

KNOWING CHRIST THROUGH THE POETRY AND WISDOM BOOKS

I. Overview

POETRY & WISDOM

The five Poetry and Wisdom books include hymns, proverbs, poems, and dramas. They illustrate the creative ways the people of Israel expressed themselves to God and to each other.

JOB

Who: Unknown
What: Story of Perseverance
Where: Mesopotamia (Uz)
When: Unknown
Why: To show the sovereignty of God and to illustrate faithfulness in the midst of suffering.

Outline (Chapter)

- Job Tested (1–3)
- Job's Friends (4–31)
- Elihu's Speech (32–37)
- God's Answer (38–42)

Key Verse: I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. (Job 19:25–26)

PSALMS

Who: David, Moses, Asaph, Solomon, Ethan, Sons of Korah
What: Poetry and Song
Where: Ancient Israel
When: c. 1000 BC–450 BC
Why: To communicate with God and worship him.

Outline (Chapter)

- Book I: Psalms 1–41
- Book II: Psalms 42–72
- Book III: Psalms 73–89
- Book IV: Psalms 90–106
- Book V: Psalms 107–150

Key Verse: My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever. (Psalm 145:21)

PROVERBS

Who: Solomon and others
What: Wisdom
Where: Israel
When: c. 900s BC–700s BC
Why: To provide wisdom and guidance for God's children.

Outline (Chapter)

- Lessons in Wisdom (1–9)
- Proverbs of Solomon (10–22)
- Other Wise Sayings (23–24)
- Solomon's Sayings (25–29)
- Other Proverbs (30–31)

Key Verse: Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5–6)

ECCLESIASTES

Who: Unknown (Solomon)
What: Wisdom
Where: Jerusalem
When: c. 900s BC or 500s BC
Why: A search to discover truth.

Outline (Chapter)

- The Meaning of Life (1–2)
- Life is Not Always Fair (3–6)
- Wisdom (7–8)
- No One Knows the Future (9–10)
- Obedience to God (11–12)

Key Verse: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14)

SONG OF SONGS

Who: Solomon and others
What: Love Poem
Where: Jerusalem
When: c. 900s BC or 500s BC
Why: To illustrate the joy of authentic love found in marriage.

Outline (Chapter)

- The Courtship (1–2)
- The Wedding (3–4)
- The Lasting Relationship (5–8)

Key Verse: Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned. (Song of Songs 8:7)

II. Review of Historical Context

Biblical Covenants

Covenant	Definition	Key Verses	How it Points to Christ
Covenant of Works / Life (Eden)	God's arrangement with Adam: life for obedience, death for disobedience.	Genesis 2:16–17 – “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’”	Christ is the second Adam (1 Cor 15:45), perfectly obeying where Adam failed and giving life to those united to Him (Romans 5:18–19).
Noahic	God's covenant with Noah and all creation never again to destroy the earth with a flood.	Genesis 9:11 – “I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”	Guarantees the stability of creation until redemption is complete (Genesis 8:22). Foreshadows salvation through judgment, fulfilled in Christ who brings final deliverance (1 Peter 3:20–21).
Abrahamic	God's promise to bless Abraham's offspring, give land, and bring blessing to all nations.	Genesis 12:2–3 – “And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Genesis 15:6 – “And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.”	Christ is the true offspring of Abraham (Galatians 3:16), through whom all nations are blessed and by whom righteousness is credited to those who believe.
Mosaic (Sinai)	Covenant of law given through Moses to Israel: obedience brings blessing, disobedience curse.	Exodus 19:5–6 – “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”	The law exposes sin and points to the need for a Savior (Galatians 3:24). Christ perfectly keeps the law and is the mediator of a better covenant (Hebrews 8:6).

Covenant	Definition	Key Verses	How it Points to Christ
Davidic	God's promise to David of an eternal throne and kingdom through his offspring.	2 Samuel 7:12–13 – “When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”	Jesus is the greater Son of David whose kingdom will never end (Luke 1:32–33; Acts 2:30–31).
New Covenant	God's promise of forgiveness of sins and a transformed heart through the Spirit.	Jeremiah 31:31–33 – “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Luke 22:20 – “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”	Fulfilled in Christ's death and resurrection. He is the mediator who brings forgiveness and the Spirit (Hebrews 9:15; Luke 22:20).

Chart is from ChatGPT.

What is a Covenant?

A covenant is a solemn agreement that binds two parties together in a defined relationship. In covenants God makes with men, he alone establishes the terms of the covenant. The Noahic (Gen 6-9), Abrahamic (Gen 12,15,17), Mosaic (Ex 20), and Davidic covenants (2 Sam 7) are all part of the “covenant of grace,” which found its ultimate fulfillment in the New Covenant in Christ (Jer 31). In these covenants, there are blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. Fortunately for us, Christ obeyed in our behalf (Rom 5:18-19) and took the curse of disobedience upon Himself (Gal 3:13-14), so that those who are united with Christ receive the full blessings of the covenant of grace (Gal 3:29). The benefits of the New Covenant in Christ extend back in time to the Old Testament saints. Christ's life and death accomplished salvation for the elect of all time. Therefore, God's elect people in every age are saved *by grace alone, through faith alone, and in Christ alone*.

How do the Covenants Point to Christ?

- **Unity of Scripture:** Each covenant progressively unfolds God's plan of redemption.
- **From Shadow to Substance:** Earlier covenants provide promises, patterns (sacrifices, kingship, law), and types that Christ fulfills.
- **Covenant of Grace:** The Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New Covenants are administrations of one overarching “Covenant of Grace” culminating in Jesus.

Summary of Old Testament History⁹²

Beginning	God creates the heavens and the earth.
2166	Abram is born.
2091	God calls Abram (Abraham).
2066	Isaac is born.
2006	Jacob is born.
1916	Joseph is born.
1899	Joseph is sold into Egyptian slavery.
1876	Jacob and family move to Egypt.
1526	Moses is born.
1486	Moses flees to Midian after killing an Egyptian.
1446	Exodus from Egypt occurs (430 years after Jacob moves to Egypt).
1406	Moses dies; Joshua leads Israel into Canaan (40 years after the Exodus).
1375-1051	Judges rule over Israel (Samuel is last Judge)
1051	Saul becomes King of Israel.
1011	Saul dies; his son Ish-bosheth becomes King of Israel. David becomes King of Judah.
1004	Ish-bosheth dies; David becomes King of United Kingdom.
971	David dies; his son Solomon becomes King of United Kingdom.
931	Solomon dies; Kingdom divides. Jeroboam becomes King of Israel. Solomon's son Rehoboam becomes King of Judah.
880-612	Assyrian Empire is the main power in the region.
722	Israel falls to the Assyrians and is scattered throughout Assyria.
612-539	Babylonian Empire is the main power in the region.
586	Judah falls to the Babylonians and is deported to Babylon. Jerusalem temple, walls, and king's palace are destroyed.
539-333	Persian Empire is the main power in the region. ⁹³
538	Persian King Cyrus decrees Judah is allowed to return home. ⁹⁴
516	The Jews complete the temple rebuilding.
430	Malachi writes the last book of the Old Testament.

