

Writings (Wisdom)

Job—Song of Solomon

Job

Job 1-3	Job 4-37	Job 28	Job 38-41	Job 42
Prologue	Speeches	Wisdom Poem	God's Speech	Epilogue
Royal Court: God and Satan, Satan's Challenge, God's Permission, Job's Lament	Cycle 1 (4-14), Cycle 2 (15-21), Cycle 3 (22-31) Elihu's Speeches (32-37)	Even Wisdom elusive to human grasp by divine design	Creation power, even Behemoth, Leviathan, Job repents human hubris	Repentance Repeated, Sacrifices Commanded, Job Restored

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Speech Cycles

- Speech Cycle 1 (4-14)
 - Eliphaz (4-5)—Job (6-7)
 - Bildad (8)—Job (9-10)
 - Zophar (11)—Job (12-14)
- Speech Cycle 2 (15-21)
 - Eliphaz (15)—Job (16-17)
 - Bildad (18)—Job (19)
 - Zophar (20)—Job (21)
- Speech Cycle 3 (22-31)
 - Eliphaz (22)—Job (23-24)
 - Bildad (25)—Job (26-27)
 - Wisdom (28)—Job (29-31)

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Job				
Job 1-3	Job 4-37	Job 28	Job 38-41	Job 42
Prologue	Speeches	Young Elihu patiently awaits his turn, but his speeches add nothing new, rehashing old themes		
Royal Court: God and Satan, Satan's Challenge, God's Permission, Job's Lament	Cycle 1 (4-14), Cycle 2 (15-21), Cycle 3 (22-31) Elihu's Speeches (32-37)	Even wisdom elusive to human grasp by divine design	even Behemoth, Leviathan, Job repents human hubris	Repentance Repeated, Sacrifices Commanded, Job Restored

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Job				
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Prologue	Speeches	"in" dust and ashes ambiguous: agreeing with God, or leaving even piety behind in disgust at God?		
Royal Court: God and Satan, Satan's Challenge, God's Permission, Job's Lament	Cycle 1 (4-14), Cycle 2 (15-21), Cycle 3 (22-31) Elihu's Speeches (32-37)	Even Wisdom elusive to human grasp by divine design	Creation power, even Behemoth, Leviathan, Job repents human hubris	Repentance Repeated, Sacrifices Commanded, Job Restored

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Job				
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Prologue	Speeches	Friends were wrong and Job right (!), Job intercedes through prayer, God hears Job's prayer		
Royal Court: God and Satan, Satan's Challenge, God's Permission, Job's Lament	Cycle 1 (4-14), Cycle 2 (15-21), Cycle 3 (22-31) Elihu's Speeches (32-37)	Even Wisdom elusive to human grasp by divine design	even Behemoth, Leviathan, Job repents human hubris	Repentance Repeated, Sacrifices Commanded, Job Restored

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Job

- **Critical Issues**
 - **Date (7th-4th cent.)**
 - ~Earlier: article with Satan (like Zechariah)—so not a name (6th cent.)
 - ~Later: Persian type names for kings, princes (3:14-15), abundant Aramaisms
 - **Addresses common issues in ANE**
 - ~Egypt: Dispute between Man and His Ba
 - ~Canaan: Epic of Keret
 - ~Mesopotamia: A Man and His God (Sumerian), Babylonian Theodicy
 - ~Universal question on human suffering and divine justice

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Job

● Critical Issues

- Compositional history (indecisive, so pushes to wholistic, narrative approach)
 - ~ Narrative then dialogues, or dialogues then narrative added? Indecisive.
 - ~ Elihu speeches interrupt flow of cycles but themes anticipate God's speech
 - ~ Epilogue seems out of keeping with rest of book

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Job

● Theological Themes

- Human piety toward God
 - ~ Human piety motivations scrutinized (Satan's challenges to God)
 - ~ Job, friends: God's retributive justice should reward the pious, punish wicked
 - ~ God is equivocal: neither confirms nor denies, only claims total power
 - ~ God rebukes Job's friends, then turns around and rewards Job's piety!
 - ~ Polarities of piety: unquestioning devotion vs. furious resentment (Stevens)

