

BANNED

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BIBLE



The Rev. Dr. Carl Gregg

Mondays, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm,

September 29 – November 3

Housekeeping

- Slides: frederickuu.org/fcc
- **Attendance** for FCC
- Add to **email** list?
- Insights from your studies — *or other questions/suggestions?*

Covenant

- Use **“I” statements**: *Speak from your own experience.*
- **Ask permission before sharing** other participants’ stories outside the group.
- **Step-up, step-back**: be conscious of the level of participation that you bring to the conversation. Allow everyone a chance to speak before you speak again.
- You always have **permission to “pass.”**



Upcoming Classes

- *Session 7: Introduction (to Prophetic Literature)*
- *Session 8: Isaiah*
- *Session 9: Jeremiah, Ezekiel*
- *Session 10: The Twelve*
- **Session 11: Psalms & Proverbs; Job; Five Scrolls**
- **Session 12: Daniel and “After the Hebrew Bible”**
- Spring 2015: 6-weeks on Jesus, the Gospels, and Acts
- Fall 2015: 6-weeks on Paul & the rest of the NT

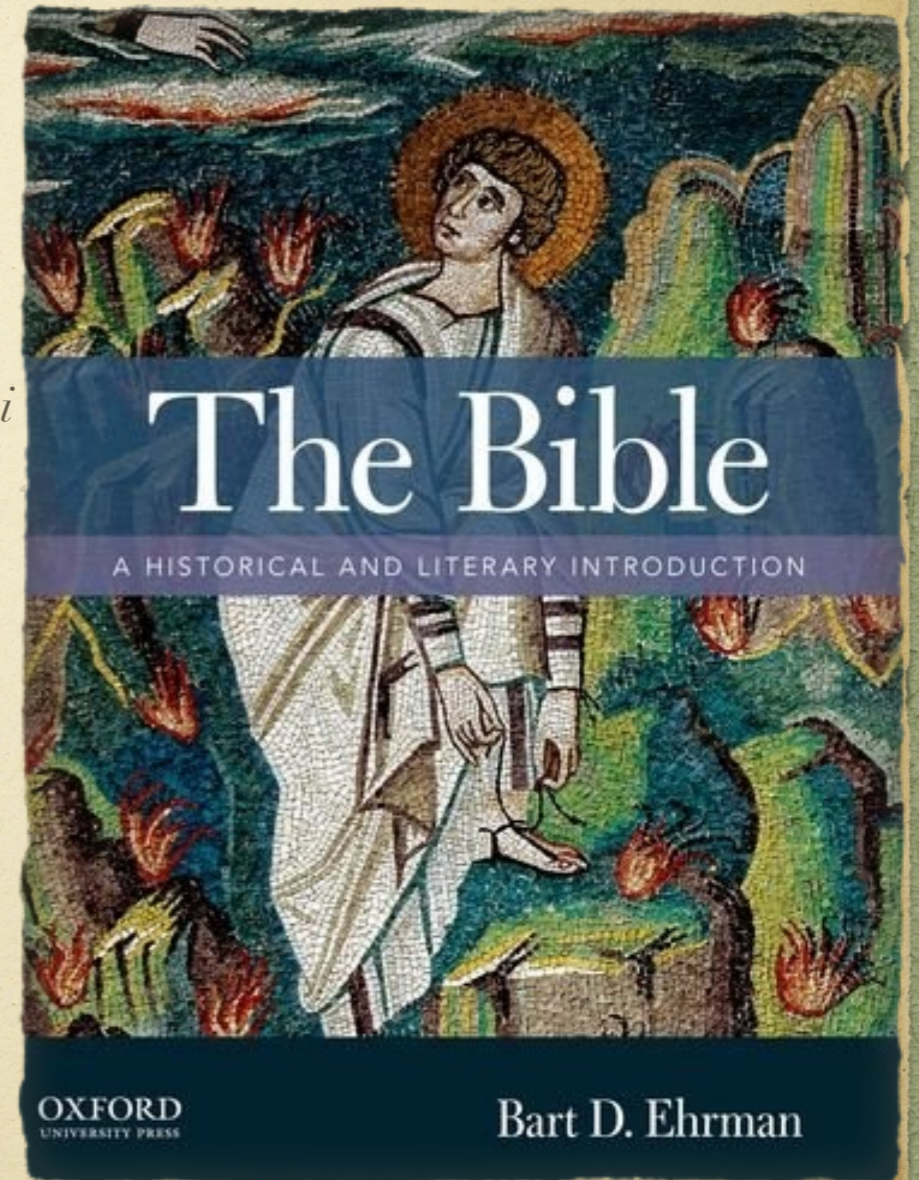
Alternately: Read primary text...*and* annotations
...*or just come to class*

Chapter 5: The Early Israelite Prophets: *Amos, Isaiah of Jerusalem, Jeremiah, Hosea, Micah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk*

Chapter 6: The Historians and Prophets of Exile and Return: *Ezra and Nehemiah, Second Isaiah, Joel, Obadiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Third Isaiah, Malachi*

Chapter 7: Poets and Story Tellers of Ancient Israel: Psalms, Lamentations, Song of Songs, Ruth, Esther, Jonah, Daniel, 1 and 2 Chronicles

Chapter 8: Wisdom and Apocalyptic Literature: Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Selections of AL



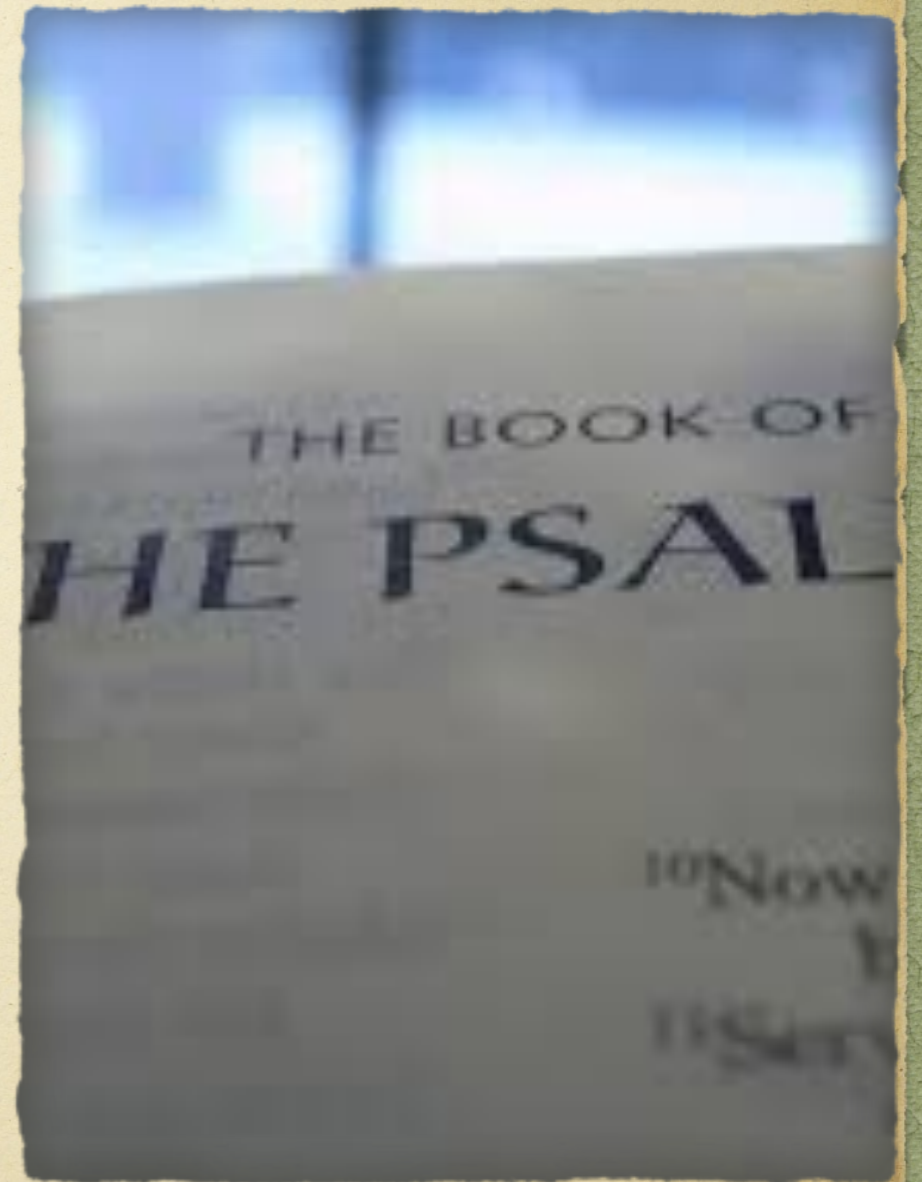
Fall 2014

Psalms: Prayer book of the Temple *...the Synagogue and the Church*

➤ Psalter - from the Greek for “song.” (Hebrew title *Tehillim* means “hymns” or “songs of praise”)

➤ Speech back to YHWH - affirmation, distress, and testimony

➤ Centrality in NT - quoted more in the NT (Isaiah is 2nd), although it is difficult to tell the exact number because some are implicit or subtle allusions.



Structure

➤ Canonical form - divided into five books, each with a culminating doxology:

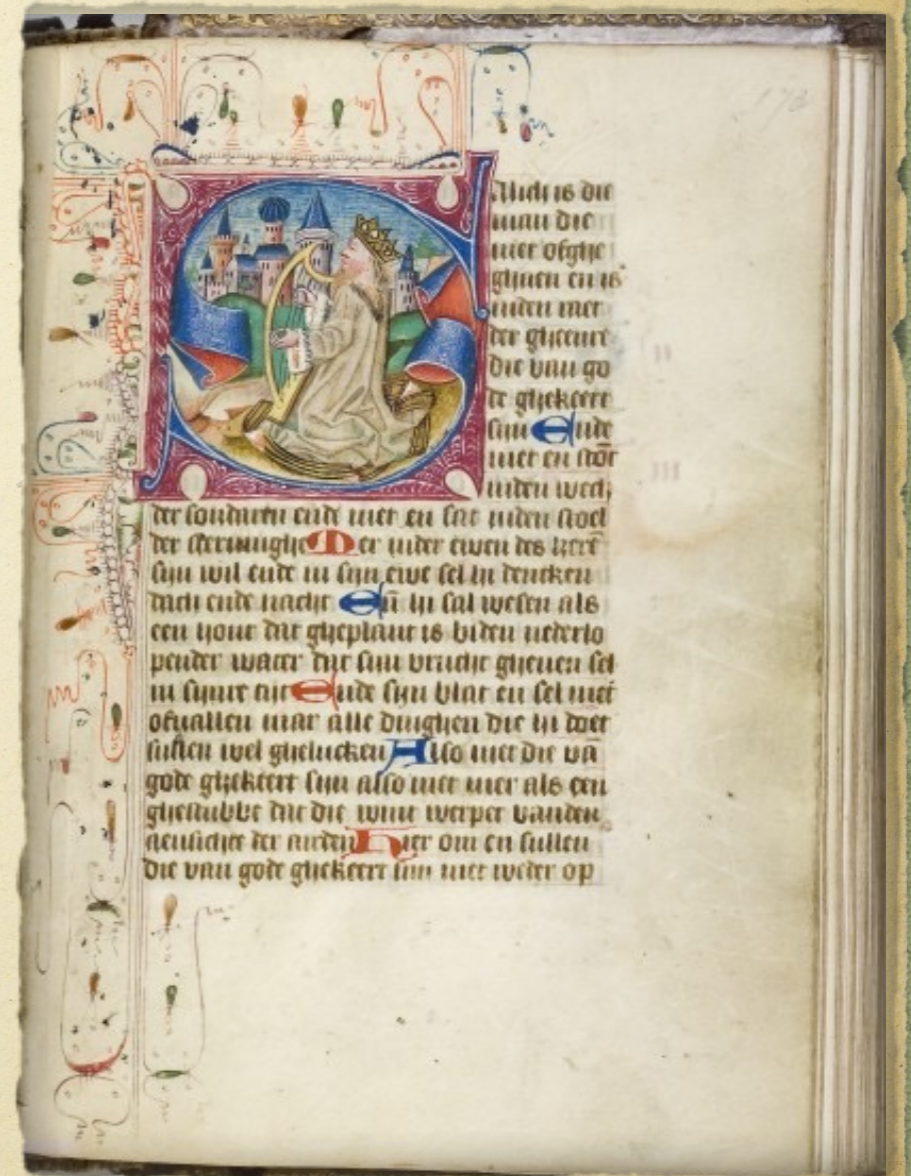
➤ (1) 1-41, (2) 42-72, (3) 73-89, (4) 90-106, (5) 107-150

➤ End: in a collection of doxologies (Pss 145-150)

➤ Arrangement:

➤ likely late in the process of canonization

➤ probably intended to be a liturgical counterpoint to the Five books of the Torah.



