

becomes one of the _____ of the Persian king, Ahasuerus, giving her the opportunity to appeal directly to the king for the lives of the Jewish people who were about to be exterminated through the machinations of the wicked man, Haman. In an ironic twist of fate, Haman is _____ on the very gallows he had built to hang Esther's uncle, Mordecai. The book reads like a fictional tale full of ironic plot twists, but is a true and important part of the nation of Israel's history. Oddly enough, _____ is never mentioned in the book of Esther.

The Jewish Poetic Books

_____ books of _____ poetry were written during Israel's monarchy period and have been preserved as Scripture: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, and Lamentations. Hebrew poetry does not rhyme, but instead, the second or more following lines often parallel the _____ of the first line.

Job—The book of Job, named after its central character, is written in a combination of prose and poetry and is the true story of a devout _____ who lived about 4000 years ago during the time of the patriarchs of Israel (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). The book poses the question, “_____ do the righteous _____?” but oddly enough, does not fully answer the question. The majority of the book is taken up with discussions between Job and his three friends about the _____ for Job's suffering, with Elihu suggesting the best answer, that suffering can be for our _____, not just for punishment. At the end of their discussions, God, in a dramatic fashion, literally shows up, and Job's questions are _____. God _____ to Job why he had suffered, and simply expects Job to _____ Him. The man, Job, is clearly different after going through the process of suffering than he was prior to his suffering.

Psalms—The word “psalm” is a Greek word referring to “a song sung to the accompaniment of a plucked instrument.” The book of Psalms is a compilation of songs written over a period of about _____ years from the time of Moses until Israel's return from Babylonian exile. The book of Psalms was the _____ for the _____ nation of Israel during the Kingdom Period and contains songs written by King David; by King David's worship leader, Asaph; David's son, King Solomon; as well by Moses, and others, many of whom are anonymous.

Proverbs—As its name implies, the book of Proverbs contains short, pithy maxims on the subject of _____ living. Written during Israel’s monarchy phase, most of the proverbs were written by the Jewish king, Solomon, the wisest man who has ever lived. A man, who unfortunately, _____ from his own words of wisdom, and entered a life filled with carnality, materialism, and _____.

Ecclesiastes—Ecclesiastes comes from a Greek word meaning “_____.” The book of Ecclesiastes was written by the wisest and richest king in Israel’s history, King Solomon. Written toward the _____ of his life after having turned away from God and lived for the world’s pleasures of riches, sex, and power, Solomon concludes “all is vanity and striving after wind.” The book is a brief autobiography of one who lived in pursuit of the world’s _____, and who at the end of his life found them all to be _____ and vain, as if striving after wind. The book ends with great advice from someone who failed to take this advice: “The conclusion,” the Preacher says, “when all has been heard, is: _____ God and _____ His commandments...because God will bring every act to judgment.”

The Song of Solomon—According to Jewish tradition, King Solomon wrote the Song of Solomon in his _____ years, the book of Proverbs in his _____ years, and the book of Ecclesiastes in his _____ years of life. The Song of Solomon is a blushingly graphic and beautiful dramatic poem about the _____ love between a wealthy king (King Solomon) and a poor shepherdess. Although often allegorized and said to be about God’s love for Israel or Jesus’ love for the Church, there is no reason not to take this poem literally as a description of the beauty of the sexual relationship between a man and a woman in the confines of _____ as God intends.

Lamentations—This is a poetic lament, written using an acrostic arrangement of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, by the prophet Jeremiah as he _____ over the _____ of the city of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Jeremiah had delivered prophetic warnings to Israel for some forty years, but they were ignored, resulting in God punishing Israel through the hands of the Babylonians. Jeremiah, an _____ of the destruction of Israel’s capital city, his heart broken, shares his tears and sorrow in this poem.