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Job

● Theological Themes

- Nature of God
 - ~ Diverse, conflicting claims by everyday people (not systematic theologians)
 - ~ Befuddling life dualities: joy/sorrow, prosperity/poverty, war/peace, etc.
 - ~ Key problem: God's total power in the face of innocent human suffering
 - ~ Key theological conundrum: retributive justice as operative assumption
 - ~ Secondary problem: whether God even accepts repentance (Job's wife)

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Psalms

Pss 1-41	Pss 42-72	Pss 73-89	Pss 90-106	Pss 107-150
Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Book 5
Two major themes: Ps 1: God's Torah Ps 2: God's Reign				
Covenant	Succession	Descendants	Failure	Restoration

Five-Part division inexplicable. Older theory was based on Davidic covenant in its rise, demise, and restoration. Newer theory is just generic "Torah focus."

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Psalm Genres and Types

- Thanksgiving (18, 30, 34, 41, 66, 116, 138)
- Lament
 - Individual (3, 5, 13, 22, 26, 39, 51, 59, 70, 88, 120, 141)
 - Communal (44, 74, 79, 80, 83)
- Hymns (8, 19, 29, 33, 65, 57, 96, 100, 103-105, 114, 117, 145-150)
- Liturgical (temple function: 15, 24, 48, 66, 118, 132; Psalms of Ascent: 120-134)
- Royal (court function, as in coronation: 2, 72, 110; king's activity: 20, 21, 45, 89, 101, 144)
- Torah (1, 19, 119)
- Wisdom (37, 49, 73, 112, 127, 128, 133)

After exile anticipating Davidic restoration and rule

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Psalms

● Critical Issues

- Textual and canonical ambiguities
 - ~Textual history is complex, confused
 - ~Masoretic versus LXX: combinations, splits, so numbering, sequence off
 - ~Impacts canon issue: Psalms was not early fixed as once thought
- Function of the canonical whole is unclear
 - ~Supposed temple function of canonical psalter belied by late formation evidence
 - ~Synagogue/home use shows post-temple function in early Judaism
 - ~Christian use to interpret Jesus, constant devotional use throughout history

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Psalter

Masoretic	LXX
Pss 1-8	Pss 1-8
Pss 9-10	Pss 9
Pss 11-113	Pss 10-112
Pss 114-115	Pss 113
Pss 116	Pss 114-115
Pss 117-146	Pss 116-145
Pss 147	Pss 146-147
Pss 148-150	Pss 148-150
	Pss 151

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Calls into question concept of early, fixed, tripartite canon, the traditional reading of NT passages such as Luke 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20

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Psalms

- Cannot use typical implied author/reader strategies, since those vary widely from psalm to psalm, even though ascribed to David (e.g., Ps 51 about Bathsheba), since David clearly is not author of some of them.
- ~ Masoretic versus LXX: *conjunctions, splits, so numbering, sequence off*
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Psalms

- Critical Issues
 - Unclear rationale of the obvious five-part division
 - ~ Davidic: covenant focus, explaining rise, fall, and hoped for Davidic restoration
 - ~ Synagogue: liturgical focus, to match weekly Torah portions
 - ~ Collections: assimilation focus, uniting smaller, cohesive collections
 - ~ Integration: liturgical mirror of shape of Torah

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Psalms

- Theological Themes
 - Wide variety, appropriating, reshaping existing biblical themes
 - Deuteronomic theology—particularly laments
 - ~ Focus on election, but absent acknowledgement of covenant sin
 - ~ Focus on retributive justice, but more for foes
 - Yahwist theology
 - ~ Focus on election, promises of land and nation to ancient patriarchs
 - ~ Enthronement traditions modulated into God's universal kingship
 - ~ Modifies retributive justice into merciful God dependence for any future

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Psalms

- Theological Themes
 - Priestly theology—ambivalent attitudes
 - ~ Priestly vocabulary used only as foil to contravene priestly cult (cf. Ps 51)
 - ~ Yet, unexpectedly, concludes with affirmation of priestly cultus (Ps 51:18-19)
 - Wisdom theology—life inequities betray that human insight leads to prosperity, honor
 - David-Zion theology
 - ~ Well represented: Davidic authorship, concern for kingship, royal rituals
 - ~ Modifies with other theologies (creation, ANE kingship, Yahwist)

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Psalms

“Even more, the received theologies were ‘mixed and matched’ to create new, somewhat novel theological perspectives . . . provides ample support for the notion that theology is indeed a daughter of human experience. . . . It is the residue of human reflections on what it means to be human in relationship to God. . . . In this way the Psalter is one of the greatest theological treasures of the Hebrew Bible” (KH: 204).

