life (wealth, foreign wives, and pagan religion) over the Lord and because of that the Lord tore his kingdom apart after his death (1 Kings 11.1-13).
9. Solomon brought Israel to her greatest fame and wealth; yet at his death the kingdom tore itself into two because of evil kings, idolatry, and bloodshed. At the end of his life Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes. In that book he recorded for posterity that details of life did not give him satisfaction.
10. He finally wrote his conclusion about life: "fear God and keep his commandments" (Ecclesiastes 12.13).
11. So what does Solomon teach us?
 - a. Famous parents do not ensure that the children will always walk with the Lord. David was Solomon's father.
 - b. Children from parents who have walked closely with the Lord may turn from God to details of life and idolatry. David, Solomon's father, was a man close to the Lord; he was Israel's greatest king; he even wrote inspired Scripture.
 - c. Fame, fortune, and people can turn believers away from the Lord. These are constant sources of temptation.
 - d. Happiness does not come with having things, fame, wealth, learning, or power. Happiness comes from right relationship with God.
 - e. Because God created man in his image, both unbelievers and carnal believers (a NT term for living by the sinful nature) can observe history and record correct principles about life. Solomon observed the realities of history and life. He was able to evaluate and make choices.
 - f. Mankind has volition. Even though a person has Bible knowledge and wisdom, he still has a sinful nature and is still vulnerable to spiritual failure. Each believer needs to learn the word, live by faith and in fellowship and by Holy Spirit, and make good faith based decisions. Solomon summarizes this in Old Testament terms by "fear God and keep his commandments."

Key Words and Phrases

1. Fear God or fear him 7X in NASB. Strong's #3372 (3:14; 5:7; 7:18; 8:12, 13; 12:13).
2. Futility. 11X in NASB. Strong's 1892 (2:1, 17; 6:4, 9, 11; 7:6, 15; 8:10, 14; 11:8).

3. God, Elohim. 40X in the NASB. We see that Solomon was quite aware of God throughout his life and the book. He just had pushed God and his word away. Note that neither Lord nor LORD is found in Ecclesiastes.
4. Happy, Merry, Pleasant, Rejoice. Various Hebrew words. (3:12, 22; 4:16; 5:19; 8:15; 9:7| 10:19; 11:8-9).
5. Pleasure. 7X in NASB. Strong's #8057 (2:1, 2, 8, 10; 4:8, 7:4; 8:15).
6. Striving after wind. 9X in NASB. (1:14, 17; 2:11, 17, 26; 4:4, 6, 16; 6:9).
7. Time. 41X in NASB. (3:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 17; 7:17| 8:5, 6, 8; 9:8, 11, 12; 10:17).
8. Vanity. So translated 22X in NASB Ecclesiastes (1:2, 14; 2:11, 15, 19, 21, 23, 26; 3:19; 4:4, 7, 8, 16; 5:10; 6:2; 12:8). The Hebrew word (הֶבֶל hebel) generally means indicates vapor, breath, vanity, and emptiness. It occurs 36 times in Ecclesiastes.
9. Wisdom. 27X in NASB. Strong's #2451 chokmah (1:13; 2:9, 21; 7:11; 8:1; 9:18; 10:10).

Trace the Theme

1. The theme of Ecclesiastes is developed from chapter to chapter. Each human acquisition of material wealth, every human success, all his thinking and study, every new philosophy of life—whatever he examined and experimented with came up short of giving him lasting meaning and happiness in life.
2. Ecclesiastes begins with a prologue that says that all physical creation goes on generation after generation in monotonous unending cycles (Ecclesiastes 1:1-11). The epilogue provides the answers: only special revelation provides the key to unlock the mysteries, meaning, and purpose of life (Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:14).
3. In between the prologue and epilogue, Solomon experiments and observes life, and he does so without considering special revelation from God (Ecclesiastes 1:12-11:8). Among his experiments and observations he includes wisdom (1), pleasure (2), human accomplishments (2), time (3), oppression (4), work (4), political power (5), religion (5), wealth (5-6), and human advice laced with cynicism and fatalism (7-11).
4. Examples of the theme traced: hedonism and materialism do not work (2) fatalism does not work (Ecclesiastes 3:14-21); pessimism does not work (Ecclesiastes 4:1-3); wealth does not work (Ecclesiastes 6:1-2); intellectualism does not work (Ecclesiastes 8:16-17); and others indicate the same thing. Only right relationship with God and God's word answer life's questions and give meaning and satisfaction to one's life.

