

In Consideration of Wisdom Literature
Mark DeYmaz • October 1, 2023 • Threaded

1. **SLIDE 1 - Wisdom Literature describes a genre found in many ancient cultures.**
 - a. **SLIDE 2** - It provides the hearer/reader with moral, philosophical, and practical guidance for living and maxims that can be counted on as generally or typically true in most situations under normal circumstances.
 - b. A modern example of the more practical wisdom might be Benjamin Franklin's "Poor Richard's Almanac," source of the wise saying "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."
 - i. Mostly this is true...
 - ii. Like train up a child...
2. **SLIDE 3 - Examples of Wisdom Literature**
 - a. **Psalms 1:1-3**

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight
is in the law of the LORD, and in His law, he meditates day and night. He will be
like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season
And its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.
 - b. **Proverbs 3:5, 6**

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.
 - c. **Ecclesiastes 12:1-4**

Poetic voice and metaphor as well is at times used to convey wisdom
Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days
come and the years approach when you will say, "I have no pleasure in
them"; before the sun and the light, the moon and the stars are darkened
(eyesight dims), and clouds return after the rain (sorrow upon sorrow); on the
day that the watchmen of the house tremble (hands), and strong men are bent
over (backs), the grinders (teeth) stop working because they are few...
3. **SLIDE 4** - Thus, as the name of the genre implies, **Wisdom Literature passes down sound advice... Instruction for living... Proven and credible understanding distilled from the those who've gone before.**
4. Throughout the genre, both stated and implied...
 - a. **SLIDE 5** - God is recognized as the source of wisdom.
Job 28:23-28

But where can wisdom be found? God understands its way, and He knows its
place... For He looks to the ends of the earth; He sees everything under the
heavens. And to mankind He said, "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;
And to turn away from evil is understanding."
 - b. **SLIDE 6** - As the source of wisdom, God is to be feared and obeyed. (Proverbs 1:7) **Proverbs 1:7**

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and
instruction.

5. **SLIDE 7** - In Proverbs 9, Wisdom is personified (i.e., she is a beautiful lady) and contrasted with the boisterous/rebellious woman of Proverbs 7 whose flattering words lead the foolish and naive to death.

a. **Proverbs 9**

¹ Wisdom has built her house,
She has carved out her seven pillars;
² She has prepared her food, she has mixed her wine;
She has also set her table;
³ She has sent out her attendants, she calls out
From the tops of the heights of the city:
⁴ “Whoever is naive, let him turn in here!”
To him who lacks understanding she says,
⁵ “Come, eat of my food
And drink of the wine I have mixed.
⁶ Abandon *your* foolishness and live,
And proceed in the way of understanding.”

b. **Proverbs 7**

For at the window of my house
I looked out through my lattice,
⁷ And I saw among the naive,
And discerned among the ^[d]youths
A young man lacking ^[e]sense,
In the twilight, in the ^[f]evening,
In the ^[g]middle of the night and the darkness.
¹⁰ And behold, a woman *comes* to meet him,
Dressed as a prostitute and cunning of heart.
¹¹ She is boisterous and rebellious,
So she seizes him and kisses him,
^[h] And with a brazen face she says to him:
I have spread my couch with coverings,
With colored linens of Egypt.
¹⁷ I have sprinkled my bed
With myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
¹⁸ Come, let’s drink our fill of love until morning;
Let’s delight ourselves with caresses.
¹⁹ For ^[i]my husband is not at home;
With her many persuasions she entices him;
With her ^[j]flattering lips she seduces him.
²² Suddenly he follows her
As an ox goes to the slaughter,
Or as ^[m]one walks in ankle bracelets to the discipline of a fool,
²³ Until an arrow pierces through his liver;
As a bird hurries to the snare,
So he does not know that it *will cost him* his life.