Sub-structure

- ❧ Psalms 120-134 (“A Song of Ascents”)
- ❧ Pss 73-83 (“Asaph”)
- ❧ Pss 84, 85, 88 (“Korah”)
- ❧ Perhaps related to particular guilds of choirs in the Persian period. Each guild perhaps created its own worship manual (or hymnal), which was eventually incorporated into the larger collection
- ❧ If the process was anything like a church hymnal committee, it was part intentional, part accidental, part haphazard—and complicated by competing advocacies and political compromises



Theme: “Heavy Jerusalem Accent”

➤ Temple (YHWH’s residence) such as the “Songs of Zion” that celebrate the city (Ps 46)

➤ YHWH as creator and king – see the “enthronement Psalms” like Pss 47, 93, 96-99

➤ Davidic King – “Royal Psalms,” king as God’s designated ruler (Pss 2, 18, 20-21, 45, 72, 89)



Interpreting the Psalms: Historical-Critical

- Situate each Psalm in a particular historical context. Not very helpful because it is likely that only Ps 137 can be dated with any reasonable certainty.
- “1 By the rivers of Babylon — there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion. 2 On the willows there we hung up our harps. 3 For there our captors asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" 4 How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? 5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! 6 Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy. 7 Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem's fall, how they said, "Tear it down! Tear it down! Down to its foundations!" 8 O daughter Babylon, you devastator! Happy shall they be who pay you back what you have done to us! 9 Happy shall they be who take your little ones and dash them against the rock!”

Ps 44 (God in the Hands of Angry Sinners)

9 Yet you have rejected us and abased us, and have not gone out with our armies. 10 You made us turn back from the foe, and our enemies have gotten spoil. 11 You have made us like sheep for slaughter, and have scattered us among the nations. 12 You have sold your people for a trifle, demanding no high price for them. 13 You have made us the taunt of our neighbors, the derision and scorn of those around us. 14 You have made us a byword among the nations, a laughingstock among the peoples. 15 All day long my disgrace is before me, and shame has covered my face 16 at the words of the taunters and revilers, at the sight of the enemy and the avenger. 17 All this has come upon us, yet we have not forgotten you, or been false to your covenant. 18 Our heart has not turned back, nor have our steps departed from your way, 19 yet you have broken us in the haunt of jackals, and covered us with deep darkness.

Interpreting the Psalms: Historical-Critical

- Ps 51 has been linked to David's crisis with Bathsheba and Uriah, but most scholars think these "superscriptions" were applied by a later community
- "1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. 5 Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. 6 You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. 9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me."

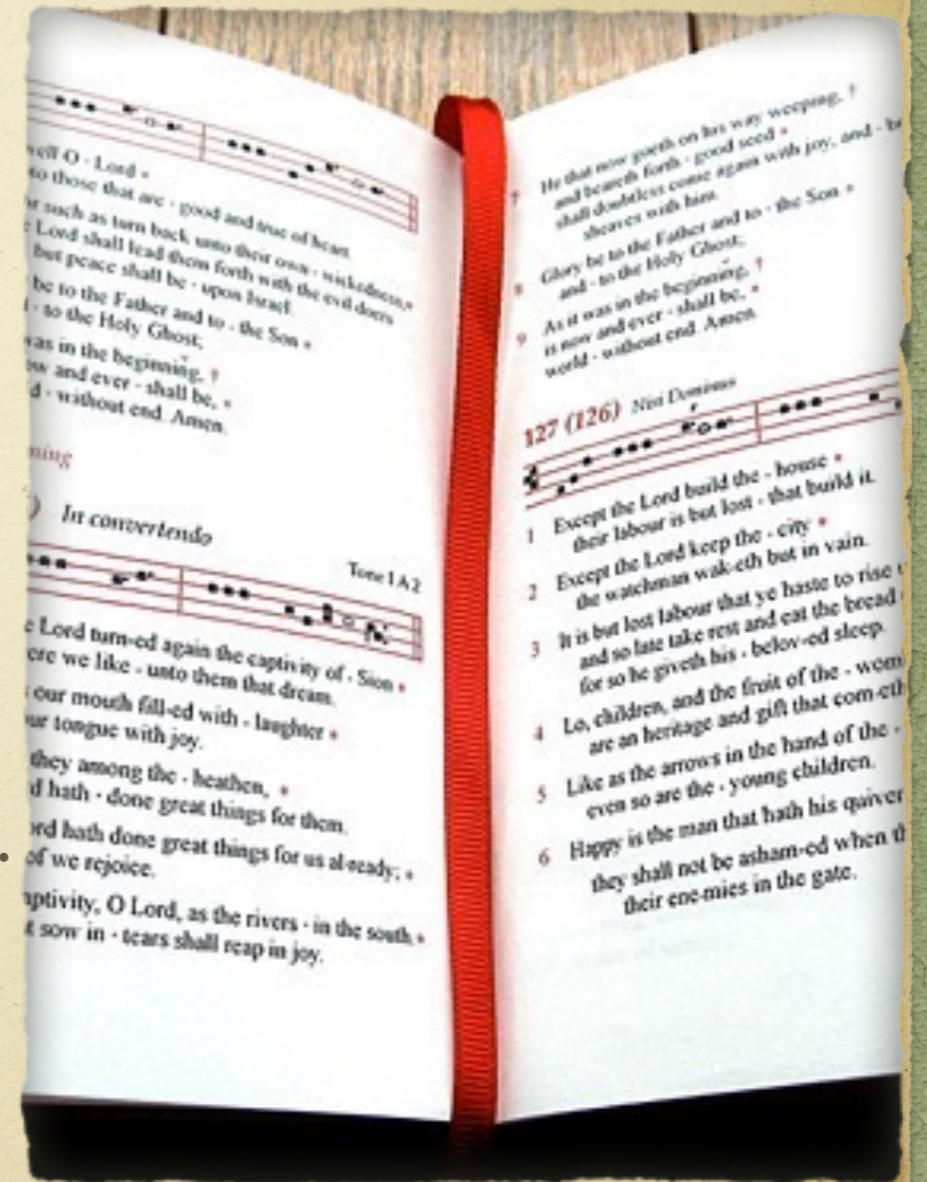
Interpreting the Psalms: Historical-Critical

- Formula “a Psalm of David” (e.g. Ps 3, 4, 5, etc.) is also probably *not* a note on authorship. Critical scholarship does not see Davidic authorship as credible. More likely, the formula should be translated “for David” — that is, “*for the king.*”
- Parallel: African-American spirituals that have no author or identifiable place or origin — but arose in the life and practice of the community and are applied to many different usages over time.



Interpreting the Psalms: Christological/Messianic

- Jesus as the speaker of the psalm (as in Ps 22).
- This approach was taken with great seriousness in the early centuries of the church and was championed by Augustine.
- Rejected by critical study.



Interpreting the Psalms: Form Criticism

- Gunkel, early 20th c.
- Tracing the fairly limited number of rhetorical patterns (genres).
- Psalms are not free and innovative speech, but are highly stylized and predictable in form.
- This approach has decisively influenced all subsequent Psalm study.



Psalm 1 (Deuteronomistic Historian Perspective)

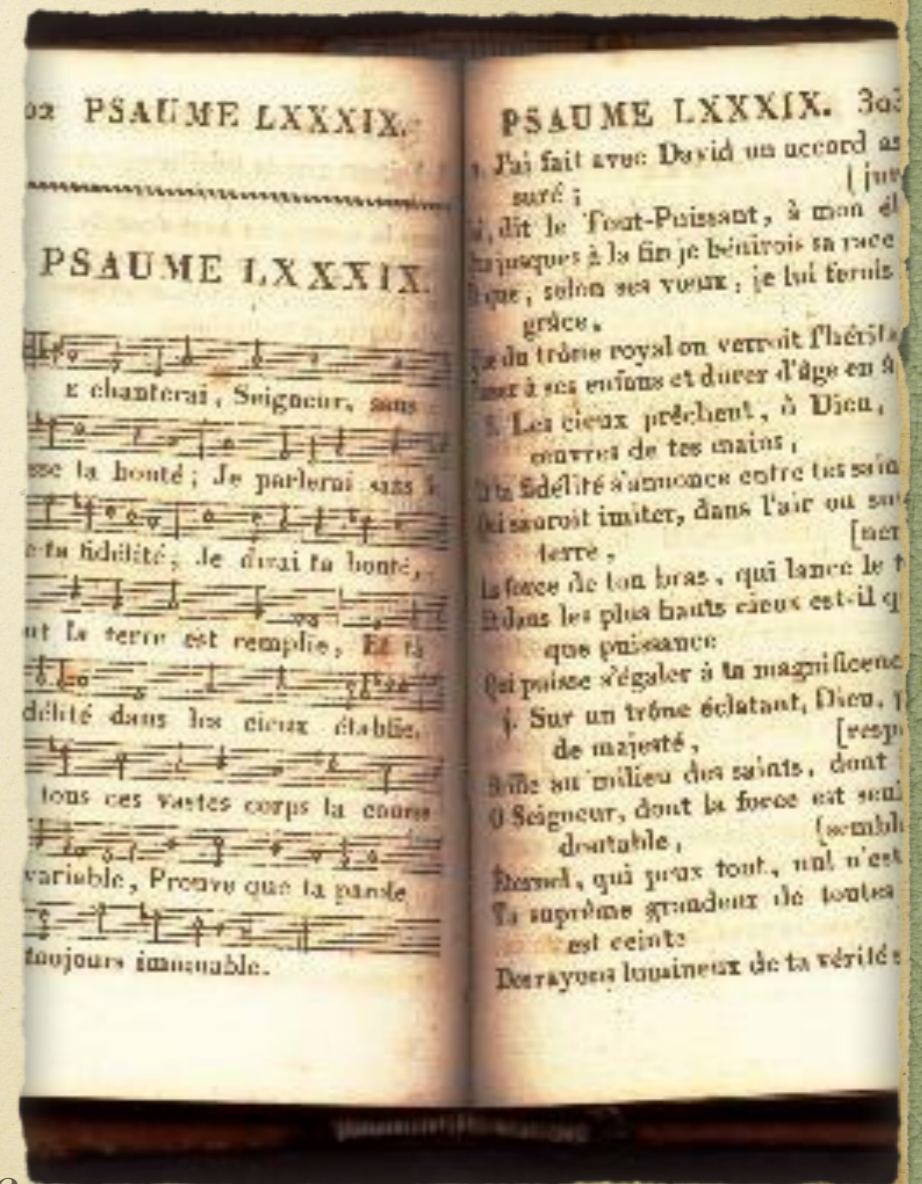
“1 Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; 2 but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. 3 They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; 6 for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”



