

# OLD TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION II

Grace Bible Church | Spring 2024

## PURPOSE

Whenever we approach Scripture, we do it with the ultimate purpose that we would know the God it reveals better. It is, after, His revelation—His self-disclosure. His word allows us to know God; His word is also powerful and transformative. This is no less true of the Old Testament than the New. Further, there is abundant practical instruction and wisdom in the Old Testament that God has given to Christians for our sanctification (Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11). It is to our detriment to ignore this rich resource.

## RATIONALE

The Old Testament is the first major portion of a story that flows through the pages of Scripture. When we forget that Scripture is a narrative, it can be tempting to focus on particulars with no thought to the broader whole, diminishing our ability to understand their full significance. In other words it can be easy to lose sight of the forest through the trees. This course will seek to provide a high-level understanding of the Old Testament as God's revelation of Himself and His plan of redemption, enabling us to read all of Scripture in the context in which it was meant to be understood.

## OPTIONAL READING

- Andrew E. Hill & John H. Walton. *A Survey of the Old Testament*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.
- Tremper Longman III & Raymond B. Dillard. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.
- Eugene H. Merrill. *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.
- Eugene H. Merrill, Mark F. Rooker, & Michael A. Grisanti. *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2011.
- Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013.

## COURSE OUTLINE

**Week 1:** Introduction, Job

**Week 2:** Psalms, Proverbs

**Week 3:** Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs

**Week 4:** Isaiah

**Week 7:** Daniel

**Week 8:** Hosea, Joel, Amos

**Week 9:** Obadiah, Jonah, Micah

**Week 10:** Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah

**Week 5:** Jeremiah, Lamentations

**Week 11:** Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

**Week 6:** Ezekiel

## THE WISDOM LITERATURE

*Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*

We now begin the next major section of the Old Testament canon: Israel's wisdom literature. These poetic books, written at various times throughout Israel's history, describe in various ways what life in fellowship with God should look like. Emphasis is placed on the character of the godly individual:

- *"How blessed is the man"* (Psalm 1:1)
- *"There was a man"* (Job 1:1)
- *"A wise man will hear"* (Prov 1:5); *"Hear, my son"* (Prov 1:8)
- *"May he kiss me"* (Song 1:2)
- *"What advantage does a man have in all his work?"* (Eccl 1:3)

The Hebrew word for wisdom, *Hokma*, describes the skill of being able to form and execute the correct plan to gain the desired results. When applied to life, wisdom describes "skillful living," living life in such a way that pleases God and is in conformity to His will. More specifically, a common theme throughout these books will be the fear of Yahweh, for it is the "fear of Yahweh" that is "the beginning of wisdom" (Prov 9:10); c.f. 1:7). Wisdom was with God "at the beginning of His work. . . before the beginning of the earth" (Prov 8:22, 23). God alone is the source of true wisdom because He is the omnipotent, omniscient Creator (Job 28:23-27). If man is to live wisely in this world, he must know and live according to what God has revealed (Job 28:28).

### Three Levels of Wisdom

1. Level 1: Academic knowledge or artisan skill (Ex 35:30-35, saying that God filled Bezalel and Oholiab with "wisdom").
2. Level 2: Knowing how to deal with life: ethics, common sense, social interaction, responsibility, family life, faith in God (Proverbs).
3. Level 3: God's secret ways: his often surprising way of resolving the problem of evil (Job; 1 Cor 1:24, "Christ the wisdom of God")

### POETRY

Poetry is the dominant genre in these books. As in any language, poetry has the ability to communicate truth in a visceral and powerful way, something the authors of Scripture employ to great effect. The standard form of Hebrew poetry is parallelism—lines written as couplets which relate to each in a variety of ways, including:

- Synonymous Parallelism – Ps 1:2; 7:16; 15:1; 19:1; 49:1; 51:3; Prov 9:10; 16:18, 28; 19:29

The heavens **declare** *the glory of God*;  
The skies **proclaim** *the work of His hands*. (Psalm 19:1)

- Antithetical Parallelism – Ps 1:6; Prov 10:1, 2, 4, 7

A wise son **makes** *a father glad*,  
But a foolish son **is a grief** *to his mother*. (Proverbs 10:1)

- Synthetical Parallelism – Ps 3:4; 29:1; 95:3; Eccl 11:1

*To the LORD* I **cry aloud**,  
And *He* **answers** me from His holy mountain. (Psalm 3:4)

- Emblematic Parallelism – Ps 42:1; 103:13

As the deer **pants** *for the water brooks*,  
So my soul **pants** *for You, O God*. (Psalm 42:1)

- Formal Parallelism – Ps 2:6

“But as for Me, I have installed My King  
Upon Zion, My holy mountain.” (Psalm 2:6)

Poetry, like any genre, has its unique literal features and figures of speech that must be taken into account when interpreting the text. Alongside its structural parallelism, in poetry these features can include things like acrostic, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, paronomasia, inclusio, metaphor, simile, and many others. In His divine wisdom, God worked through a variety of human authors and the expressive nature of Hebrew poetry to communicate truth about Himself and how man is to relate to Him.

