
BOOK OVERVIEW

Job

Author: unknown (possibly Job)

Date: about 2000–1800 B.C. (during the time of Abraham, it is probably the oldest book in the Bible)

Recipients: not noted

Key word: affliction (11 times)

Summary: The account of Job whose physical suffering reveals God's working behind the scenes.

Key verses: Job 2:3; 42:10

Theme: Why do the righteous suffer?

Notes:

Job is the first of the Poetic books, which account for about twenty percent of the Old Testament.

The land of Uz (Job 1:1) was an area east of the Jordan River.

The book refutes the recurring idea espoused by Job's three friends that his physical problems were a consequence of his sin. The book reveals that Job's afflictions were a test rather than a punishment.

Job 13:15 shows Job's heart for God in spite of the taunting of his friends and family.

The book may include the first mention of the resurrection. (19:25-27)

Job lived an additional 140 years after what is recorded in this book. (42:16)

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Psalms

Author: of the 150 psalms only about 100 mention the author's name (David=73, Asaph=12, Korah=10, Solomon=2, Heman=1, Ethan=1, Moses=1)

Date: from Moses (1440 B.C.) to the Babylonian captivity (580 B.C.)

Key words: praise (176 times) blessed (92 times)

Summary: The book provides inspired examples of worship and praise of God.

Key verses: Psalms 33:1-4

Notes:

It is not known who collected the psalms and divided them into five books: Book 1 (1-41), Book 2 (42-72), Book 3 (73-89), Book 4 (90-106), Book 5 (107-150). Each book ends with a doxology

The Psalms were originally accompanied by music. That is why they are referred to as lyric poetry. It was the hymn book of the second Temple.

Over one fourth of the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament are from this book. Only Isaiah is quoted more often.

Psalms 120-134, "psalms of ascent", were sung by those approaching Jerusalem for the feasts.

The "Messianic Psalms" refer to Christ: 2, 16, 22, 41, 45, 72, 110, 132, and others.

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BOOK OVERVIEW

Proverbs

Author: most of the proverbs were written by King Solomon

Date: 970–930 B.C.

Recipient: probably Solomon's son Rehoboam, with a broad application to all

Key words: wise, wisdom, wisely (119 times); my son (22 times); instruction, instruct (26 times); fear of the Lord (14 times)

Summary: Godly wisdom for how to live in a sin-cursed world.

Key verses: Proverbs 1:4; 9:10

Notes:

Understanding the book depends upon an understanding of the difference between *knowledge*, the gathering of information, and *wisdom*, the appropriate application of information.

Agur, chapter 30, and King Lemuel, chapter 31, may have been other names for King Solomon.

I Kings 4:32 says that Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs and composed 1,005 songs.

In spite of his wisdom, in the latter part of his life Solomon strayed from God. His son, Rehoboam followed his example rather than his instruction.

In Jewish tradition husbands quote Proverbs 31:10-31 to their wives on sabbath evenings.

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BOOK OVERVIEW

Ecclesiastes

Author: King Solomon

Date: 935 B.C.

Recipient: not specifically stated

Key words: wisdom (28 times); wise (21 times); vanity (37 times); under the sun (31 times)

Summary: The writer, who has experienced all that life has to offer, concludes that what matters most is our relationship to God.

Key verses: Ecclesiastes 1:12-14; 2:11; 12:13-14

Notes:

In Proverbs *wisdom* refers to Godly wisdom, but in Ecclesiastes *wisdom* refers to human wisdom.

In Ecclesiastes *vanity* refers to futility or emptiness rather than pride and arrogance.

Solomon refers to himself as “the preacher (teacher).” (Ecclesiastes 1:1)

Ecclesiastes 7:20 reinforces the truth of Romans 3:23 in that everyone is a sinner and in need of a Savior.

One must be cautious when drawing life principles from this book. What is presented must be understood in the context of the whole book. For example, “eat, drink, and be merry” (8:15) is not how God wants us to live.

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BOOK OVERVIEW

Song of Solomon

Author: King Solomon

Date: 970–950 B.C.

Recipient: not specifically stated

Key words: beloved (32 times), usually the bride speaking of her bridegroom

Summary: A description of the love between a bridegroom and his bride.

Key verse: Song of Solomon 2:16

Notes:

This may be the most significant of Solomon's 1005 songs. In Latin songs are called *canticles*. The book is referred to in Hebrew as ***The Song of Songs***.

There are three ways this book is commonly interpreted:

1) Literally—the account of the love relationship between a husband and his wife.

2) Allegorically—a picture of the love between God and the Jewish people. This is the view that many Jews have held through the centuries.

3) Typical—a picture of the love that Christ has for the Church (the Shulammitte bride). This is a view that has been held by Christians since the early days of the Church.

Nothing in the book suggests that it is to be interpreted in any way but literally; but, as is true of much poetry, people expect it to have more than a superficial meaning.

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