Psalms 3 (Selah):

liturgical/musical direction of unknown meaning

➤ 1 O Lord, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me; 2 many are saying to me, "There is no help for you in God." (Selah) 3 But you, O Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, and the one who lifts up my head. 4 I cry aloud to the Lord, and he answers me from his holy hill. (Selah) 5 I lie down and sleep; I wake again, for the Lord sustains me. 6 I am not afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. 7 Rise up, O Lord! Deliver me, O my God! For you strike all my enemies on the cheek; you break the teeth of the wicked. 8 Deliverance belongs to the Lord; may your blessing be on your people! (Selah)



Genres of Psalms: Hymns

Complements & Praises — usually God as object

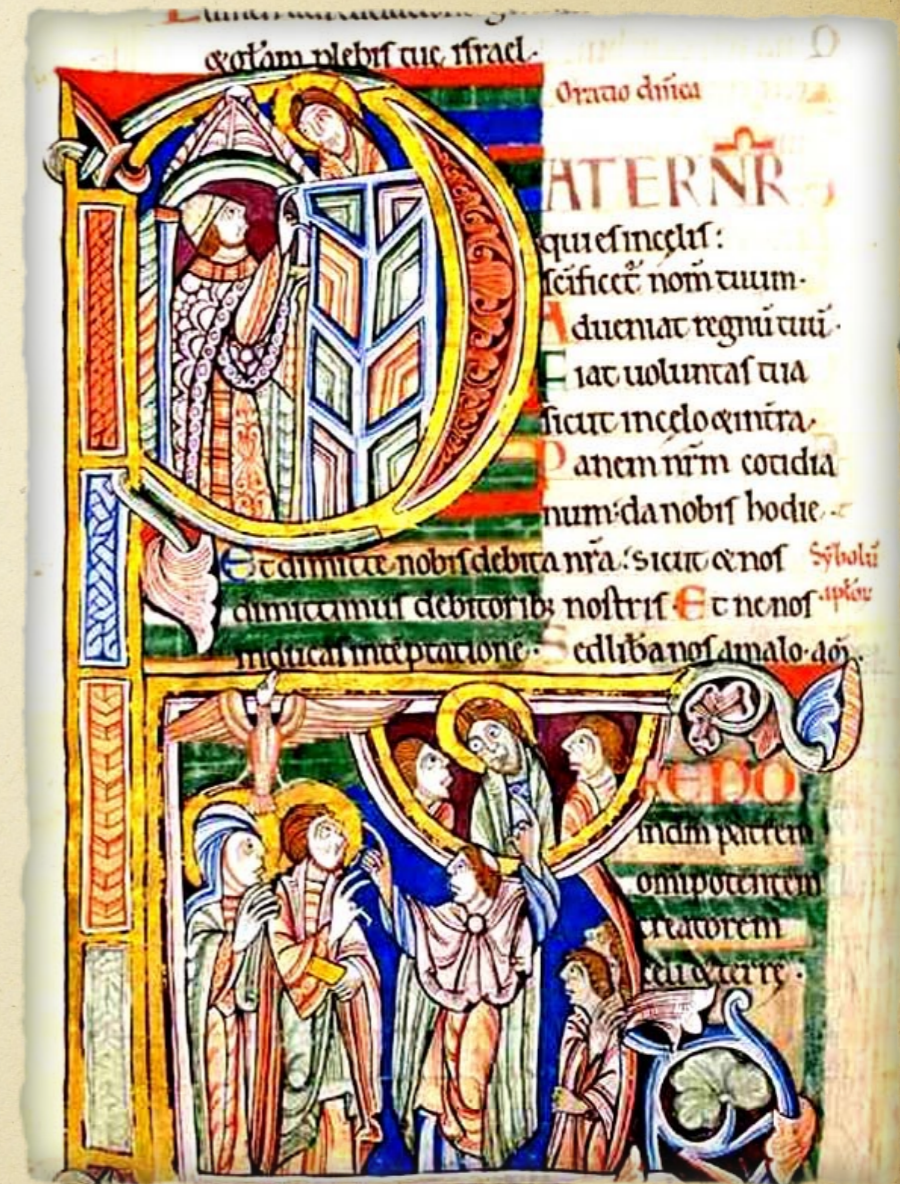
- Example: Psalm 117 (also see 113)
- Summons: 1 Praise the Lord, all you nations! Extol him, all you peoples!
- Reasons: 2 For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.
- Concluding formula: Praise the Lord!



Genres of Psalms: Lament—Group (Psalm 137)

Complements & Praises — usually God as object

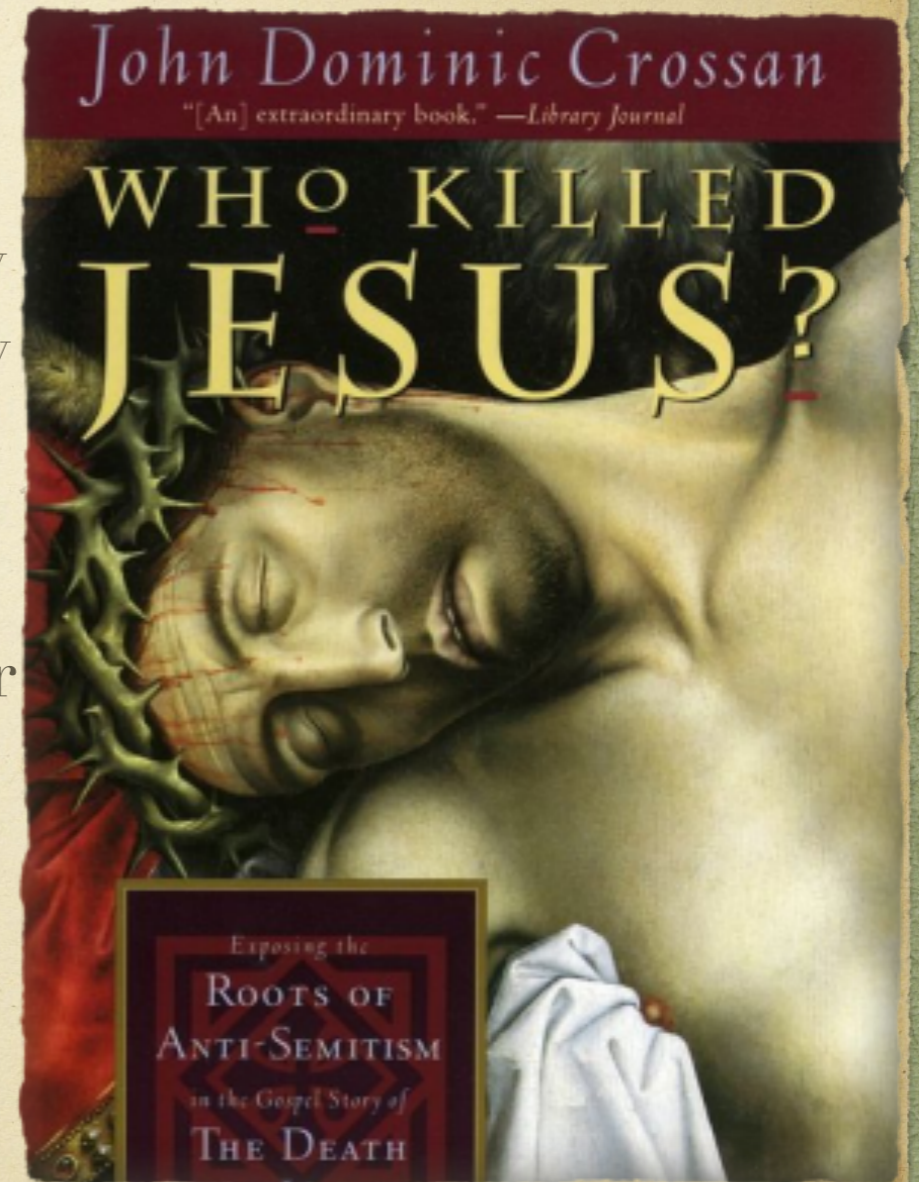
- 10 tribes lost, 2 in bondage in Babylon, David's Empire dispersed.
- Laments/complaints are largest category (Ps 74 and 79 over the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem)
- Description: details of disaster to get YHWH's interest
- Doxology: celebrate YHWH's power to act
- Petition: requests YHWH's intervention



Genres of Psalms: Lament—Individual (Psalm 22)

Complements & Praises — usually God as object

- Distressing situation where God asked for help
- “1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?” (*Jesus’ prayer book? And/or of Gospel writers?*)
- “18 they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.”
- Heading indicates the psalm was set to "The Deer of the Dawn". No one really knows what this refers to, though it may be the name of a tune known by the Chief Musician.
- Ps 31:5, “Into your hand I commend my spirit.” (Lk 23:46) “Jesus’ last words”



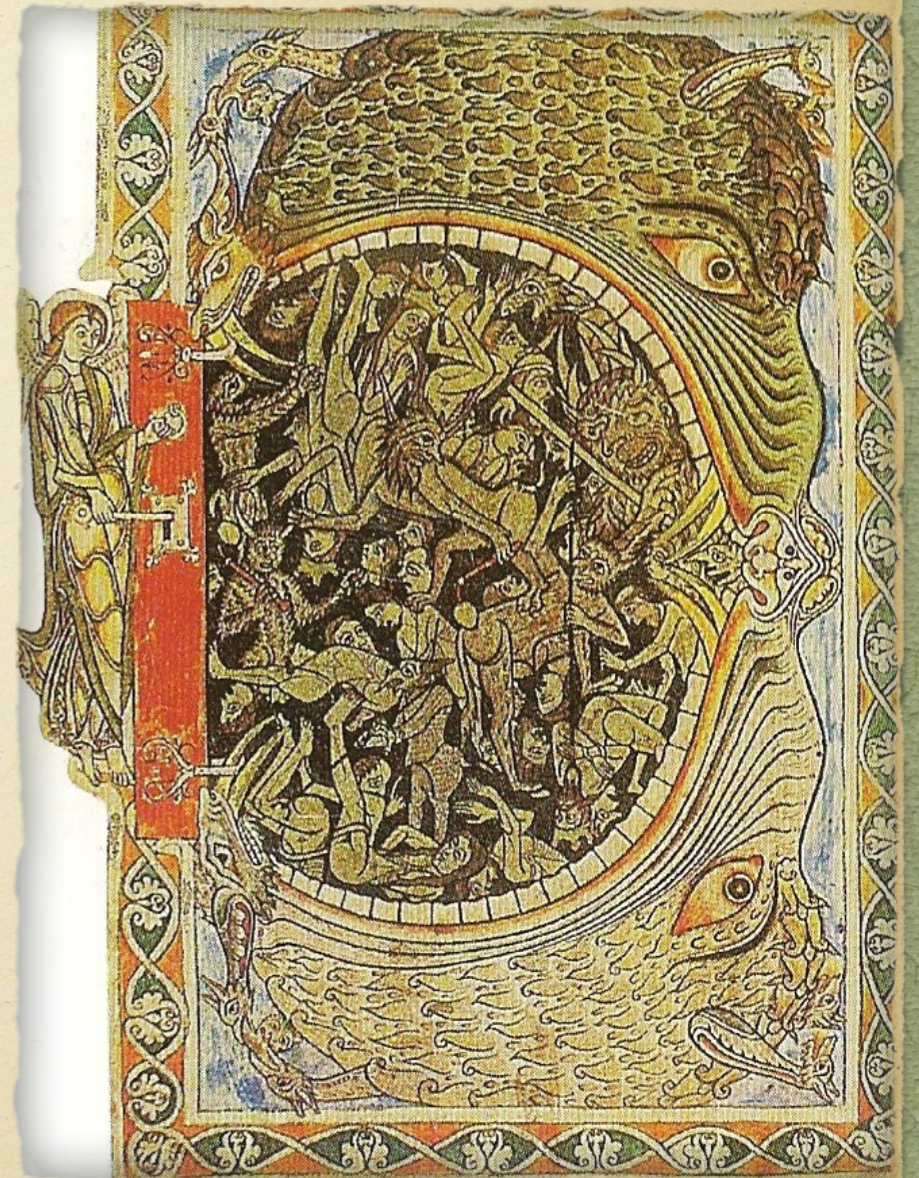
Form of Psalm 13

❧ Complaint: 1 How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? 2 How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