⁹² Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*. Most of the dates in these OT lessons are from this long-time professor of biblical history at Dallas Theological Seminary.

⁹³ The Persian Empire is sometimes called the Medo-Persian Empire in the Bible because it began as a coalition of the Medes and Persians under Cyrus. Though Persia became dominant, early biblical writers reflected the dual structure of the empire, especially in Daniel and Esther.

⁹⁴ **Summary Timeline Table** (per the *Babylonian Chronicle*—ancient Mesopotamian tablets, some still in existence in museums today), ChatGPT.

Event	Approx. Date	Scripture References
Fall of Babylon to Persia	Oct 12 539 BC	Isaiah 45:1; Jeremiah 51:11; Daniel 5:30–31
Cyrus enthroned as King of Babylon (already King of Persia)	Late Oct 539 BC	Daniel 6:28; Daniel 10:1
Edict for Jewish Return	538 BC (first regnal year)	Ezra 1:1–3; 2 Chronicles 36:22–23; Isaiah 44:28

III. Poetry and Wisdom Books

A. Job

1. Author and Setting

- a. The anonymous author was apparently a Hebrew who was well-versed in the Hebrew scriptures, astronomy, meteorology, nature, animals, and wisdom sayings.
- b. The narrative of Job, containing both prose and poetry, is set in a land outside of Israel called Uz.
- c. We don't know when the book of Job was written.
- d. The period in which the account takes place is possibly the patriarchal period of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob due to:
 - 1) The absence of references to Israelite history or law
 - 2) Job's long life of over 200 years
 - 3) Job's role as priest of his family (prohibited by Mosaic law), and
 - 4) The measurement of Job's wealth in terms of livestock.
- e. Ezekiel in the OT (Ezekiel 14:14,20) and James in the NT (James 5:11) both referred to Job, implying that he was a real person.⁹⁵

2. The Dilemma, Debates, and Deliverance of Job

a. The Dilemma of Job (1:1-2:13)

- Job is an upright (faithful, obedient, characterized by integrity, striving to do what is right) man who honors God. Satan ("Adversary") appears before God in a heavenly courtroom and accuses Job of only obeying God because God has blessed him materially.
- God allows Satan to inflict extreme suffering on Job (harming his family, riches, and health).

Job's Righteous Character

The narrator describes Job as blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil. He is wealthy, with seven sons, three daughters, and vast possessions. He regularly offers sacrifices for his children.

Heavenly Council and Satan's Challenge

Satan appears before the Lord and challenges Job's integrity, suggesting Job only serves God because of his blessings. God permits Satan to test Job's faith by taking away his possessions, but not his life.

⁹⁵ **Ezekiel 14:12-14,20:** ¹² And the word of the Lord came to me: ¹³ "Son of man, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it and break its supply of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast, ¹⁴ even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord God. . . . ²⁰ even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, declares the Lord God, they would deliver neither son nor daughter. They would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness."

James 5:11: ¹¹ Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

Job's Losses

Disaster strikes in rapid succession: raiders steal oxen and donkeys, fire consumes sheep, Chaldeans raid camels, and a wind collapses a house, killing all Job's children. Job mourns but worships.

Job 1:21

²¹ And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Second Heavenly Challenge

Satan argues that Job's integrity will fail if his health is attacked. God grants permission for Job to be afflicted physically but not killed.

Job's Suffering and Integrity

Satan strikes Job with painful sores from head to foot. Job's wife urges him to curse God and die, but Job refuses, saying they must accept both good and evil from God. Despite his suffering, Job does not sin with his lips.

Job 2:10

¹⁰ " . . . Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

b. The Debates of Job (3:1-37:24)

- As Job sits in misery, three friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar) show up to "comfort" him. In three cycles of speeches, the friends advise Job that God works by a principle of justice in which there is direct correlation between righteous conduct and good outcomes of health and prosperity. They insist that Job had to have done something wrong.
- Job knows his friends are wrong, but he struggles with understanding how a righteous person like himself should suffer so much when the wicked enjoy prosperity and health. He complains to God and tells him every doubt and fear. Even so, he trusts God.

Job 19:25-27 (Job speaking)

*²⁵ "For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and at the last he will stand upon the earth.
²⁶ And after my skin has been thus destroyed,
yet in my flesh I shall see God,
²⁷ whom I shall see for myself,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.
My heart faints within me!"*

- A new character named Elihu arrives on the scene and rebukes Job and his friends. He doesn't answer Job's questions but does begin to reorient Job's friends away from Job's problems toward God.

c. The Deliverance of Job (38:1-42:17)

- God visits Job in a whirlwind and asks him a series of rhetorical questions, such as: “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?” “Have you commanded the morning since your days began?” God teaches Job that his ways are far higher and more complicated than Job could ever imagine.

Job 38:4–7

⁴ “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me, if you have understanding.

⁵ Who determined its measurements—surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it?

⁶ On what were its bases sunk,

or who laid its cornerstone,

⁷ **when the morning stars sang together**

and all the sons of God shouted for joy?⁹⁶

- God never tells Job why he experienced such extreme suffering.
- Job repents of questioning God.
- Job finds the comfort he needs in the awareness of God’s unsearchable wisdom.

Job 42:1-6

¹ Then Job answered the Lord and said:

² “I know that you can do all things,

and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

³ “Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?”

Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

⁴ “Hear, and I will speak;

I will question you, and you make it known to me.”

⁵ I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye sees you;

⁶ therefore I despise myself,
and repent in dust and ashes.”

- “When his eyes have seen the Lord and he has repented in dust and ashes, Job has come to understand that God on His throne is sovereign and rewards those who belong to Him despite times of pressure and pain. The reader learns that Job suffered, not because he was one of the worst of men, but because he was one of the best, and that his ordeal glorified his God.”⁹⁷
- In the final verses (42:10-17), God restores Job’s fortunes.

⁹⁶ “Morning stars” and “sons of God” are widely understood to be poetic references to angels. The passage indicates that angels already existed and rejoiced when God laid the foundations of the earth. This suggests that angels were created before or at least by the time the earth’s foundations were set in place, but the book of Job doesn’t provide a more detailed timeline.

⁹⁷ *New Geneva Study Bible*, 699.

3. Application for Christians Today

a. Trust God's Sovereignty

- Job teaches that God is in control even when life feels chaotic.
- Application: In seasons of grief, illness, or loss, we can trust that our suffering is not meaningless or outside of God's plan.

b. Be Humble Before God's Wisdom

- Job never receives a full explanation of "why" he suffered.
- Application: We may not understand every hardship, but faith calls us to humility before God's wisdom rather than demanding answers.

c. Endure with Integrity

- Job remained faithful, refusing to "curse God and die" despite immense loss.
- Application: Our faith is tested not only in prosperity but in hardship; endurance and honesty before God matter more than quick fixes.

d. Show Compassion

- Job's friends initially sat with him in silence (helpful), but later their words became harsh and misguided.
- Application: When others suffer, presence and compassion are often more helpful than explanations or judgment.

e. Practice Honest Lament

- Job cried out in pain, asking hard questions of God, yet he remained in dialogue with Him.
- Application: God invites us to bring our raw emotions—anger, grief, confusion—into prayer instead of hiding them.

f. Cling to Hope in God's Restoration

- Job's story ends with restoration and blessing, showing suffering is not the final word.
- Application: For believers, ultimate hope rests not in present circumstances but in God's promised final redemption through Christ.