Key Doctrines

1. Man was created in God's image to live in relationship with God and God's word. Life without God and God's revelation is incomplete, empty, and indefinite. The entire book of Ecclesiastes drives this point home to us.
2. Fear God, called fear of the Lord in other Scripture is the learned volitional faith commitment to God. It is the same as Occupation with Christ. Live for the Lord from your soul (Deuteronomy 6:2; 31:11-13; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 2 Corinthians 5:9, 15; 7:1; Colossians 3:23; Ephesians 6:7).
3. Keep His commandments. The Word of God ought to influence what you think and what you do. Today the church is the primary place for Bible instruction. In the Old Testament times people assembled to listen to the prophets and priests teach the Word of God. But, as Solomon realized, when a person learns about God, what he learns should influence him (Ephesians 4:11-12; Hebrews 13:7, 17; Titus 2:15; Deuteronomy 32:46-47; Psalm 19:7-14; James 1:1-23; 2 Peter 3:18; Philippians 4:9, Colossians 3:23).

Lessons for Us Today

1. God is infinite and therefore his wisdom and his acts are infinite; God's word is the product of his perfect character and infiniteness. Mankind, on the other hand, is limited and therefore his wisdom is limited, his knowledge of life is limited, and his acts are limited.
2. Man, alone, cannot figure out life. Human knowledge, human wisdom, human accomplishments, and human relationships by themselves cannot make sense out of life. Neither, money, learning, wisdom, wealth, possessions, reputation, or family can give permanent meaning, accomplishment, and happiness to life without relationship and fellowship with God and God's word.
3. God had to reveal himself and his thoughts to mankind through his word and through his Son so that man can know about God, know how to have relationship and fellowship with God, and know how to serve God.
4. Start early in life: relationship with God; fellowship with God; learn and apply God's word; Christian service.
5. Therefore to fear God and his word is the right, the smart, the practical thing to do.
6. Therefore, as Solomon concluded, we should enjoy our fleeting life while we can, but the only right and best way is to do so is to have a right relationship with God and his word and to grow in that relationship.

Song of Solomon Bible Walk
Theme: Romantic love in courtship and marriage
 Tod Kennedy, July 31, 2005

Key Verses

Song of Solomon 5:16: "This is my beloved (Hebrew **דוד** dod) and this is my friend (Hebrew **רע** rea`)."

Song of Solomon 8:6-7: "Put me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm. For love (Hebrew **אהבה** `ahabah) is as strong as death, Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, The very flame of the Lord.⁷ "Many waters cannot quench love (Hebrew **אהבה** `ahabah), Nor will rivers overflow it; If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love (Hebrew **אהבה** `ahabah), It would be utterly despised."

Author is Solomon (Song of Solomon 1:1, 5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:11-12). Furthermore, other evidence indicates that Solomon is the author.

1. Solomon wrote 1005 songs (1 Kings 4:32).
2. He is the king (1:4, 12; 3:9, 11; 7:5).
3. He has luxury and commercial success (3:6-11; 6:12).
4. He has many queens and concubines (6:8). At this time in his story these queens and concubines were likely political dressing for his kingdom. This would change.
5. He has knowledge of plants and animals (Solomon in 1 Kings 4:32-33, with 21 species of plants and 15 species of animals mentioned in SONG OF SOLOMON).
6. The song gives indication of one intact Jewish kingdom when it mentions Tirzah, the northern capital, and Jerusalem, the southern capital (6:4).
7. The song mentions 15 geographic locations from north to south, and this is compatible with Solomon's kingdom and his international relations. For example, Kedar (1:5); Egypt (1:9); Sharon (2:1); Jerusalem (2:7); Lebanon (3:9); Heshbon (7:4); Damascus (7:4); and others.

Interpretation of Song of Solomon goes in several directions.