❧ Petition : 3 Consider and answer me, O Lord my God! Give light to my eyes,

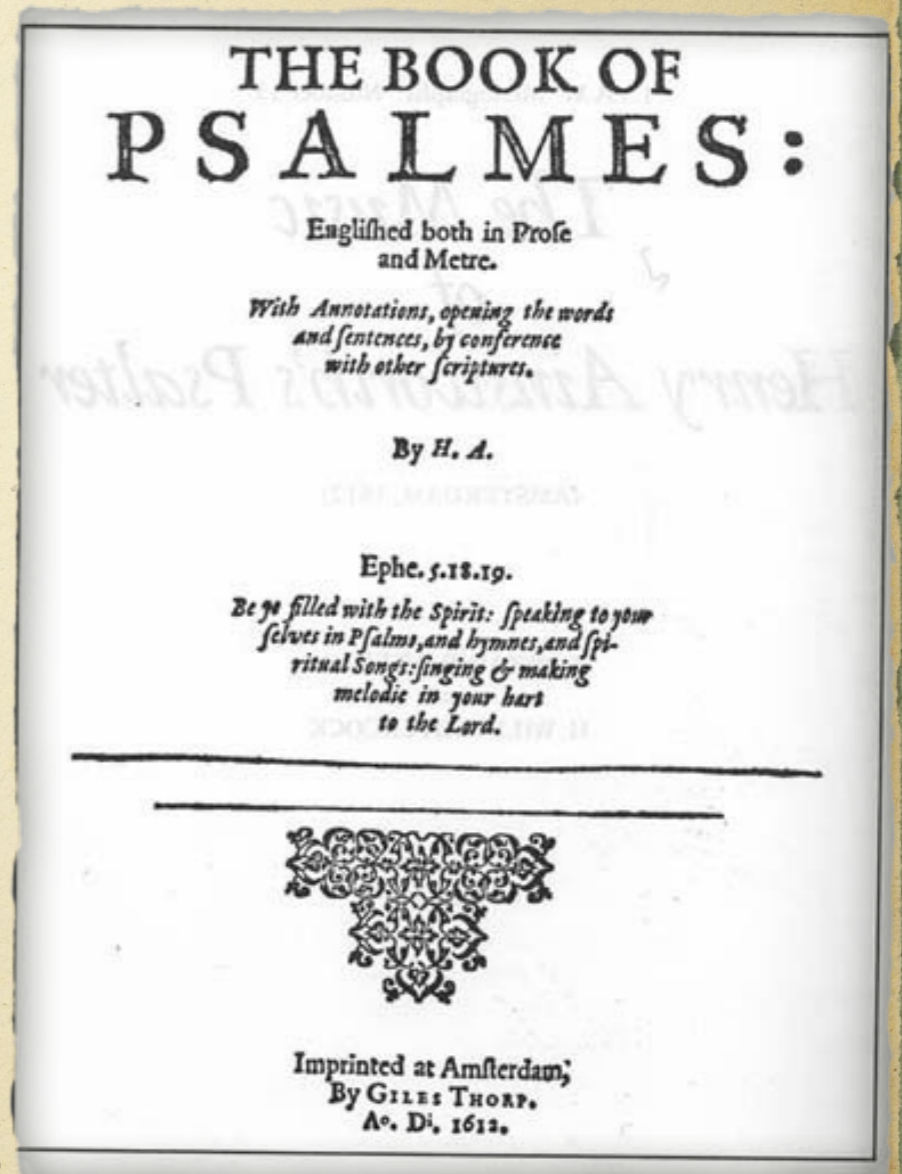
❧ Reasons: or I will sleep the sleep of death, 4 and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed"; my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.

❧ Resolution 5 But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. 6 I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.



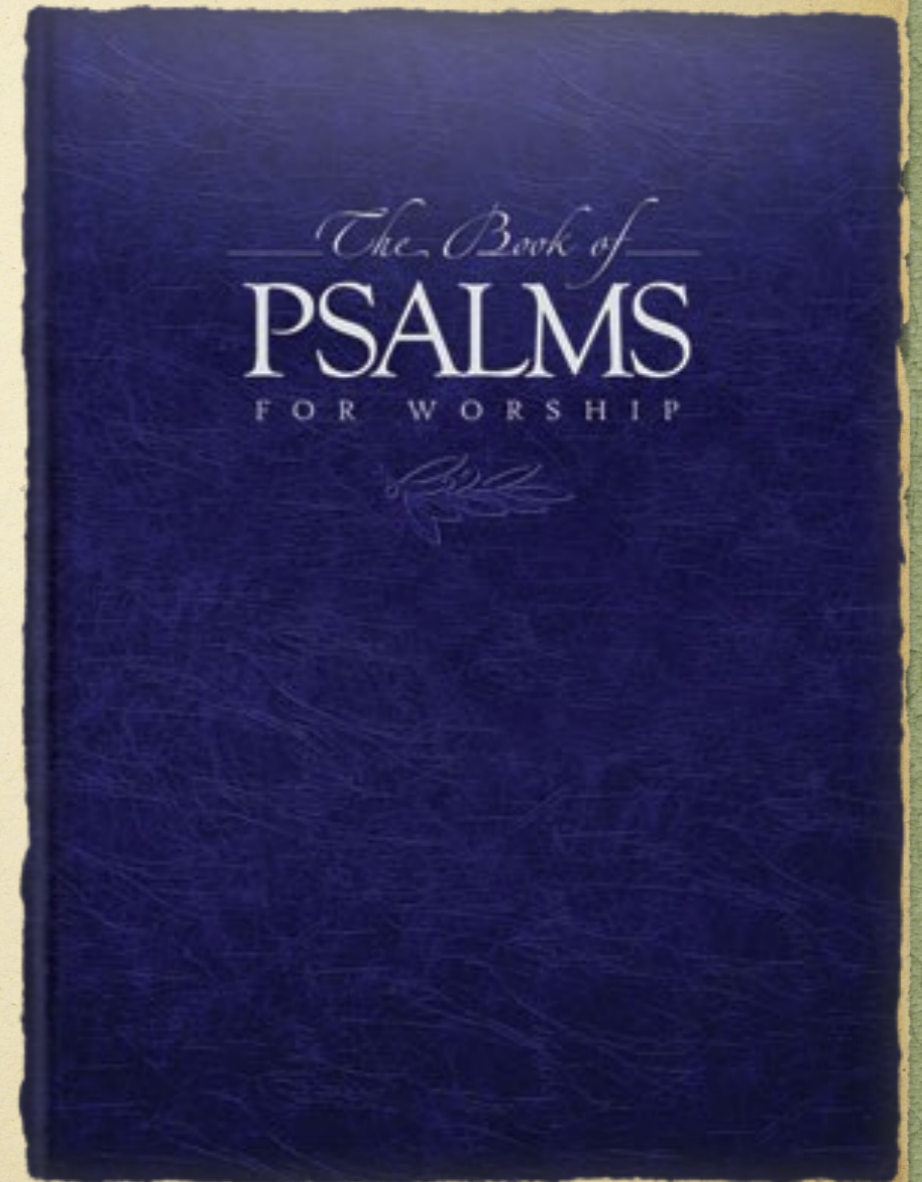
Form of Psalm 13

- Transition: Psalms often moves dramatically, even abruptly from “plea” to praise”.
- Cry-Hear-Thank Pattern parallels Exodus. For Example, Exodus 2:23-25, 23 “After a long time the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned under their slavery, and cried out. Out of the slavery their cry for help rose up to God. 24 God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 25 God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them.”



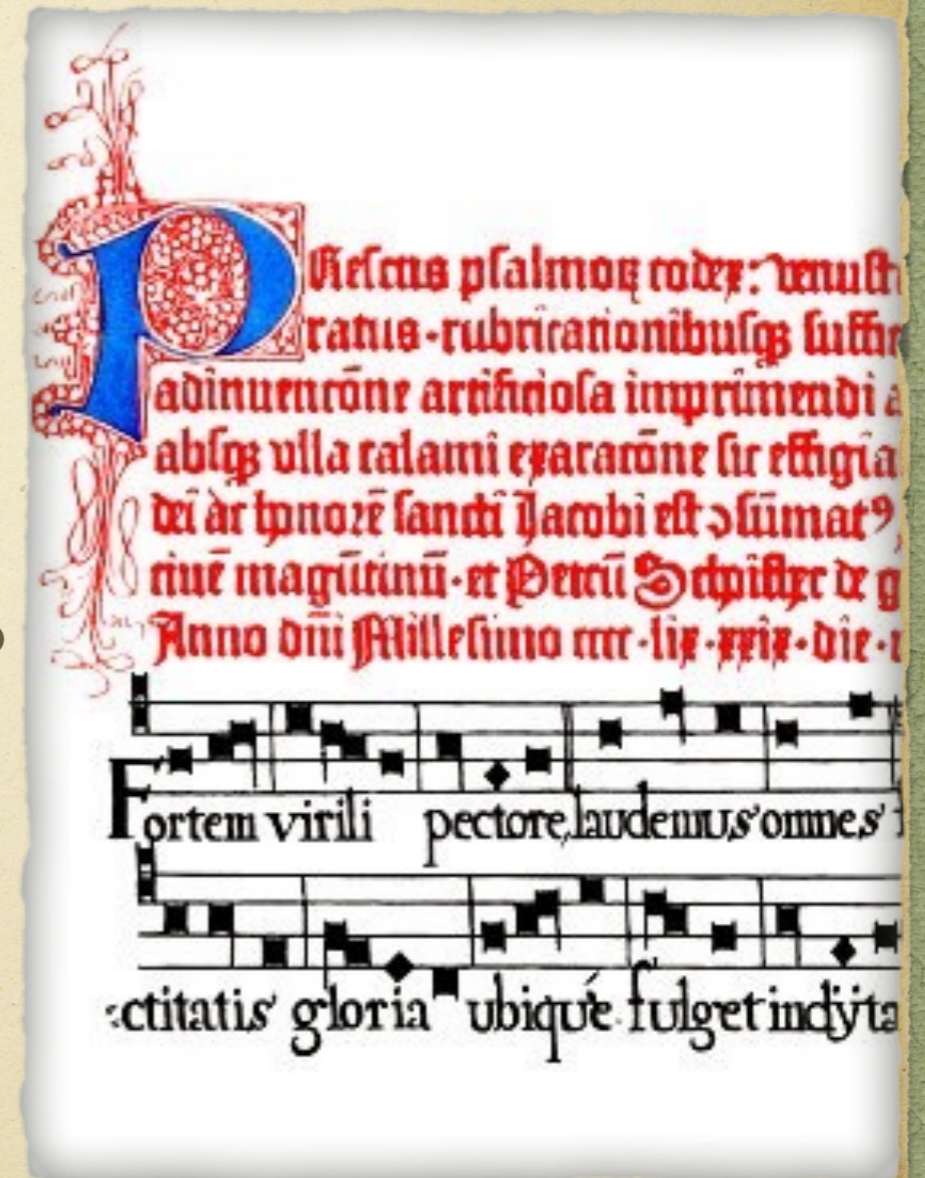
Riceur's "orientation-disorientation-reorientation" *(in microcosm within Psalm)*