B. Psalms

1. Introduction

- a. "The book of Psalms, or Psalter, has supplied to believers some of their best-loved Bible passages. It is a collection of 150 poems that express a wide variety of emotions, including: love and adoration toward God, sorrow over sin, dependence on God in desperate circumstances, the battle of fear and trust, walking with God even when the way seems dark, thankfulness for God's care, devotion to the word of God, and confidence in the eventual triumph of God's purposes for the world."⁹⁸
- b. "The Book of Psalms is God's prescription for a complacent church, because through it he reveals how great, wonderful, magnificent, wise, and utterly awe-inspiring he is! If God's people before the incarnation could have such a faith in the Lord, witnessing to his greatness and readiness to help, how much more should this be true among twentieth-century Christians! The Book of Psalms can revolutionize our devotional life, our family patterns, and the fellowship and the witness of the church of Jesus Christ. . . . The Book of Psalms is . . . unique. In it God not only speaks to his people, he also encourages us to use the language of the Psalms in our individual and communal prayers and praise. By applying these ancient psalms to a new situation, the life of faith, hope, and love of the individual Christian, the Christian family, and the church may be greatly enhanced."⁹⁹

2. Titles

Many of the psalms have titles (heading, superscripts). It is not clear when the titles were applied to the psalms during the process of compiling them into the final collection in our Bibles. These titles can include liturgical directions, historical notes, and possibly the identity of the author. **The Hebrew word translated "of" (as in "of David") can mean, according to its context, "belonging to," "authored by," or "about." Davidic authorship corresponds well with biblical testimony, since David was known to be a skillful musician and songwriter.**¹⁰⁰

Psalm 3

A PSALM OF DAVID. WHEN HE FLED FROM ABSALOM HIS SON.

¹ *O Lord, how many are my foes!*

Many are rising against me;

² *many are saying of my soul,*

*"There is no salvation for him in God." Selah*¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ *ESV Study Bible*, 935.

⁹⁹ Willem VanGemeren, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, 5.

¹⁰⁰ *ESV Study Bible*, 935.

¹⁰¹ The meaning of the Hebrew word *Selah*, used frequently in the Psalms, is uncertain. It may be a musical or liturgical direction. *ESV Study Bible*, 944.

3. Types of Psalms¹⁰²

- **Laments**, whose primary function is to lay a troubled situation before the Lord, asking him for help. There are community laments, dealing with trouble faced by the people of God as a whole (e.g., Psalm 12), and individual laments, where the troubles face a particular member of the people (e.g., Psalm 13). This category is the largest by far, including as much as a third of the whole Psalter.
- **Hymns of praise**, whose primary goal is to call and enable God's people to admire God's great attributes and deeds. These can focus, e.g., on a particular set of attributes (e.g., on God's benevolence in Psalm 145), on God's universal kingship over his creation (e.g., Psalm 93), or on God's works of creation (e.g., Psalm 8).
- **Hymns of thanksgiving**, which thank God for his answer to a petition; sometimes the petition can be identified as one of the lament psalms. Like laments, there are community (e.g., Psalm 9) and individual (e.g., Psalm 30) thanksgiving psalms.
- **Hymns celebrating God's law**, which speak of the wonders of the Torah (the Law of Moses) and help worshipers to aspire to obey it more fully (e.g., Psalm 119).
- **Wisdom psalms**, which take themes from the Wisdom Books (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon) and make them the topic of song (e.g., Psalms 1; 37).
- **Songs of confidence**, which enable worshipers to deepen their trust in God through all manner of difficult circumstances (e.g., Psalm 23).
- **Royal or Messianic psalms**, which are concerned with the Davidic monarchy as the vehicle of blessing for the people of God. Some of these are prayers (e.g., Psalm 20), some are thanksgivings (e.g., Psalm 21). **All relate to the Messiah, the ultimate heir of David**, either by setting a pattern (Psalms 20–21) or by portraying the king's reign in such a way that only the Messiah can completely fulfill it (e.g., Psalms 2; 72), or by focusing primarily on the future aspect (e.g., Psalm 110).
- **Historical psalms**, which take a lesson from the history of God's dealings with his people; these are generally corporate in their focus (e.g., Psalm 78).

¹⁰² *ESV Study Bible*, 940.

- **Prophetic hymns**, which echo themes found in the Prophets, especially calling the people to covenant faithfulness (e.g., Psalm 81).

There are other elements in the psalms, such as **penitence** (see Psalms 6; 25; 32; 38; 51; 130; 143), **claims of innocence** (e.g., Psalm 26), **yearning for God** (e.g., Psalm 27), and **curses or imprecations** ([asking God to punish his enemies because the psalmist desires God's justice to be carried out, not because the psalmist desires personal vengeance]; e.g., Psalms 5; 10; 35). There are psalms that seem to have been written for specific **liturgical occasions** (e.g., Psalm 24 and possibly Psalms 68 and 118).