# JOB

The book of Job is likely the oldest book in the Bible. Internal and external evidence indicate that it was originally written during the patriarchal period—likely in the latter half of the second millennium BC—making Job a contemporary of Abraham and/or his offspring. In many ways, the book of Job poses questions that the rest of Scripture answers—questions about the problem of evil, righteous suffering, pain, and the justice of God. Fundamentally, Job’s question is our question: why? Why does God do what He does? Why has He ordained what He has ordained? Job never questions God’s right to do whatever He pleases; he simply struggles to understand if God *is right* in what He has done.

## STRUCTURE

### *Outline*

- I. The Prologue (1:1-2:13)
  - A. Job’s Character (1:1-5)
  - B. Job’s Calamities (1:6-2:13)
- II. The Dialogues (3:1-27:23)
  - A. Job’s Opening Lament (3:1-26)
  - B. The Cycles of Discourses between Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Job (4:1-27:23)
    1. The First Cycle (4:1-14:22)
    2. The Second Cycle (15:1-21:34)
    3. The Third Cycle (22:1-27:23)
- III. The Interlude: The Fear of the Lord is Wisdom (28:1-28)
- IV. The Monologues (29:1-42:6)
  - A. Job’s Final Discourse (29:1-31:40)
    1. Job’s Past (29:1-25)
    2. Job’s Present (30:1-31)
    3. Job’s Protest of Innocence (31:1-40)
  - B. Elihu’s Discourse (32:1-37:24)
  - C. The Lord’s Answers to Job (38:1-42:6)
    1. The Lord’s First Answer and Job’s Response (38:1-40:5)
    2. The Lord’s Second Answer and Job’s Response (40:6-42:6)
- V. The Epilogue (42:7-17)
  - A. The Lord’s Verdict (42:7-9)
  - B. Job’s Restoration (42:10-17)

### *Chiasm*

- A Job’s Affliction (1-2)
- B Job’s Lament (3)
  - C The Debate Cycles (4-27)
  - D The Inaccessibility of Wisdom (28)
- C’ The Three Major Speeches (29:1-42:6)

- B' Job's Intercession (42:7-9)
- A' Job's Prosperity (42:10-17)

## PURPOSE

The book of Job shows that the proper relationship between God and man is based solely on the sovereign grace of God and man's response of faith and submissive trust.

## THEMES

- 1) The "Righteous" man (1:1, 8; 2:3) who became a suffering servant of Yahweh (1:8; 2:3; 42:7, 8)
  - a. "Complete, blameless, integrity" (1:1, 8; 2:3, 9; 4:6; 8:20; 9:20, 21, 22; 12:4; 21:23; 27:5; 31:6)
  - b. "Just, upright" (1:1, 8; 2:3; 4:7; 8:6; 17:8; 23:7; 33:27)
  - c. "Fearing God" (1:1, 8, 9; 2:3; 9:35; 28:28; 37:24)
  - d. "Righteous, righteousness" (4:17; 6:29; 8:3, 6; 9:2, 15, 20; 10:15; 11:2; 12:4; 13:18; 15:14; 17:9; 22:3, 19; 25:4; 27:5, 17; 29:14; 31:6; 32:1, 2; 33:12, 32; 34:5, 17; 35:2, 7; 36:3, 7; 40:8)
- 2) The attack against the righteous sufferer
  - a. Satan (1:6-12; 2:1-7): "the adversary," a personal, angelic being among the sons of God. The emphasis is not on the Satan the individual, but on his personality as an adversary, an attacker of God and the people of God. By his words he turns Yahweh "against" Job.
  - b. Yahweh (2:3; 38:1-42:6): Yahweh has not actually become Job's enemy, but He has removed His protection from Job. Satan is the one who carries out the direct attack, only when Yahweh allows him to (Yahweh "attacks" indirectly). There can be no attack without Yahweh's permission.
  - c. The Three Friends (2-31; 42:7-9): They came to help, but they turn out to be enemies of Job. By chapter 42 they have not spoken correctly about God's actions, proving their lack of wisdom.
  - d. Elihu (33-37): Though he takes a different approach, he still doesn't speak rightly. He does not attack directly (like the other friends), but somewhat indirectly by saying that Yahweh was protecting Job from future sin because of his wickedness
- 3) The sovereignty, justice, and wisdom of Yahweh (38-42)
  - a. The Creator
  - b. The Controller of the Universe

### **SPEECH CYCLES IN JOB**

| <b>FIRST CYCLE</b> | <b>SECOND CYCLE</b> | <b>THIRD CYCLE</b> |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Eliphaz (4-5)      | Eliphaz (15)        | Eliphaz (22)       |
| Job (6-7)          | Job (16-17)         | Job (23-24)        |
| Bildad (8)         | Bildad (18)         | Bildad (25)        |
| Job (9-10)         | Job (19)            | Job (26-27)*       |
| Zophar (11)        | Zophar (20)         | Zophar             |
| Job (12-14)        | Job (21)            | Job (28-31)        |