- Psalms of orientation – reliable coherence of the world, demanding conformity
- Psalms of disorientation – lament, protest
(approximately 1/3 of the Psalter)
- Psalms of Reorientation –
 - Thanksgiving/Praise (Ps 107), "1 O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever."
 - Divine enthronement (Ps 96)



Genres of Psalms: Thanksgiving—Individual (Ps 30) *grateful to God for deliverance from troubling situation*

- Trouble 7b you hid your face; I was dismayed.
- Complaint 8 To you, O Lord, I cried, and to the Lord I made supplication: 9 "What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the Pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness? 10 Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me! O Lord, be my helper!"
- Intervention 11 You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,
- Praise 12 so that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever.



Bookends

➤ Begins: summons to obedience (Ps 1)

➤ Ends: summons to praise (Ps 150)



Proverbs 1:1

What those wise guys (Solomon?) had to say

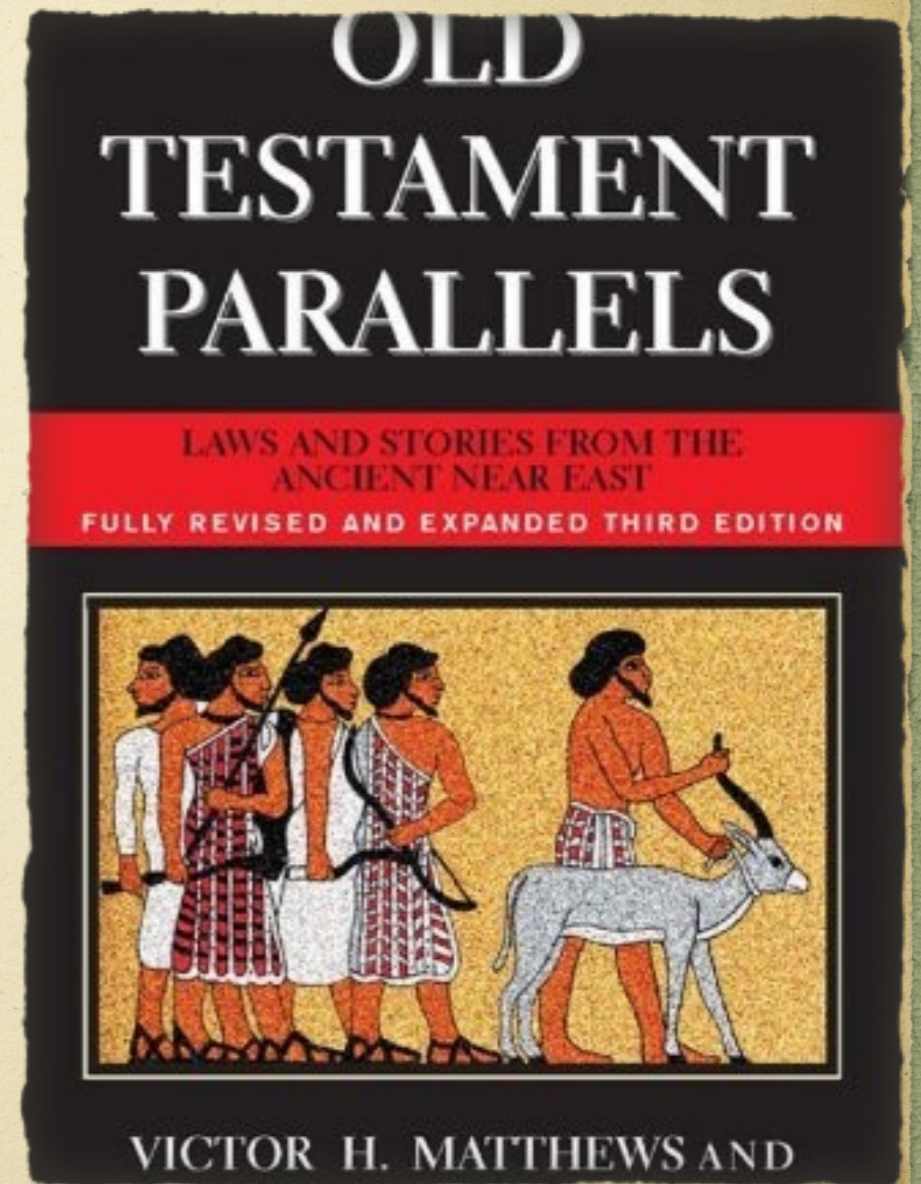
- “1 The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:”
- Song of Songs: youthful love
- Proverbs: middle-aged wisdom (adulthood, parenthood)
- Ecclesiastes: Elderly cynicism/curmudgeon...or perspective
- Proverbs is a *consensus* teaching that is a *foil* for dissenting wisdom teachings like Job and Ecclesiastes.



Why Proverbs? (1:2-7)

Common Genre in Ancient Near East

“2 For learning about wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight, 3 for gaining instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice, and equity; 4 to teach shrewdness to the simple, knowledge and prudence to the young— 5 let the wise also hear and gain in learning, and the discerning acquire skill, 6 to understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles. 7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

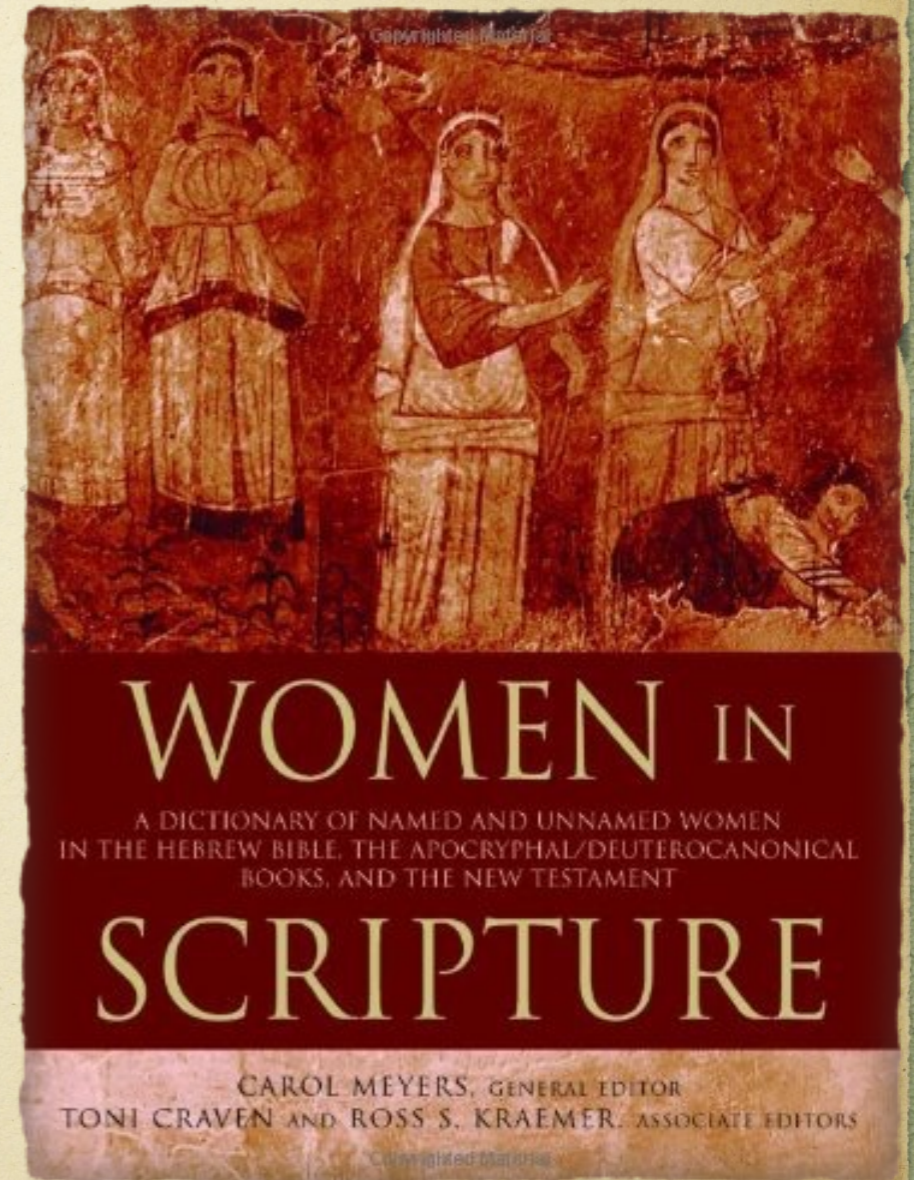


Personified Wisdom (8:1-2, 22-24)

“1 Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice? 2 On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand.... 22 The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. 23 Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. 24 When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water.”

