

Core Seminars—How to Study the Bible

Class 7: Poetic & Wisdom Literature



"My heart overflows with a pleasing theme; I address my verses to the king; my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe." (Ps. 45:1)

A. What is Wisdom Literature?

i. Proverbial Wisdom

ii. Speculative Wisdom

B. Main Features of Wisdom Literature

- i. Comparison (Pr 17:1)
- ii. Numerical Sequences (Pr 6:16-19)
- iii. Alliteration and Acrostic Patterns (Ps 37; Pr 31:10-31)
- iv. Riddles (Jdg 14:12ff)
- v. Fables (Ezek 17:3ff)
- vi. Parables (2 Sam 12:1-4)
- vii. Allegories (Is 5:1-7)

C. What is Poetic Literature?

How To Study the Bible Schedule

- I. Section One: First Things
 - a. What is the Bible & is it Reliable?
 - b. The Inductive Study Method Pt 1
 - c. The Inductive Study Method Pt 2
- II. Section Two: Anatomy of the Bible
 - a. Studying the Old and New Testaments
 - b. Genres I: Narratives and Histories
 - c. Genres II: Poetic and Wisdom Writings
 - d. Genre III: Gospels/Epistles & Prophetic/Apocalyptic Literature
- III. Section III: Interpretive Tools
 - a. Purpose and Context
 - b. Structure and Parallels
 - c. Linking Words
 - d. Repetition
 - e. Using Commentaries & Other Resource
 - f. Studying Difficult Passages and Familiar Passages

D. Main Features of Poetic Literature

- i. Figures, metaphors & hyperbole
- ii. Couplets
- iii. Meter is absent
- iv. Parallelism
 - a. Synonymous (Ps 19:1)
 - b. Antithetic (Pr 13:9)
 - c. Synthetic (Ps 3:5,6)
- v. Acrostic (Ps 119)

E. Why poetry?

- 3 He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.
- 4 The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
- 6 for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Practical Exercise: Psalm 1

- 1 Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
- 2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.