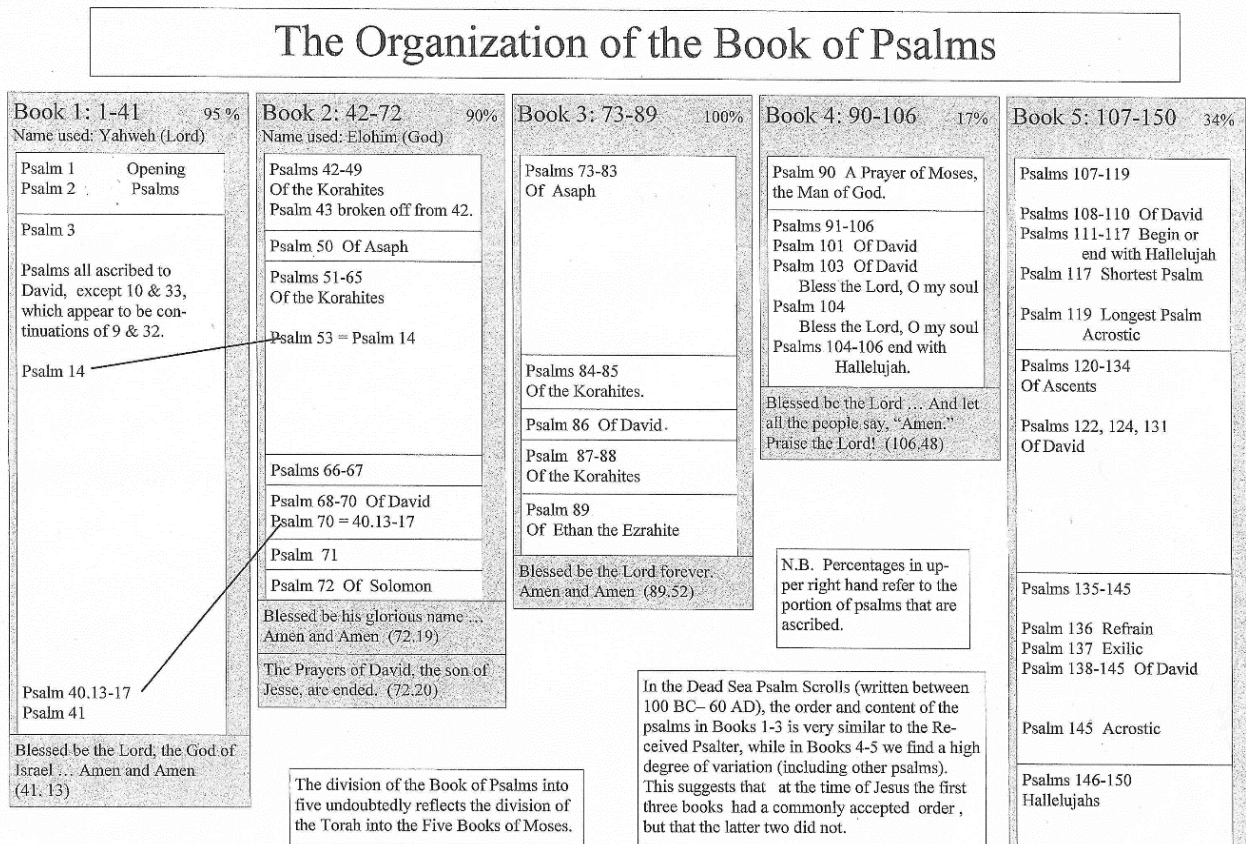
4. Literary Terms¹⁰³

Literary Terms

Term	Explanation	Example
Image	A word or phrase that names a concrete action or thing; by extension, a character, setting, or event in a story is an image—a concrete embodiment of human experience or an idea.	the way (or path); the congregation (or assembly); nature (or harvest) (Psalm 1)
Metaphor	An implied comparison that does not use the formula <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> .	"The LORD is my shepherd" (Ps. 23:1).
Simile	A figure of speech in which a writer compares two things using the formula <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> .	"He is like a tree planted by streams of water" (Ps. 1:3).
Personification	A figure of speech in which human attributes are given to something nonhuman, such as animals, objects, or abstract qualities.	Light and truth are personified as guides in Psalm 43:3 .
Hyperbole	A figure of speech in which a writer consciously exaggerates for the sake of effect; usually that effect is emotional, and thus, loosely put, hyperbole usually expresses emotional truth rather than literal truth.	"My tears have been my food day and night" (Ps. 42:3).
Apostrophe	A figure of speech in which the writer addresses someone absent as though present and capable of responding. By slight extension, an apostrophe might be an address to something nonhuman as though it were human and capable of responding, even if the speaker is in the presence of the object.	The poet in Psalm 148:3 might well be looking up at the sun, moon, or stars as he commands them to praise God.

¹⁰³ *ESV Study Bible*, 940.

5. Organization



Bruce Bryant-Scott, "The Island Parson"

6. Probable Authors of the 150 Psalms

- 73 by David
- 11 by the Sons of Korah (priests)
 - Psalm 88 by Heman the Ezrahite (one of the Sons of Korah)
- 12 by Asaph (David's worship leader)
- 2 by Solomon
- 1 by Moses
- 1 by Ethan the Ezrahite
- 50 were anonymous

7. Chart of All 150 Psalms

Psalms

Number	Title	Type	Content	Key verse
1		Celebrating God's law, wisdom	Two ways: righteous blessed, wicked wither under judgment	1:6 — For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.
2		Messianic	Nations rage; God enthrones His Son, calls kings to kiss	2:7 — I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.
3	Of David, when he fled from Absalom his son	Lament	Surrounded by foes; Lord shields, sustains, grants deliverance	3:3 — But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.
4	To the choirmaster; with stringed instruments. A Psalm of David	Confidence	Evening trust: righteousness, quiet heart, safety in God	4:8 — I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.
5	To the choirmaster; for the flutes. A Psalm of David	Lament	Morning prayer: guide me; judge evil; shelter the righteous	5:3 — My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.
6	To the choirmaster; with stringed instruments; according to Sheminith. David	Lament	Weary in tears; Lord hears prayer and heals	6:9 — The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer.
7	Shiggaion of David, concerning Cush, a Benjaminite	Lament	Appeal to righteous Judge; He searches hearts, vindicates	7:17 — I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.
8	To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. Of David	Praise, messianic	Majesty of Creator; mankind crowned with delegated glory	8:4 — What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

Number	Title	Type	Content	Key verse
9	To the choirmaster; according to Muth-labben. A Psalm of David	Praise	Praise for just judgments; refuge for oppressed, wicked undone	9:10 — And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.
10		Lament	Why do wicked prosper? Lord sees, defends the helpless	10:14 — Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.
11	To the choirmaster. Of David	Confidence	Foundations shaken; trust Lord whose throne is in heaven	11:3 — If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?
12	To the choirmaster: according to The Sheminith. Of David	Lament	Save from flattering lips; preserve the poor; pure words	12:6 — The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.
13	To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David	Lament	How long, O Lord? from sorrow to song	13:5 — But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.
14	To the choirmaster. Of David	Wisdom	Fools deny God; corruption universal; Lord saves Zion	14:1 — The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.
15	A Psalm of David	Wisdom	Who dwells with God? blameless, truthful, steadfast justice	15:1 — LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?
16	A Miktam of David	Confidence, messianic	Refuge in Lord; Holy One not seeing corruption	16:11 — Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.
17	A Prayer of David	Lament	Plea for vindication; hide me under Your wings	17:8 — Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

Number	Title	Type	Content	Key verse
18	Of David the servant of the LORD; delivered from Saul	Praise, thanksgiving	Rescued from enemies; God's strength, deliverance, steadfast faithfulness	18:2 — The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;
19	To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David	Praise, celebrating God's law	Heavens declare; law perfect; cleanse me from hidden faults	19:1 — The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.
20	To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David	Praise	Prayer for king's victory; trust in God, not chariots	20:7 — Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.
21	To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David	Praise	Thanksgiving for king's triumph; enemies consumed by fire	21:13 — Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power.
22	To the choirmaster: according to The Doe of the Dawn. David	Lament, messianic	Forsaken yet trusting; pierced hands; nations worship the Lord	22:1 — My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
23	A Psalm of David	Confidence	Shepherd leads, restores, protects; goodness pursues forever	23:1 — The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
24	A Psalm of David	Messianic	Earth is Lord's; King of glory enters gates	24:7 — Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.
25	Of David	Lament	Teach, forgive, guide; fear the Lord, redeem Israel	25:4 — Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.
26	Of David	Lament	Vindicate me; integrity amidst evildoers; love Your house	26:8 — LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