Hebrew: *Hokma*; Greek: *Sophia*

Parallel: personifying “Adam”/humankind



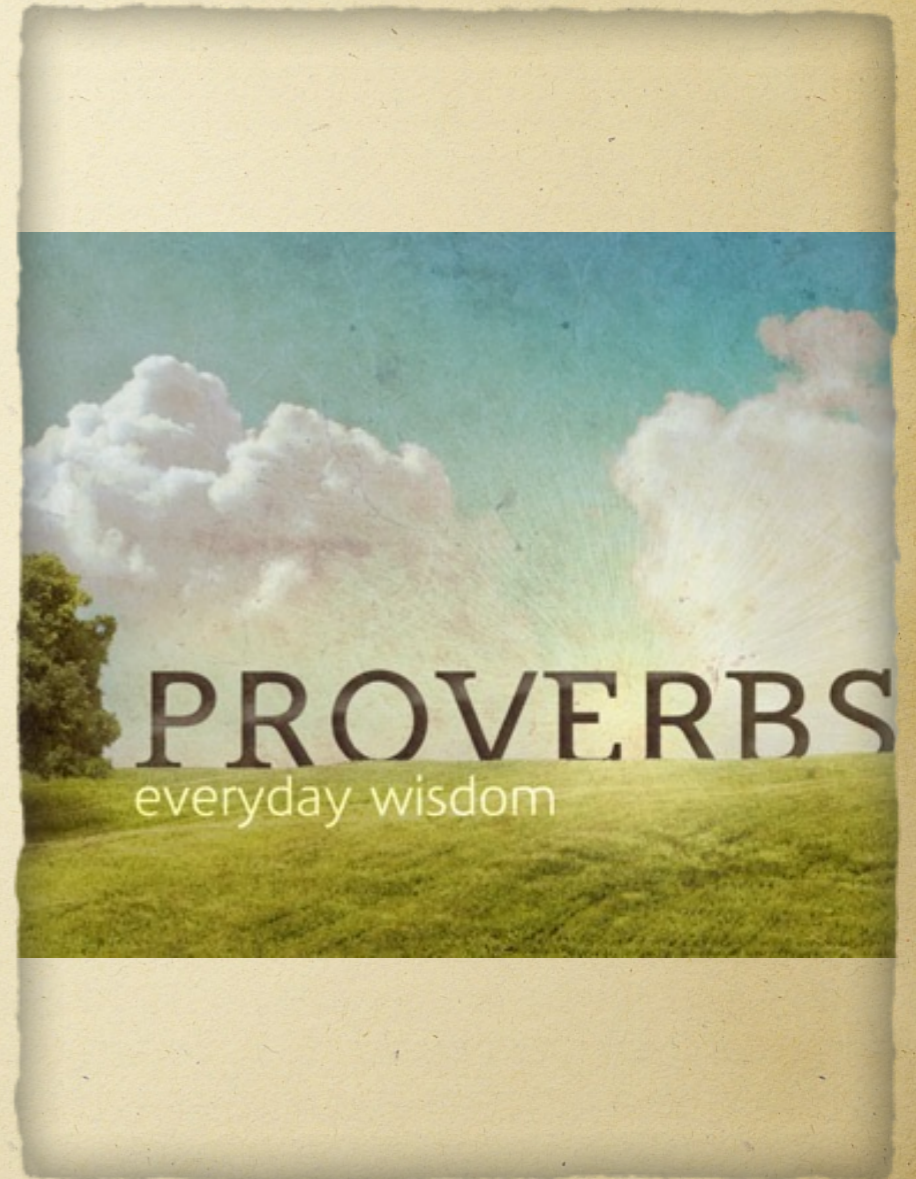
Motto (3:13)

- ❧ “13 Happy are those who find wisdom, and those who get understanding”
- ❧ Genre: Wisdom Literature — revelation “from below,” from *human* experience.
- ❧ Sinai tradition and DH: revelation “from above,” (“Thus saith the Lord”)



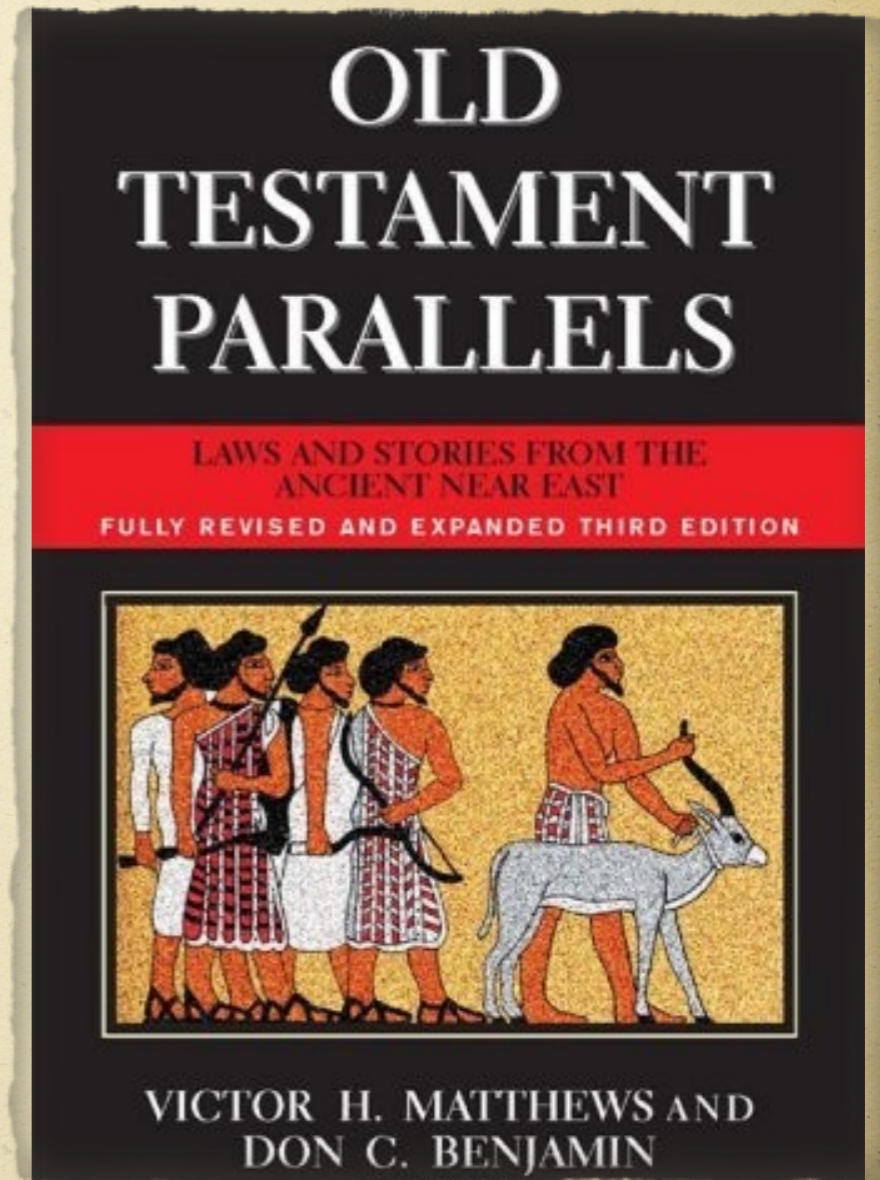
“Collection of Collections”

- Proverbs 10:1, “1 The proverbs of Solomon.”
- 10:4, “4 A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.” [Get what’s coming to you...contra Job.]
- *“Lord often helps those who (don’t) help themselves?!”*



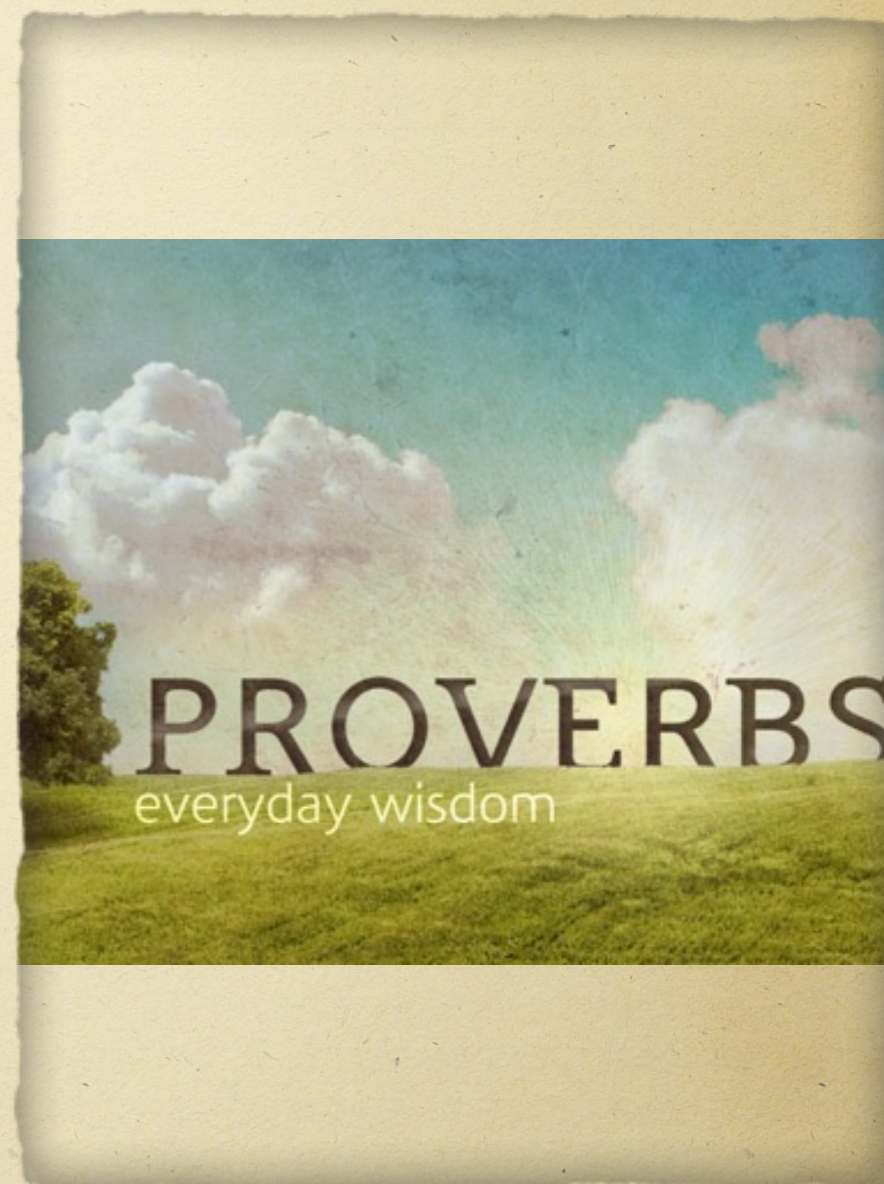
“Collection of Collections”

- Proverbs 22:17, “The words of the wise: Incline your ear and hear my words, and apply your mind to my teaching;”
- Proverbs 31:1, “1 The words of King Lemuel. An oracle that his mother taught him:” (*foreign king*)



Ambiguous Voice of Experience (26:4-5)

➤ “4 Do not answer fools according to their folly, or you will be a fool yourself. 5 Answer fools according to their folly, or they will be wise in their own eyes.”



The Problem of Good, the Problem of Evil: Confronting Theodicy in the Book of Job

➤ Prose Prologue and Epilogue: Folktale of a man, who is victim to a heavenly competition, refuses to curse God, and is ultimately restored to greater fortunes. (If read alone, indicates that humans suffer unfairly.)