6. **SLIDE 8 - Books of Wisdom Literature**

- a. **Job** (whose author is unknown) is considered one of the oldest books in the Bible.
 - i. Generally speaking, it addresses the problem of unjust suffering.
 - ii. It invites us to God's wisdom and character in spite of our circumstances.
 - iii. Christ can be seen in Job's unjust suffering, His trust in God throughout it all, His later questioning of God (as did Christ, My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me), and in time God's restoration of his life and fortunes (i.e., resurrection)
- b. **Psalms** (150 in total)
 - i. Some 73 are attributed to David
 - ii. 50 are unknown origin
 - iii. The rest attributed to Asaph (David's worship leader) and a Levite named Korah
- c. **Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs** (often called the Song of Solomon) are all attributed to Solomon
 - i. **Proverbs**
 - 1) Perhaps no better explanation of Wisdom Literature
Proverbs 1:1-5
The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, To discern the sayings of understanding, To receive instruction in wise behavior, Righteousness, justice, and integrity; To give prudence to the naive, To the youth knowledge and discretion, A wise person will hear and increase in learning, And a person of understanding will acquire wise counsel...
 - ii. **Ecclesiastes**
 - 1) Solomon wisest man that ever lived (I Kings 3)
 - 1) Solomon prays for wisdom
 - 2) God gives it to him, saying...
Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked for yourself a long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the lives of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice...
Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you.
 - 2) In Ecclesiastes, then, Solomon asks and address the question, *What is the meaning of life?*
 - a) **Ecclesiastes 1:13**
I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom about everything that has been done under heaven...

b) **Ecclesiastes 2**

I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself." And behold, it too was futility. ² I said of laughter, "*It is senseless,*" and of pleasure, "What does this accomplish?" ³ I explored with my mind *how* to refresh my body with wine while my mind was guiding *me* wisely; and how to seize foolishness, until I could see what good there is for the sons of mankind to do under heaven for the few years of their lives. ⁴ I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself; ⁵ I made gardens and parks for myself, and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees; ⁶ I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate a forest of growing trees. ⁷ I bought male and female slaves, and I had slaves *born* at home. I also possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. ⁸ I also amassed for myself silver and gold, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I provided for myself male and female singers, and the pleasures of the sons of mankind: many concubines. ⁹ Then I became great and increased more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. My wisdom also stood by me. ¹⁰ All that my eyes desired, I did not refuse them. I did not restrain my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor; and this was my reward for all my labor. ¹¹ So I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold, all was futility and striving after wind, and there was no benefit under the sun.

c) **Ecclesiastes 12: 13, 14**

The conclusion, when everything has been heard, *is*: fear God and keep His commandments, because this *applies to* every person. ¹⁴ For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

iii. **Song of Songs**

- 1) A story of love between a groom and bride
- 2) Throughout the centuries, allegorical interpretation depicts the love of Christ first Israel and in time for the Church as bride.

7. But in terms of seeing Christ in Wisdom Literature and more specifically observing the Red Thread of Redemption, Psalm 22 (approximately 950 BC)

- a. Written some 300-400 years before the invention of crucifixion by the Persians
- b. Some 900 years, then, before the crucifixion of Christ
- c. Prophetic, then, as well as instructional...

My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?

I am a worm and not a person,

A disgrace of mankind and despised by the people.

⁷ All who see me deride me;
They sneer, they shake their heads, *saying*,
⁸ “Turn *him* over to the LORD; let Him save him;
Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him.”
Many bulls have surrounded me;
Strong *bulls* of Bashan have encircled me.
¹³ They open their mouths wide at me,
As a ravening and roaring lion.
¹⁴ **I am poured out like water,**
And all my bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;
It is melted within me.
¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a piece of pottery,
And my tongue clings to my jaws;
For dogs have surrounded me;
A band of evildoers has encompassed me;
They pierced my hands and my feet.
¹⁷ **I can count all my bones.**
They look, they stare at me;
¹⁸ **They divide my garments among them,**
And they cast lots for my clothing.