Number	Title	Type	Content	Key verse
27	Of David	Lament, confidence	One thing: behold Lord; courage while enemies surround	27:4 — One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after;
28	Of David	Lament	Hear my cry; strength and shield; bless Your people	28:7 — The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped:
29	A Psalm of David	Praise	Voice of the Lord thunders; He blesses with peace	29:4 — The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.
30	A Psalm of David. Song for the dedication of the house	Thanksgiving	From mourning to dancing; You lifted me from Sheol	30:5 — Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.
31	To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David	Lament	Into Your hand; besieged yet trusting steadfast love	31:5 — Into thine hand I commit my spirit:
32	A Maskil of David	Thanksgiving, wisdom	Blessed forgiveness; confessed sin; God guides the upright	32:1 — Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
33		Praise	Trust Creator's steadfast love; nations, plans under His word	33:11 — The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.
34	Of David, when he feigned madness before Abimelech	Praise, thanksgiving, wisdom	I will bless always; taste and see His goodness	34:8 — O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.
35	Of David	Praise	Contend, O Lord; false accusers; I'll praise publicly	35:1 — Plead my cause, O LORD, with them that strive with me:
36	Of David, the servant of the LORD	Praise, wisdom	Wickedness within; Your steadfast love reaches the heavens	36:9 — For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

Number	Title	Type	Content	Key verse
37		Wisdom	Fret not evildoers; trust, wait; meek inherit earth	37:4 — Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.
38	A Psalm of David, for the memorial offering	Lament	Discipline and pain; friends distant; Lord my salvation	38:22 — Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.
39	To the choirmaster: Jeduthun. A Psalm of David	Lament	Life is breath; guard tongue; hope in You	39:4 — LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days,
40	To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David	Lament, praise, thanksgiving, messianic	From pit to praise; delight to do will	40:8 — I delight to do thy will, O my God:
41	To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David	Lament, messianic	Blessed who consider poor; betrayal, healing, doxology	41:9 — Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.
42	To the choirmaster. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah	Lament	Soul thirsts; hope in God amid tears and taunts	42:5 — Why art thou cast down, O my soul? hope thou in God:
43		Lament	Vindicate me; send light; I will praise again	43:3 — O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me;
44	To the choirmaster. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah	Praise	Former victories recalled; now reproach; rise and redeem	44:26 — Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake.
45	To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. Of the Sons of Korah	Messianic	Royal wedding song; eternal throne; Messiah beloved bridegroom	45:6 — Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:
46	To the choirmaster. Of the Sons of Korah; according to Alamoth	Confidence	God our refuge; be still; He is exalted	46:10 — Be still, and know that I am God:

Number	Title	Type	Content	Key verse
47	To the choirmaster. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah	Praise	Clap and sing; God reigns over all nations	47:7 — For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.
48	A Song. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah	Praise	Zion, city of God; His steadfast defense stands	48:14 — For this God is our God for ever and ever:
49	To the choirmaster. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah	Wisdom	Do not trust riches; foolish die; God redeems	49:15 — But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave:
50	A Psalm of Asaph	Praise	God judges His people; true worship is thankful obedience	50:23 — Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.
51	To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David; after Bathsheba	Lament	Have mercy; create clean heart; restore joy of salvation	51:10 — Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.
52	A Maskil of David; when Doeg the Edomite told Saul	Praise	Boastful evildoer uprooted; righteous trust God's steadfast love	52:8 — I am like a green olive tree in the house of God:
53	To the choirmaster: according to Mahalath. A Maskil of David	Praise	Fools deny God; workers of evil fear judgment	53:6 — Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!
54	To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Maskil of David; Ziphites	Lament	Save me, O God; enemies rise; I'll praise	54:4 — Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul.
55	To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Maskil of David	Lament	Betrayed by friend; cast burden on the Lord	55:22 — Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee:

Number	Title	Type	Content	Key verse
56	To the choirmaster: according to The Dove on Far-off Terebinths; of David	Lament	When afraid, trust God; tears kept; vows fulfilled	56:3 — What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.
57	To the choirmaster: Do Not Destroy. Of David, in the cave	Lament	Refuge in shadow; steadfast heart sings among nations	57:1 — Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee:
58	To the choirmaster: Do Not Destroy. Of David, a Miktam	Lament	Unjust rulers judged; righteous rejoice at God's vengeance	58:11 — Verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.
59	To the choirmaster: Do Not Destroy. Of David; watched at house	Lament	Surrounded by watchers; God my fortress each morning	59:16 — But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning:
60	To the choirmaster: Shushan Eduth. A Miktam of David; Aram wars	Lament	Restoration prayer after defeats; God apportions the nations	60:12 — Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.
61	To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. Of David	Lament	Lead me to rock higher; abide under wings	61:2 — When my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.
62	To the choirmaster: according to Jeduthun. A Psalm of David	Confidence	Wait in silence; salvation from God alone	62:1 — Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.
63	A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah	Lament	Thirsty in wilderness; Your steadfast love satisfies	63:3 — Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

Number	Title	Type	Content	Key verse
64	To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David	Lament	Hidden plots; God shoots suddenly; righteous rejoice	64:10 — The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him;
65	To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. A Song	Praise, thanksgiving	God answers prayer; crowns year; rules seas and nations	65:11 — Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.
66		Praise, thanksgiving	Come see His works; He refined us; praise	66:16 — Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.
67	To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song	Praise, thanksgiving	Bless us, that nations know Your saving ways	67:1 — God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us;
68	To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. A Song	Praise, messianic	God rides victoriously; cares for lonely; ascends with gifts	68:19 — Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.
69	To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. Of David	Lament, messianic	Zeal consumes; reproach and gall; save me, God	69:9 — For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up;
70	To the choirmaster. Of David, for the memorial offering	Lament	Make haste to help me; let God be magnified	70:1 — Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD.
71		Lament	From youth to gray hairs; continual refuge and praise	71:18 — Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not;
72	Of Solomon	Messianic	Royal Son's just reign; worldwide peace and blessing	72:19 — And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.
73	A Psalm of Asaph	Wisdom	Why do wicked prosper? until sanctuary clarifies end	73:26 — My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Number	Title	Type	Content	Key verse
74	A Maskil of Asaph	Lament	Temple devastated; plead covenant; arise, O God	74:12 — For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.
75	To the choirmaster: Do Not Destroy. A Psalm of Asaph	Praise	God judges uprightly; exalts one, humbles another	75:7 — But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.
76	To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm of Asaph	Praise	God breaks weapons; feared in Zion; kings subdued	76:10 — Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.
77	To the choirmaster: according to Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph	Lament	In distress remember wonders; Your way in sea	77:11 — I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.
78	A Maskil of Asaph	Historical prophetic	Teach children works; stubborn generations; God shepherds David	78:4 — We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,
79	A Psalm of Asaph	Lament	Nations defile Jerusalem; atone sins; vindicate Your name	79:9 — Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name:
80	To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. A Testimony. Asaph	Lament	Shepherd restore us; shine face; revive shattered vine	80:3 — Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.
81	To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. Of Asaph	Praise, historical prophetic	Festival call; warning against stubborn idolatry; open wide	81:10 — I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.
82	A Psalm of Asaph	Historical prophetic	God judges gods; defend weak; inherit nations	82:8 — Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

