

# OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

## The Poetical Works

### I. Poetical Books

- a. Examples of Israelite wisdom and literature
  - i. Life is not only about intelligence or education.
  - ii. Many of the poetical books are about making choices in life and how we rely on God in those choices.

### II. Job

- a. Satan is given extraordinary power specifically by God.
- b. But God ultimately speaks and asks “Do you know what I am doing? Do you understand or question the wisdom of God?”
- c. Trust in God and be humble before him because he knows what he is doing. He rules over all the universe and cares for you.

### III. Psalms

#### a. Hymn

- i. *Victory songs*—praise God for victories
- ii. *Processional Hymns*—Ps 24 could have been bringing up arc of covenant to the temple.
- iii. *Zion Songs*—as the place where God rests on earth and where God dwells with His people. Elevated language when speaking about Zion. Not literal, but metaphorically it is the hill that is exalted over all the nations because it is the place where God dwells. Eschatologically, Zion becomes the locus of hope for Israel.
- iv. *Songs of the Lord's reign*—psalm 97 begins with “the Lord reigns...” similar to Zion songs in that they focus on the ruling of God over all the earth.
- v. *Antiphonal psalms*—were perhaps chanted by priests and congregation.
- vi. *Hallelujah hymns*—hymns that either start or end with “Praise the Lord”

- b. **Community complaint**—these are psalms in which the whole nation voices its complaint. Something is wrong and the community responds. Usually in response to some sort of disaster. (cf. Ps. 74, 83)
  - i. National imprecation—instead of praying for someone, you pray against the enemy (Ps. 83).

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- c. **Individual complaint**—similar to community complaint, but individual voices complain. May include substantial imprecation against enemies (Ps. 5) or could be a penitential psalm in which the speaker voices their guilt (Ps. 51).
- d. **Individual songs of thanksgiving**
- e. **Royal Psalms**
- f. **Torah Psalm**—songs that give moral or religious instruction.
  - i. Testimony song
  - ii. Wisdom song
- g. **Oracle psalm**—this type gives a report of a decree of God (Ps. 82). Yahweh gives a decree that is often of divine judgment and concludes with prayer for God to carry out his judgment. Ps. 2, God sends a decree to a Davidic king to be the messiah, the anointed one.
- h. **Blessing psalm**—pronounces blessing upon hearer. Ps. 128, was apparently used as part of a priestly ceremony. Praying for the individual that they will prosper and that the Lord will bless them. Perhaps given at a wedding to the groom.
  - i. Taunt psalm—address the wicked who are reproached for their vile behavior and promises that God will destroy them.
- j. **Psalm of trust**—psalmist may face difficult circumstances, but he remains assured of God's help and proclaims his faith and trust (Ps. 11)

*(When reading any Psalm we must first come to an understanding of how it was to be read and in what context it was meant to be read.)*

## IV. Proverbs

- a. Specifically wisdom literature with sayings that are sometimes common or found in other ANE literature

## V. Ecclesiastes

- a. Steps back to take a look at the big picture of life. Is there any meaning to life?
  - i. Final answer: fear God and keep his commandments

## VI. Song of songs

- a. Poems of love between husband and wife that demonstrate the covenant of marriage
  - i. Also metaphorical for God's covenant love for Israel and all of his children.