- ~Well represented: Davidic authorship, concern for kingship, royal rituals
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Proverbs

Prov 1:1-7	Pr 1:8-9:18	10:1-22:16	22:17-24:34	25:1-29:27	Pr 30:1-33	Pr 31:1-31
Introduction	Father	Solomon	Wisdom	Hezekiah	Agur	Lemuel
Solomon, Share Pious Instruction, Advancing the Wise	Prescriptive, Dame Wisdom vs. Stranger Woman	Descriptive, Wide Variety of Human Behaviors	Part 1: like Wisdom of Amenemope, Part 2: Peculiar Mix	Royal Intro, Similitudes, Eclectic	Caustic Foil to Traditional Wisdom, Numerical Sayings	Queen to Coming of Age Son, Good Wife Praise
"Fear of God"	"Hear, my son"		Two Parts		Two Parts	Two Parts

Proverbs

Human industry, confronting misbehavior, accepting discipline, avoiding fools, business honesty, parental worth of wise child, prudent speech

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"Fear of God"	"Hear, my son"		Two Parts		Two Parts	Two Parts

Proverbs

- Critical Issues
 - Greek text (LXX)
 - ~Substantial additions reflecting Hellenistic-style wisdom
 - ~Suggests growth and accumulation through usage over time
 - Authorship and Compositional History
 - ~Ascription to Solomon (1:1) not reasonable
 - ~Absence of temporal markers obscures compositional history

Proverbs

- Critical Issues
 - Contents do not match character of wisdom ascribed to Solomon in 1 Kgs 4:29-34; headings within the book ascribe to others, with some suggesting foreign origins (Agur and Lemuel); compositional history shows some proverbs added even in process of later translation.
 - Date
 - ~Substantive
 - ~Suggests growth and accumulation through usage over time
 - Authorship and Compositional History
 - ~Ascription to Solomon (1:1) not reasonable
 - ~Absence of temporal markers obscures compositional history

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Proverbs

- Critical Issues
 - Date
 - ~Proverbs 1-9 as Persian period: wicked woman as "stranger" and "harlot"
 - ~Wisdom personified feminine generally thought later date (Prov 8, 31)
 - Treatment of women
 - ~Recognizable negative portraits of women (misogynist attitudes inherent)
 - ~Larger agenda: not denigrating the female gender but coaching national survival

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Proverbs

- Critical Issues
 - Date
 - ~Persian period
 - ~Wisdom personified feminine generally thought later date
 - Treatment of women
 - ~Recognizable negative portraits of women
 - ~Larger agenda: not denigrating the female gender but coaching national survival
- "That the first nine chapters address the question of how young men in postexilic Judah should behave in their personal conduct so as best to support the survival of the Judean community may be indicative of the book's larger purpose. . . its advice is meant to cultivate the success of the people of Israel . . . the quintessential work about wisdom as at least one of the keys to Israel's strategy for being God's chosen people in the world" (KH: 209).

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Proverbs

- Theological Themes
 - Wisdom as fear of God
 - ~Fear of God font of all wisdom
 - ~Practice of wisdom favored by God (contrast Job, Ecclesiastes)
 - ~Supported in all sections of Proverbs (with exception of Agur material)
 - Torah and Wisdom relationship
 - ~Complicated, since D seems to denigrate wisdom subtly
 - ~Torah references frame beginning and end as standard of behavior
 - ~Seeks to supplement and reinforce Torah

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Proverbs

- Theological Themes

- Proverbs and Job, Ecclesiastes

- ~ Job, Ecclesiastes show deep skepticism toward human wisdom
- ~ Proverbs argues just as relentlessly the abiding value of wisdom
- ~ Both perspectives canonically balance out