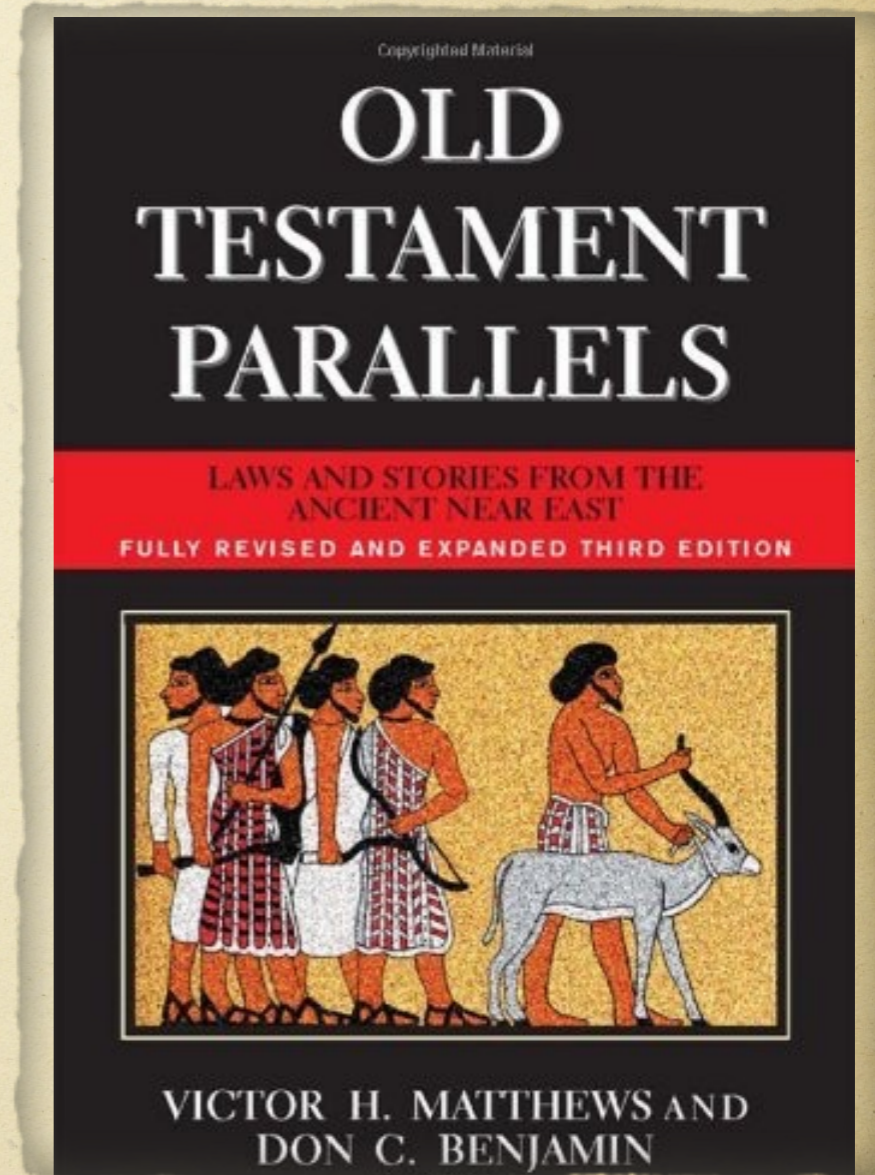
➤ Poetic Center: Arguments among four human characters about divine justice and response.



Prose Bookends (1-2; 42:7-17)	Poetic Center (3:3 - 42:6)
Job as hero	Job rebuked
God as "Yahweh"	God as "El, Eloah, Shaddai")
Original fortune doubled at end	No satisfactory answer (42:1-6)
Satan and Elihu	These characters vanish
Job never argues	Job questioning but faithful

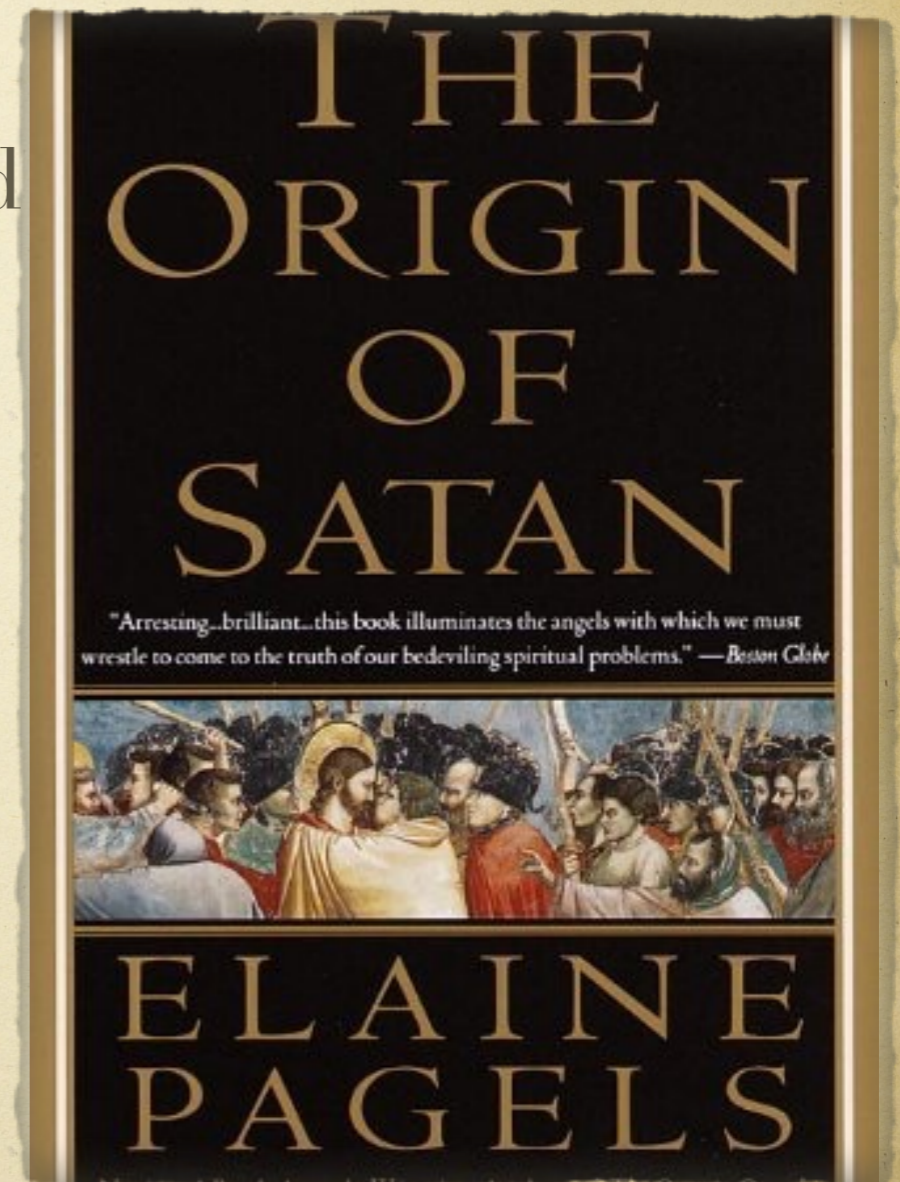
Parallels

- Edomite folktale, where tested and received back double.
- Poetry/prose genre also in the Aramaic Ahikar;
- Mesopotamian tradition of the “righteous sufferer.”



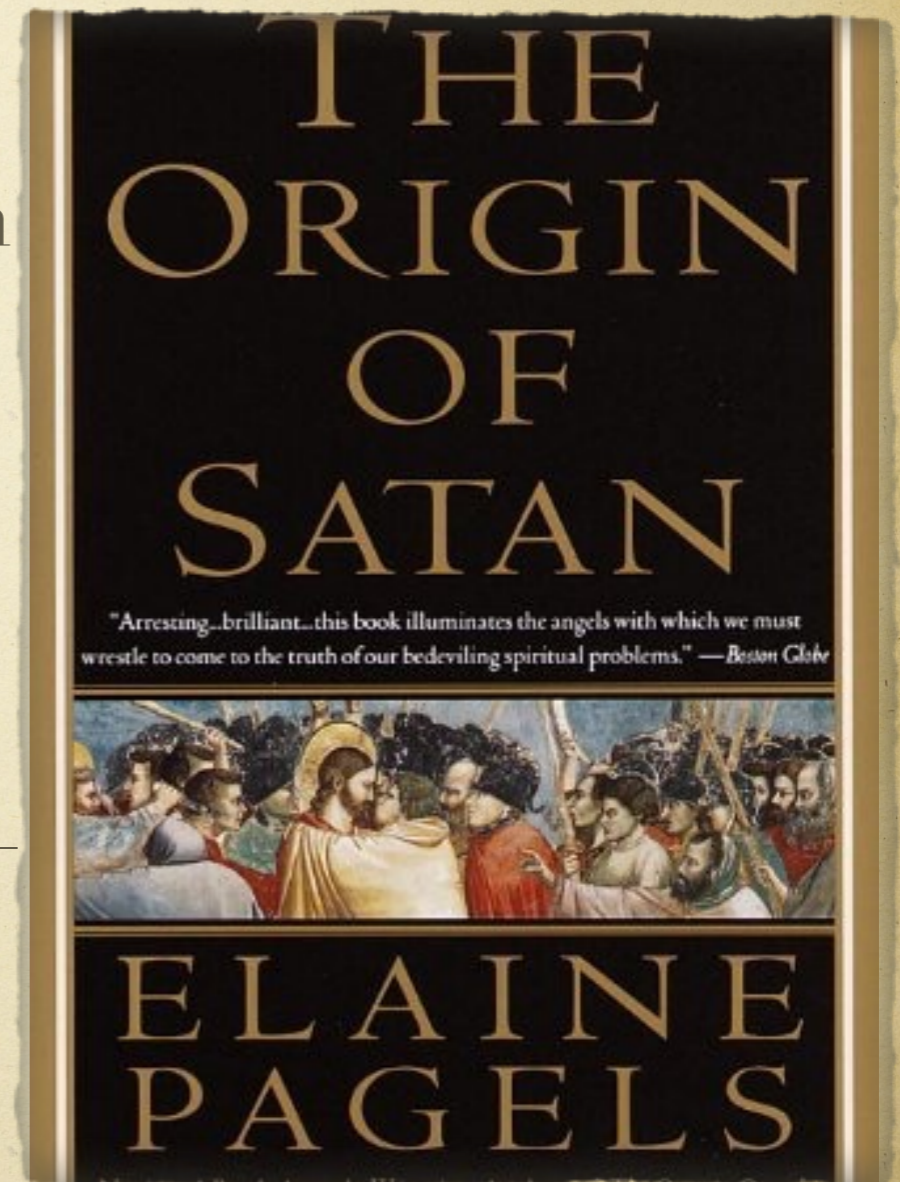
The Satan (Hebrew “*ha’satan*”)

- Definite article (“the”) indicates that “*hasatan*” is a **title**, not a proper name, and should not be confused with the devil of popular culture.
- More accurate translation would be “the satan,” “the Accuser,” or “The Adversary.”
Office in the divine court
- Dualism not present in the Hebrew Bible; instead, the satan is an agent, controlled by God.