1. There are three main wrong interpretations of this book.
2. Allegory in which hidden spiritual truths. For example, God's love is taught for Israel or the Church; the dark skin of the Shulamite refers to the blackness of sin in the church; the beauty of the bride teaches about the Church's beauty after conversion; cooing doves refers to the apostles preaching; and the vineyard of 5:1 refers to the Lord's Supper. This, of course, is subjective and silly.
3. Typical in which Solomon pictures Christ and the Shulamite pictures the Church—wrong. It is true that Christ loves the church, but there is no basis in the Bible for saying that is what the Song of Solomon is about.
4. Drama—but drama as such was not used by Israel; and it is difficult to divide up the acts and scenes.
5. The normal or literal view is correct. It understands The Song of Solomon as an autobiographical lyric poem that describes the romantic courtship and marriage between King Solomon and the Shulamite woman. A lyric poem is a subjective story song often accompanied by music. The song is about human love between a man and a woman who become husband and wife.

6. Some understand the story to have three main characters: Solomon, the Shulamite, and a shepherd. The shepherd is the true love of the woman, and Solomon is cast as the villain trying to lure her from him. But, there is nothing in the text of Song of Solomon that identifies another man pursuing the Shulamite woman.
7. The best interpretation understands the story to have two characters: Solomon and the Shulamite woman.

History. See studies of 1 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes for information about Solomon.

1. Solomon was the son of David and Bathsheba and the last king over Israel before the civil war and division into the northern kingdom, Israel, and the southern kingdom, Judah.
2. He had three clear periods in his life. They are not equal in time and do not exactly coordinate with young, middle, and old age.
3. In the early period of his life he walked with the Lord, built the temple, and wrote the proverbs. Solomon asked God for wisdom to rule the nation; God granted his request. Solomon became a successful, prosperous, famous, and godly king. He brought Israel wealth, prestige, and power (1 Kings 3.5ff; 4.29ff; 10.23-29; Proverbs 10-22, 25-29, Psalms 72 and 127). His most noteworthy accomplishment was the construction and dedication of Yahweh's temple as predicted by God through Nathan the prophet (1 Kings 8). During this time, God promised Solomon blessing and success if he would follow Him. He also warned him of the terrible consequences of rejecting God and God's word (1 Kings 9:1-9). This appears to be the time of the events recorded in Song of Solomon. The events would best fit before Solomon became estranged from the Lord by his allegiance to his pagan wives and concubines. One can compare Song of Solomon 6:8-9 with Ecclesiastes 9:9 and 1 Kings 11:1-4. This romance, then, took place earlier in Solomon's reign: after he had completed the temple and before he "loved many foreign woman" of 1 Kings 11:1. The events most likely took place sometime during 1 Kings 9 and 10.
4. In the middle period of his life, when Solomon was getting old (1 Kings 11:4), he rejected the Lord and his word. His many pagan wives and concubines, and his great success turned him away from the Lord. He lost his purpose for living, his meaning for life, and his happiness (1 Kings 11). Apparently, the Shulamite woman was displaced in his affections during this time. Ecclesiastes is his look back at this period. Ecclesiastes 9:9 may refer to the Shulamite woman and he recognizes all that he lost by turning to other people and things and away from her during this middle period of his life.
5. In his later old age, the third period of his life, he realized his disobedience and failure to obey God's word and walk in fellowship with God. He returned to fellowship with the Lord and later wrote the story of his spiritual failure, his spiritual recovery, and the lessons he learned in his book, Ecclesiastes.

Theme

Romantic love in courtship and marriage. The Song's theme is the romantic love between one man and one woman during courtship and marriage. The emphasis is the physical, emotional, and sexual attraction. God has placed these attractions and desires in man and woman to be a source of blessing to each other. Note that children are not mentioned at all, and so we learn that producing children are not the only reason for romantic love and sex between the man and woman. What Solomon does not mention, and very likely an important reason that this romance seems to eventually lose its luster, is the soul relationship, the genuine friendship love (rea'), between him and the Shulamite. This relationship is based upon the recognition of and

then the developing and sharing of thinking, interests, work, ideals, and purpose in life—the real likeness or compatibility factor—without which sex is simply the window dressing. Furthermore, the commitment love based upon his strength of character which strengthens and protects a relationship seems to be lacking. The result, not seen in this poem, is that Solomon seems to have harmed and likely lost this wonderful romantic love with the Shulamite sometime future to the story.

Overview Outline

1. Solomon's courtship of the Shulamite woman, Song of Solomon 1.1-3:5.
2. Solomon and the Shulamite's wedding, Song of Solomon 3:6-5:1.
3. Solomon and the Shulamite's married life, Song of Solomon 5:2-8:4.