Number	Title	Type	Content	Key verse
83	A Song. A Psalm of Asaph	Lament, historical prophetic	Hostile confederacy; make them seek Your name	83:18 — That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.
84	To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. Of the Sons of Korah	Praise	Blessed dwelling; pilgrim strength; better one day there	84:10 — For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand.
85	To the choirmaster. Of the Sons of Korah. A Psalm	Lament	Restore us again; steadfast love and faithfulness meet	85:10 — Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
86	A Prayer of David	Lament	Teach way; unite heart; great steadfast love delivers	86:11 — Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.
87	Of the Sons of Korah. A Psalm. A Song	Praise	Glorious things of Zion; nations enrolled; all springs	87:3 — Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.
88	A Song. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah. Heman	Lament	Darkest lament; no relief; friends shun me	88:1 — O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee:
89	A Maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite	Historical prophetic, messianic	Davidic covenant remembered; crisis questioned; steadfast love appealed	89:1 — I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever:
90	A Prayer of Moses, the man of God	Lament	Eternal God; brief life; teach us to number	90:12 — So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.
91		Confidence	Shelter of Most High; protection amid terrors	91:1 — He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
92		Praise, thanksgiving	Sabbath praise; righteous flourish like palms	92:12 — The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

Number	Title	Type	Content	Key verse
93		Praise	The LORD reigns; floods lift; His decrees firm	93:1 — The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty;
94		Praise	Judge of earth; teach us; consolation amid affliction	94:19 — In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.
95		Praise	Come, worship; heed His voice; do not harden	95:6 — O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.
96		Praise, messianic	Sing new song; proclaim among nations: the LORD reigns	96:3 — Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.
97		Praise, messianic	Clouds and fire; idols shamed; righteous rejoice	97:11 — Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.
98		Praise, messianic	New song for salvation; rivers clap; He judges	98:1 — O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things:
99		Praise	He is holy; exalt Him; forgives yet avenges	99:5 — Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.
100		Praise	Joyful noise; know the LORD; thankful entrance	100:3 — Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves;
101	A Psalm of David	Praise	King's resolve for integrity; no deceit at home	101:2 — I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.
102	A Prayer of one afflicted, when faint and pours complaint	Messianic	Afflicted prayer; God's unchanging years; Zion restored	102:27 — But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.
103	Of David	Praise	Bless the LORD; benefits numbered; steadfast love great	103:11 — For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

Number	Title	Type	Content	Key verse
104		Praise	Creation sustained; creatures fed; glory endures	104:24 — O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all:
105		Praise, historical prophetic	Remember Abrahamic covenant; Joseph, Exodus, Canaan gift	105:8 — He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.
106		Praise, historical prophetic	Our fathers sinned; yet He saves for name	106:1 — Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.
107		Praise, thanksgiving	Redeemed recount deliverances; He stills storms	107:1 — O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.
108	A Song. A Psalm of David	Praise	Steadfast heart; God grants victory over nations	108:13 — Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.
109	To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David	Lament	Bitter accusations; plea for justice; entrust to LORD	109:4 — For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer.
110	A Psalm of David	Messianic	Lord to my Lord; priest forever; rule enemies	110:1 — The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
111		Praise	Great works remembered; covenant faithful; fear brings wisdom	111:10 — The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom:
112		Praise, wisdom	Blessed righteous; generous, steadfast, unafraid	112:7 — He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.
113		Praise	From sunrise to sunset; He raises the poor	113:3 — From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD'S name is to be praised.

Number	Title	Type	Content	Key verse
114		Praise	Exodus remembered; sea fled; rocks poured water	114:7 — Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord,
115		Praise	Not to us; idols mute; trust the LORD	115:1 — Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory,
116		Praise, thanksgiving	He heard my cry; I will pay vows	116:12 — What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?
117		Praise	All nations praise His steadfast love and faithfulness	117:2 — For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.
118		Praise, thanksgiving, messianic	Give thanks; stone rejected; His steadfast love endures	118:24 — This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.
119		Celebrating God's law	Delight in law; affliction teaches; give me life	119:105 — Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
120		Lament	Woe to lying lips; sojourner among warlike people	120:1 — In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.
121		Confidence	Help from Maker; keeps your going out forever	121:1-2 — I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.
122	A Song of Ascents. Of David	Praise	Pray for Jerusalem's peace; house of the LORD	122:6 — Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.
123		Lament	Eyes to You; mercy amid contempt	123:2 — Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters,
124	A Song of Ascents. Of David	Thanksgiving	If not the LORD; snare broken; help comes	124:8 — Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

Number	Title	Type	Content	Key verse
125		Confidence	Like Mount Zion; those who trust endure	125:1 — They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.
126		Lament, thanksgiving	Restoration like streams; sowing tears, reaping joy	126:5 — They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
127	A Song of Ascents. Of Solomon	Wisdom	Unless LORD builds; children heritage, arrows	127:1 — Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it:
128		Wisdom	Blessed who fear LORD; fruitful family and prosperity	128:1 — Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.
129		Praise	Greatly afflicted from youth; LORD cuts cords	129:4 — The LORD is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.
130		Lament	From depths I cry; with Him steadfast redemption	130:4 — But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.
131	A Song of Ascents. Of David	Confidence	Calmed soul; hope in LORD forever	131:2 — Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother:
132		Praise	David's oath and God's promise to Zion	132:13 — For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.
133	A Song of Ascents. Of David	Wisdom	Unity's goodness; anointing oil; Hermon's dew	133:1 — Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!
134		Praise	Bless the LORD by night; LORD bless Zion	134:2 — Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD.
135		Praise	Praise Him for mighty acts; idols vain	135:6 — Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

Number	Title	Type	Content	Key verse
136		Praise	His steadfast love endures forever in all works	136:1 — O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.
137		Lament	Wept by rivers of Babylon; remember Jerusalem	137:5 — If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.
138	Of David	Thanksgiving	I give thanks; You regard lowly; fulfill purpose	138:8 — The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me:
139	To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David	Lament	Search me; You know; wondrously made; lead me	139:23 — Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:
140	To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David	Lament	Deliver from violent men; guard my lips	140:13 — Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.
141	A Psalm of David	Lament	Set watch on mouth; keep me from traps	141:3 — Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.
142	A Maskil of David, when he was in the cave	Lament	No refuge but You; bring me out	142:7 — Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name:
143	A Psalm of David	Lament	Answer quickly; teach me way; revive me	143:10 — Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.
144	Of David	Praise	Blessed be Rock; teach hands; prosper our sons	144:15 — Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.
145	A Psalm of Praise. Of David	Praise	Great is the LORD; gracious to all; everlasting kingdom	145:3 — Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.
146		Praise	Trust not princes; LORD keeps faith forever	146:5 — Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God:

Number	Title	Type	Content	Key verse
147		Praise	Heals brokenhearted; numbers stars; delights in those fearing	147:3 — He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.
148		Praise	All creation praise; He exalts His people	148:13 — Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.
149		Praise	Sing new song; His people rejoice; execute judgment	149:4 — For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.
150		Praise	Let everything that has breath praise the LORD	150:6 — Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

Psalm 150:1-6

¹ Praise the Lord!

Praise God in His sanctuary;

Praise Him in His mighty firmament!

² Praise Him for His mighty acts;

Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!

³ Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet;

Praise Him with the lute and harp!

⁴ Praise Him with the timbrel and dance;

Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!

⁵ Praise Him with loud cymbals;

Praise Him with clashing cymbals!

⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord!