Ecclesiastes

Ecc 1:1-11	1:12-2:26	Ecc 3:1-4:16	Ecc 5:1-6:12	Ecc 7:1-29	Ecc 8:1-11:6	Ecc 11:7-12:8
Introduction	Solomon	God	Speech	Wisdom	Gain	Conclusion
Superscript, Vanity Refrain, Opening Poem	King's View on Life's Vanities	God's Designs Elusive, Goodness Relativized	Cautious Speech, Oppressive Officials, Wealth	Mocking Wisdom Ironically	Futility of Seeking Gain of Any Kind	Concluding Poem to Bracket Opening Poem
"Vanity of vanities"	"To everything there is a season"					

Ecclesiastes

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Ecc 12:9-14	Appendix	(1) "Teacher" Highlighted, (2) Respect Sayings, (3) Affirm God's Justice				

Ecclesiastes

- Critical Issues

- Authorship

- ~ Attribution to Solomon (1:1, 12; 12:9) unreliable; attempt to infer authority
- ~ Topics of wealth and gain suggests well-off lifestyle

- Date and Origin

- ~ Ptolemaic patterns of governmental administration (based on pharaohs)
- ~ Governmental obligations easier in wealthy Egypt than poor Judah

Ecclesiastes

- Critical Issues

- Authorship

- ~ Attribution to Solomon

- ~ Topics of wealth and gain

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Subverting God's justice for the poor?
Context for attitude of futility of pursuing change.

Ecclesiastes

- Critical Issues

- Purpose (question of implied author)

- ~ Kindhearted man of wisdom just trying to help others accept hard lot in life?

- ~ Cynical landowner trying to secure his own lot by locking down others?

- ~ Man of leisure targeting wealthy neighbors with friendly advice?

Ecclesiastes

- Theological Themes

- Creation at God's control (Ecc 3)

- Humanity at God's mercy

- ~ Humanity's helplessness in face of destiny fated by God

- ~ Life's harshness, meaninglessness shows retributive justice not to be trusted

- Goodness to be grabbed (life's lagniappe)

- ~ Inscrutable God, helpless humans leaves only tidbits of goodness to be grabbed

- ~ Grab what you can as that is all there is (Ecc 8:15; cf. 3:12, 22; 5:19; 6:3; 9:9)

Song of Solomon

Song of Solomon					
Sg 1:1-6	Sg 1:7-3:5	Sg 3:6-11	Sg 4:1-6:12	Sg 6:13-8:4	Sg 8:5-14
Introduction	Two Lovers	Royal Wedding	Male Lover	Observers	Reprise
"Solomon's," Woman's Summons, Daughters of Jerusalem	Two Lovers' Dialogue, Visit Recalled, Daughters of Zion	Armed Guard, King Solomon, Throne, Crown, Daughters of Zion	Her Beauty, Woman Taunts Daughters of Jerusalem, Her Visit to Him	Testimony, Lovers Agree, Trust in Fields, Daughters of Jerusalem	Love's Power, Solomon's Vineyard, Woman's Summons

Song of Solomon

• Critical Issues

- Translation challenges
 - ~Frequent hapax legomena renders translation educated guesses
 - ~Repeated metaphors, ornate style, Hebrew poetry at apex
- Genre, composition, text
 - ~Wholistic work, or mashup of smaller poems?
 - ~Drama meant to be performed?
 - ~Qumran texts missing material in Masoretic (Prudishness? No.)

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Song of Solomon

• Critical Issues

- History of interpretation
 - ~Israel: metaphoric of God's relationship with Israel
 - ~Christian (Origen): metaphoric of God/Christ's relationship with church/believer
 - ~Targummic: extended historical allegory of exodus, exile, return

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Song of Solomon

• Theological Themes

- Never uses name of God, so theology not in book, but read from book
- Love as a mutuality
 - ~Judaism/Christianity: divine love as analogous to human love, utopian mutuality
 - ~Other theologies (D, J, P) testify imbalance, not mutuality
- Love as alienation
 - ~Devoted, unmarried, consummation in secret
 - ~Metaphor that full divine/human mutuality exists only in dreams
 - ~Awaken love only when ready = eschatological component? (Stevens: no)

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