Chapter Titles

1. Chapter 1, Romantic beginnings
2. Chapter 2, Growth of the romance
3. Chapter 3, The wedding
4. Chapter 4, The wedding night
5. Chapter 5, Apathy in the marriage
6. Chapter 6, Restoration of closeness
7. Chapter 7, Mutual affection
8. Chapter 8, The strength of love

Trace the Theme

The theme can be traced by following the chapter titles. The emphasis is on romantic love (Hebrew *Dod*) over both friendship love (Hebrew *rea`*) and committed love based upon relationship (*'ahabah*), therefore Solomon's love for the Shulamite did not stand the tests that came. He apparently lost her or so damaged the relationship that it was never recovered. Ecclesiastes 9:9 seems to indicate this, if as it seems likely, he was referring to the Shulamite woman.

Key People

1. Solomon, 6X (Song of Solomon 1:5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:11, 12), the son of David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 5.14; 12:24) and the third king of Israel, 971-931 BC (1 Kings 1:28-31). You can refer to previous studies on Solomon.
2. The Shulamite woman (Song of Solomon 6:13). We do not know who she was or her home town. Some think that she was Abishag the Shunammite of 1 Kings 1:3-8. There is no strong textual indication. We do know that she was a beautiful young woman who was attracted to King Solomon (Song of Solomon 1:16) and he to her (Song of Solomon 1:15). She is only named in 6:13. She worked outside in her family's vineyards (Song of Solomon 1:6), apparently was from a different social class than Solomon.
3. The Daughters of Jerusalem, 7X (Song of Solomon 1:5; 2:7; 3:5, 10; 5:8, 16; 8:4). They are friends of the Shulamite and her attendants.

Key Words and Phrases

1. Love (Hebrew **דוד** *dod*), 39X, Strong's #1730, love and beloved of romantic affection, also uncle; here means romantic love. (Song of Solomon 1:2, 4, 13, 14, 16; 2:16; 4:10; 5:16; 6:1; 7:11; 8:5, 14.)

2. Love (Hebrew אהבה `ahabah), 11X, Strong's #160, love or strong affection based on relationship; can be family, friend, covenant, can be romantic; here means a committed and responsible love. (Song of Solomon 2:4, 5, 7; 3:5, 10; 5:8; 7:6; 8:4, 6, 7.)
3. Friend (Hebrew רֵעַ rea`), 2X, Strong's #7453, neighbor, friend, fellow, companion; here means companion, strong friendship love (Song of Solomon 5:1, 16).
4. Fragrant perfumes (Song of Solomon 1:3, 12; 3:6; 4:10)
5. Beloved cheeks (Song of Solomon 1:10; 5:13)
6. Eyes like doves (Song of Solomon 1:15; 4:1)
7. Teeth like sheep (Song of Solomon 4:2; 6:6)
8. Daughters of Jerusalem (Song of Solomon 2:7; 3:5; 8:4)
9. Like a gazelle (Song of Solomon 2:9, 17; 8:14)
10. Lebanon (Song of Solomon 3:9; 4:8, 11, 15; 7:4)
11. "This is my beloved and this is my friend" (Song of Solomon 5:16)
12. "Love is as strong as death" (Song of Solomon 8:6)
13. "Many waters cannot quench love" (Song of Solomon 8:7)

Key Doctrines

1. Man was created for relationship with one woman. It began in the Garden of Eden.
2. There seem to be three levels of love in this book: attraction and romantic love, friendship and companion love, and a committed family or personal relationship love that is very hard to break. The Greek NT recognizes these as eros, philos, and agape.
3. God designed romance and sex to be within marriage. But romantic love cannot be the basis for a lasting and strong relationship.
4. Lessons For Us Today
5. Though attraction between a man and a woman initially comes in various forms, the basis for a truly strong romance love and marriage love is the friendship and companionship love. This is the point of contact and compatibility between a man and a woman, and this must be present and natural to have the best kind of marriage relationship.
6. During dating and engagement you must discover likeness, fellowship, friendship, compatibility. Sexual passions and sex during this period can counterfeit and camouflage true character and personality. If you marry at that point, you really do not know who you are marrying.
7. Resist sexual passions while dating and during engagement. God designed sex to be enjoyed between the husband and wife.
8. The basis then for a strong relationship and romantic love is the friendship love protected by the committed and responsible love.