C. Proverbs

1. Introduction¹⁰⁴

a. Author

“Proverbs itself mentions Solomon (reigned c. 971–931 B.C.) as author or collector of its contents (1:1; 10:1), including the proverbs copied by Hezekiah’s men (25:1). There are also two batches of sayings from a group called “the wise” (22:17–24:22; 24:23–34), and “oracles” from Agur (30:1–33) and Lemuel (31:1–9). But no author is named for the song in praise of the excellent wife that ends the book (31:10–31).”

b. Theme

“Proverbs states its theme right at the book’s beginning (1:1–7): its goal is to describe and instill “wisdom” in God’s people, a wisdom that is founded in the “fear of the LORD” and that works out covenant life in the practical details of everyday situations and relationships.”

2. Study¹⁰⁵

a. Topics

“Proverbs covers a wide array of topics from daily life: diligence and laziness (6:6–11); friendship (3:27–28; 18:24); speech (10:19–21); marriage (18:22; 19:14); child rearing (22:6); domestic peace (15:17; 17:1); work (11:1); getting along and good manners (23:1–2; 25:16–17; 26:17–19; 27:14); eternity (14:32; 23:17–18); and much more. In each of these areas it offers wisdom for realizing the life of the covenant in the details; it shows that “godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come” (1 Tim. 4:8). It demonstrates clearly that:

1. God’s will is intensely practical, applying to every aspect of his people’s lives. A proper relation to God involves, first, trying hard to understand his truth, and then embracing and obeying what one understands.
2. A life lived by God’s will is a happy life (3:21–26).
3. A life lived by God’s will is a useful life (3:27–28; 12:18, 25).
4. A life lived by God’s will does not just happen; one must seek after it, study, pursue it, and discipline oneself.
5. Such a life is available to those who go after it (9:1–6).”

¹⁰⁴ *ESV Study Bible*, 1129–1134.

¹⁰⁵ *ESV Study Bible*, 1129–1134.

b. Character types

- 1) The **wise** is the person who embraces God's instruction and learns the skill of living it out in everyday situations. Other terms used are: *righteous, upright, diligent, understanding, prudent*.
- 2) The **fool** is the person who steadily opposes God's instruction. Fools exist even among God's people. These people are dangerous in their influence but not beyond hope. Other terms used are: *wicked, lazy, lacking sense*. The *scoffer* and *those who are wise in their own eyes* are more severe forms of the *fool* and are almost beyond hope (21:24, 26:12).
- 3) The **simple** is the person who is not firmly committed either to wisdom or to folly. He is easily misled. He does not apply himself to the discipline needed to gain and grow in wisdom.

Proverbs presents these characters as “caricatures.” They are people with exaggerated features for easy identification. The positive figures serve as ideals for the faithful to guide their conduct and character formation. The negative figures are exaggerated portraits of those who do not embrace God's will, so the faithful can recognize those traits in themselves and flee them.

c. Proverbs 31:10-31 contains a description of a woman who fears the Lord. 31:10: *An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.*

d. Are Proverbs “promises”? Although they are always wise, Proverbs are not promises. They deal with general truths and are not meant to cover every conceivable situation. Additionally, God sometimes has higher purposes for our lives that an individual proverb does not take into account.

Proverbs 3:1-2

- ¹ *My son, do not forget my teaching,
but let your heart keep my commandments,*
² *for length of days and years of life
and peace they will add to you.*

Proverbs 22:6

- ¹ *Train up a child in the way he should go;
even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

Jim Davis:

“God chooses some people to an even higher form of blessing than these promises—a type of blessing that can only come through suffering. It's the blessing of God's deeper presence. This is what the prosperity movement gets so wrong: it assumes the ‘blessed life’ is the pain-free life. But what if there's a deeper, higher blessing? This is a blessing the apostle Paul understood when he said this light momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison (2 Cor. 4:17).” ¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Jim Davis, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/does-proverbs-over-promise/>.

e. How can we become wise? The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom.

1 Corinthians 2:12-14

¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³ And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. ¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

The Holy Spirit “regenerates” the natural person (causes him to be born again, gives him spiritual life), making him a spiritual person who is able to understand spiritual truth. With our new spiritual discernment, we must now study and apply books such as Proverbs to learn how to walk in this new path of wisdom in our daily living.

D. Ecclesiastes¹⁰⁷

1. Introduction

a. Author

The word “Ecclesiastes” means “one who convenes an assembly,” or “Preacher” (ESV). Strictly speaking, the book is anonymous, given that no personal name is attached to it. Nevertheless, traditional Jewish and Christian scholarship has often ascribed authorship to Solomon (10th century B.C.), since the book describes the Preacher as the “son of David, king in Jerusalem” (1:1) and as someone who was surpassingly wise (1:16) and had a very prosperous reign (2:1–9; cf. 1 Kings 3–4).

b. Theme

The theme of Ecclesiastes is the necessity of fearing God in a fallen, and therefore frequently confusing and frustrating, world.

Ecclesiastes 1:1-3

¹ *The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.*

² *Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher,
vanity of vanities! All is vanity.*

³ *What does man gain by all the toil
at which he toils under the sun?*

Ecclesiastes 12:13

¹³ *The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.*

2. Topics

1. **The tragic reality of the fall.** The Preacher is painfully aware that the creation has been “subjected to futility” and is “groaning ... in the pains of childbirth” (Rom. 8:20, 22), and his more troubled musings are to be viewed as the cry of the heart of one who likewise is “groaning inwardly” as he eagerly awaits the resurrection age (see Rom. 8:23). It is especially noteworthy that when Paul refers to the creation being “subjected to futility,” the Greek word he uses (*mataiotēs*) is the one utilized 38 times in the Greek translation of Ecclesiastes to render the word “vanity” (Hb. *hebel*), indicating that this book might well have formed the background to Paul’s thought in Romans 8:18ff. The emphasis on the fall and its disastrous effects is closely related to the book’s other key themes described below.

¹⁰⁷ *ESV Study Bible*, 1193-1196.

2. **The “vanity” of life.** The book begins and ends with the exclamation, “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!” (Eccles. 1:2; 12:8). While “vanity” is obviously a key word throughout the book (its 38 occurrences account for more than half of its total usage in the OT), it is notoriously difficult to translate. Literally the word means “vapor” (see ESV footnote on 1:2) and conjures up a picture of something fleeting, ephemeral, and elusive, with different nuances to be ascertained from each context. When applied to human undertakings or the pleasures and joys of earthly life, it indicates that “the present form of this world is passing away” (1 Cor. 7:31); applied to the darker realities of living in a fallen world (e.g., death), it expresses frustration, anger, or sorrow; applied to the Preacher’s search for understanding of all things, it indicates something that remained incomprehensible or inscrutable to him (e.g., Eccles. 1:14–15). This last-mentioned usage is particularly significant, as the book presents itself as primarily a quest to “figure out” all of life (see esp. 1:12–18).
3. **Sin and death.** Human beings forfeited the righteousness they originally possessed before God (7:29), and thus all people are sinners (7:20). The opening chapters of Genesis make it clear that death was a result of the fall (Gen. 2:16–17; 3:19), and the Preacher is only too aware of this dreadful reality that affects everyone (e.g., Eccles. 2:14–17; 3:18–21; 6:6).
4. **The joy and the frustration of work.** God gave Adam work to accomplish prior to the fall (Gen. 2:15), but part of the punishment of his sin was that it would become painful toil (Gen. 3:17–19). Both realities are borne out in the Preacher’s experience, as he finds his work to be both satisfying (Eccles. 2:10, 24; 3:22; 5:18–20; 9:9–10) as well as aggravating (2:18–23; 4:4ff.).
5. **The grateful enjoyment of God’s good gifts.** The Preacher spends a great deal of time commenting on the twisted realities of a fallen world, but this does not blind him to the beauty of the world God created (3:11) or cause him to despise God’s good gifts of human relationships, food, drink, and satisfying labor (2:24–26; 3:12–13; 5:18–20; 7:14; 8:15; 9:7, 9). These are to be received humbly and enjoyed fully as blessings from God.
6. **The fear of God.** The fact that “all is vanity” should drive people to take refuge in God, whose work endures forever (3:14) and who is a “rock” for those who take shelter in him (e.g., Ps. 18:2; 62:8; 94:22). In other words, it summons people to “fear” or “revere” God (Eccles. 3:14; 5:7; 12:13–14; cf. also 7:18 and 8:12–13).

3. Notable Passages

a. A Time for Everything

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

¹ For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven:
² a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
³ a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
⁴ a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
⁵ a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
⁶ a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
⁷ a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
⁸ a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

b. Remember Your Creator in Your Youth

Ecclesiastes 12:1-8

¹ Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them";
² before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain,
³ in the day when the keepers of the house tremble [*trembling arms*], and the strong men are bent [*legs bent with age*], and the grinders [*teeth*] cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed [*vision loss*],
⁴ and the doors on the street are shut—when the sound of the grinding is low [*hearing loss*], and one rises up at the sound of a bird [*old people wake up early*], and all the daughters of song are brought low [*vocal chords no longer have the elastic strength to make sweet music*]
⁵ they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way [*the elderly are afraid of falling or being attacked*]; the almond tree blossoms [*white blossoms reflect the white hair of old age*], the grasshopper drags itself along [*old people used to have a spring in their step; now they drag themselves along*], and desire fails [*the elderly suffer from diminished desire, including but not limited to sexual desire*], because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets—
⁶ before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken [*refers to death; the silver cord that holds a golden lamp is snapped, and the light of life is snuffed out*], or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern [*the shattered pitcher and broken wheel at a well mean life-giving water is no longer available*]
⁷ and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.
⁸ Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity.

c. Fear God and Keep His Commandments

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

¹³ The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴ For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

E. Song of Solomon

1. Introduction

a. Alternate titles: Song of Songs, Canticles

b. Author

- “Jews and Christians have traditionally taken 1:1 (“The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s”) to mean that Solomon, the son and successor to David, wrote the entire Song of Solomon, pointing to 1 Kings 4:32 (“his songs were 1,005”) for evidence of Solomon’s authorial work. However, there are several reasons to hesitate on that matter.
- First, 1:1 is grammatically ambiguous: it need not mean that Solomon wrote the Song of Solomon, only that it was written in his honor.
- Second, what is known of Solomon himself from 1 Kings raises problems with the suggestion that Solomon was the author.
 - For example, 1 Kings 2 gives a concise summary of how Solomon’s kingdom was established (cf. 1 Kings 2:46), which is followed immediately by the statement in 1 Kings 3:1 that “Solomon made a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt.” Pharaoh’s daughter, however, could not have been the country girl (a Shulammite) who is the heroine of the Song of Solomon (though some hold that Solomon might have married the Shulammite before he married Pharaoh’s daughter).
 - Likewise, Solomon’s full harem (1 Kings 11:1–8)¹⁰⁸ makes him a very bad example of married love for Israel (though some have replied that the Song of Solomon reflects Solomon’s wisdom that came from his chastened perspective as he reflected on his own life).
- Third, the book mentions Solomon (Song 1:5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:11–12), but generally as a distant, even idealized figure.”¹⁰⁹

“According to the title, the Song belongs to Solomon. The Hebrew phrase ‘which is Solomon’s’ (1:1) can be translated ‘by Solomon’ (as its author), or ‘for Solomon’ (as the person to whom it is dedicated).”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ 1 Kings 11:3: “He had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart.”

¹⁰⁹ *ESV Study Bible*, 1211.

¹¹⁰ *New Geneva Study Bible*, 1003.

2. Summary

“The subject of the Song is marital love. This love must be seen in the context of the even greater love of God that the Bible as a whole reveals. The beauty and worth of sexual love is affirmed at the beginning of the Bible, where the difference and relationship of the sexes is associated with the creation of humanity in God’s image.

The Song of Solomon reveals three qualities of love between a man and a woman: self-giving, desire, and commitment. In all these ways love reflects the greater love of God our Creator. The Old Testament prophets compare the love of God for His people to the love of a bridegroom for the bride (Jer. 2:2). Christian marriage, according to Paul, should be modeled on the most perfect expression of such love, the self-giving love of Christ for His church and its willing response (Eph 5:22, 33).

The Song is written in verse, as love poetry. The lines are short and rhythmical, the language rich in imagery. The poem deals more with emotions than with rational ideas. It is irrelevant, for example, whether the woman who is described in 6:9 is really “perfect” in any way that could be proven. The word is an expression of her beloved’s deep affection for her, and that is all that the images are intended to be.

Although not a formal drama, there are nevertheless exchanges between the characters within the poem. The speakers have been identified by capitalized headings inserted in the translation. The most important characters are “the Shulamite” (6:13), a young country girl; “the beloved,” her shepherd love (1:7; 6:3); and “the daughters of Jerusalem,” who function much like the chorus in a drama (2:7). There are numerous minor figures—Solomon himself is mentioned (1:5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:11, 12), as are the mothers of the young lovers (6:9; 8:5), her brothers (8:8, 9), their friends (5:1), and the city watchman.

The poem is perhaps best understood as expressing the depth of love between the Shulamite girl and her beloved shepherd in the language of romantic fantasy. She envisions him as a dashing king, the prince of her dreams.

A refrain is found at three points in the Song (2:7; 3:5; 8:4), addressed to the “daughters of Jerusalem.” Its essence is: “Do not try to force the situation. Let love take its natural course and its own time.” This refrain creates movement and suspense. The lovers experience separation, hostility, and interference, but the refrain anticipates that the relationship is nevertheless moving forward. There is a sense of fulfillment at the end of the book, when the lovers, together at last and at ease in public, walk arm-in-arm to the home of the parents, the place where their relationship began (8:5). The next two verses praise the excellence of love (8:6, 7). This is the climax of the Song, but not quite the end. It concludes by quietly echoing some of the key elements of the work (8:8-14).

Between the expressions of longing at the beginning and the consummation at the end, there is what seems to be a dream sequence in chapters 3-6 (3:1; 5:2). In this section the girl dreams about her wedding and the lovemaking that will follow. There is everything that we might expect here: erotic reveries, nightmares, fears of losing her love, and romantic experiences that transform him into a prince.

Despite the romantic images and fantasies in this book, there is realism in it. The author knows about erotic desire and the struggle to establish a relationship. But there remains also idealism. The overwhelming impression that the book leaves with the reader is that love is beautiful and can provide deep satisfaction and contentment.”¹¹¹

¹¹¹ *New Geneva Study Bible*, 1003-1004.