The Satan (Hebrew “*ha’satan*”)

- Hebrew word “satan” occurs both in noun and verbal form 26 times in the Hebrew Bible — majority of times as a title or descriptor, never as an undisputed proper noun.
- With Jesus’ “Get thee behind me Satan” — Peter is his “*Adversary*” [tempting him away from cross] not possessed by Satan



The Satan (Hebrew “*ha’satan*”)

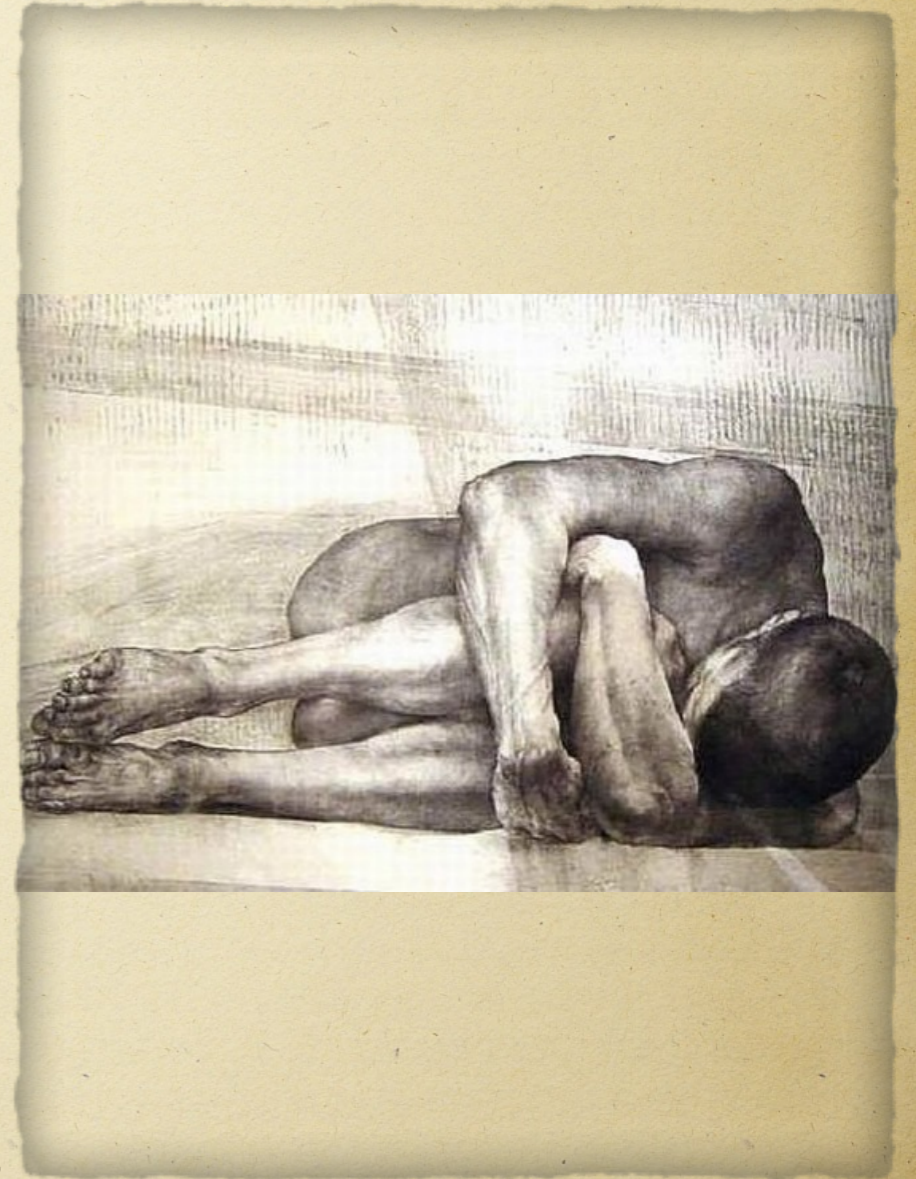
➤ RCC Canonization of Saints: playing “the devil’s advocate” for reasons she shouldn’t be canonized.



Central Theme:

possibility of disinterested righteousness

- Does virtue depend on a universe that operates by the principles of reward and punishment?
- If people will serve God without thought of the carrot (*reward*) or the stick (*punishment*), then faith will outlast any eventuality.
- Job's response to adversity affirms such faith, prompting references such as James 5:11 to "the patience [or endurance] of Job."



Whirlwind (Job 42:6)

perhaps intentionally ambiguous, elusive grammar

- NRSV: “therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”
- Gutierrez: “I repudiate and abandon [change my mind about] dust and ashes” — a *renunciation of his lamentation* instead of a concession. Perhaps Job is merely acknowledging the greater power of the Creator.
- Jack Miles: Can God make *Job* the issue, not God’s self



Epilogue (42:10-17)

Job does not get back the same sons and daughters.

➤ 10 And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends; and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.... 12 The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. 13 He also had seven sons and three daughters.... 15 In all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters; and their father gave them an inheritance along with their brothers. 16 After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children, and his children's children, four generations. 17 And Job died, old and full of days.

Theodicy: Reconciling God's knowledge/love/power

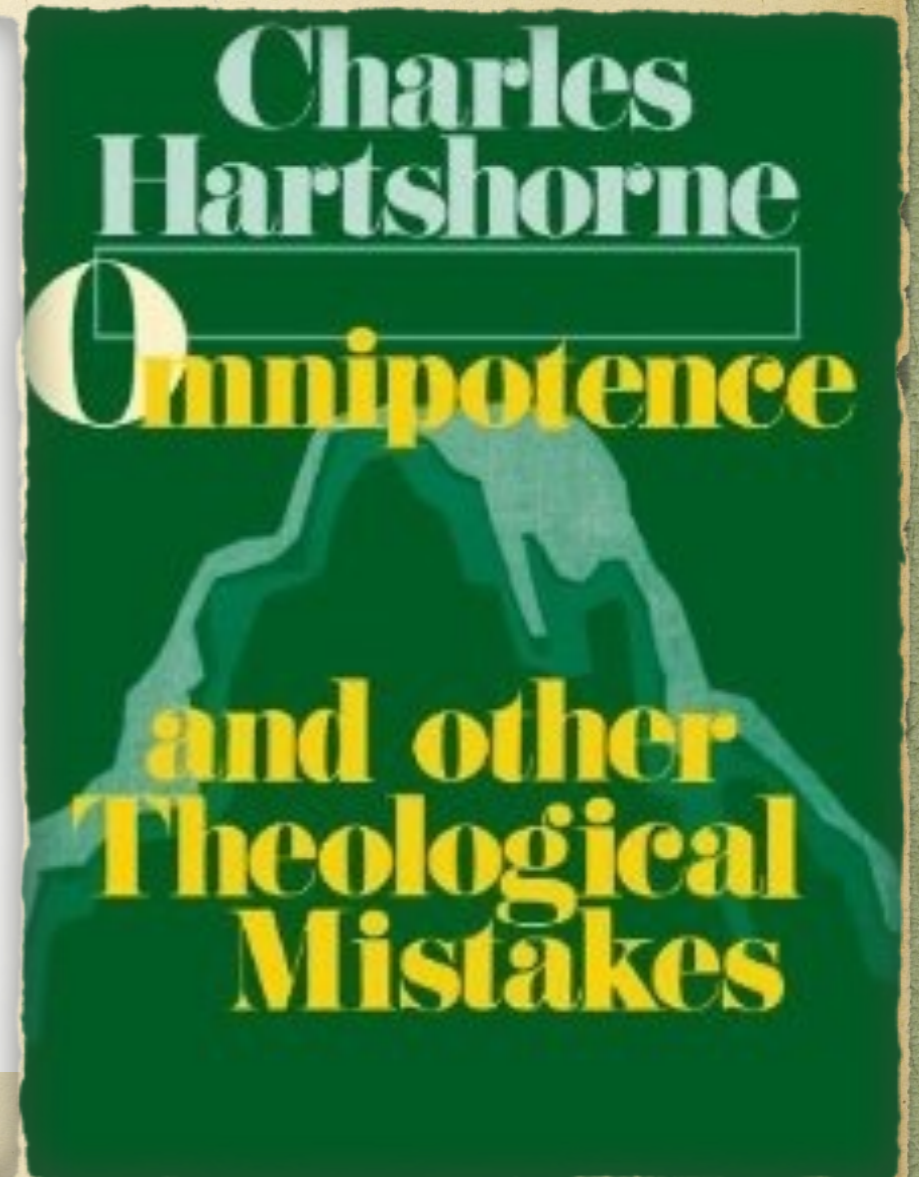
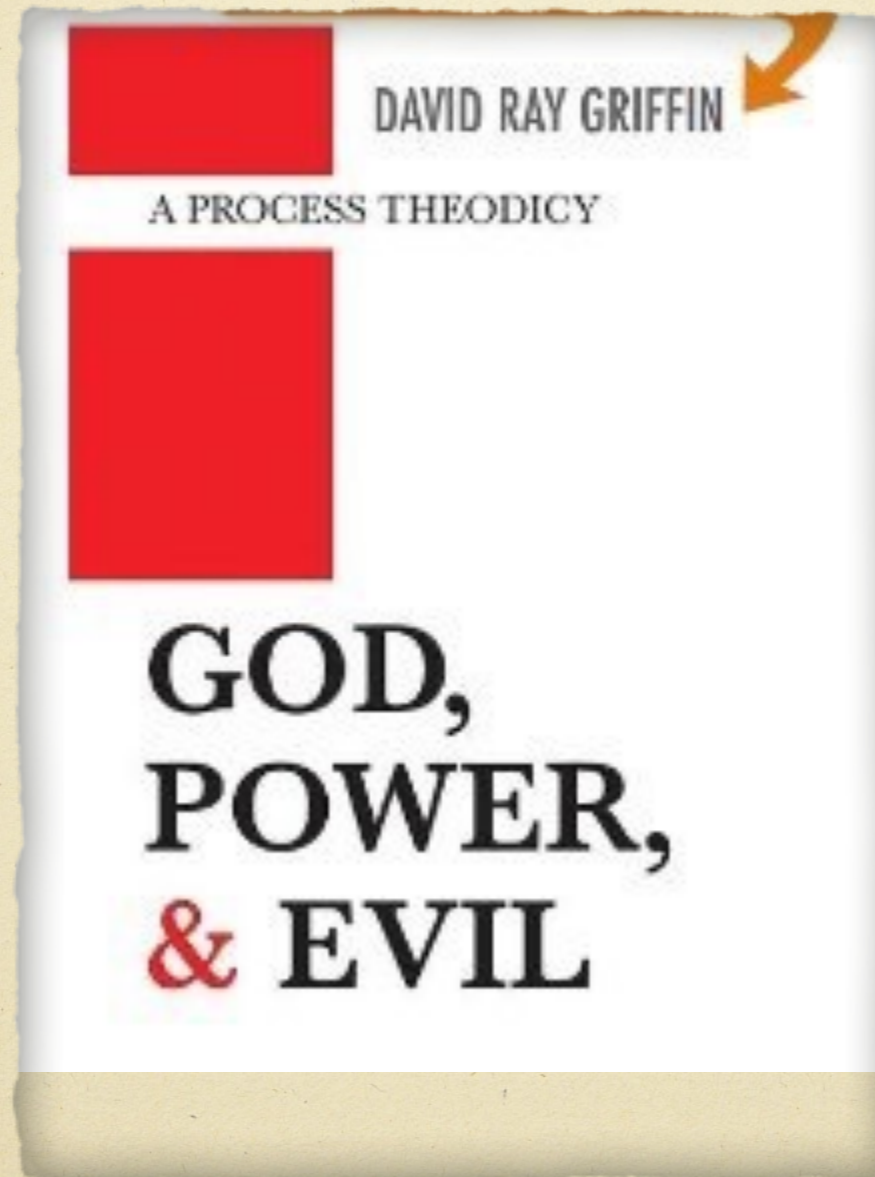
Why do bad/good things happen to good/bad people?

- Proverbs, Prophets, Deuteronomistic Hist: “you reap what you sow”
- Genesis 38:7, “But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord put him to death.”
- Proverbs 12:21, “No harm happens to the righteous, but the wicked are filled with trouble.”
- Isaiah 3:10-11, “Tell the innocent how fortunate they are, for they shall eat the fruit of their labors. Woe to the guilty! How unfortunate they are, for what their hands have done shall be done to them.”



Jesus' Physics Lesson (Luke 13:4)

“Those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you.”

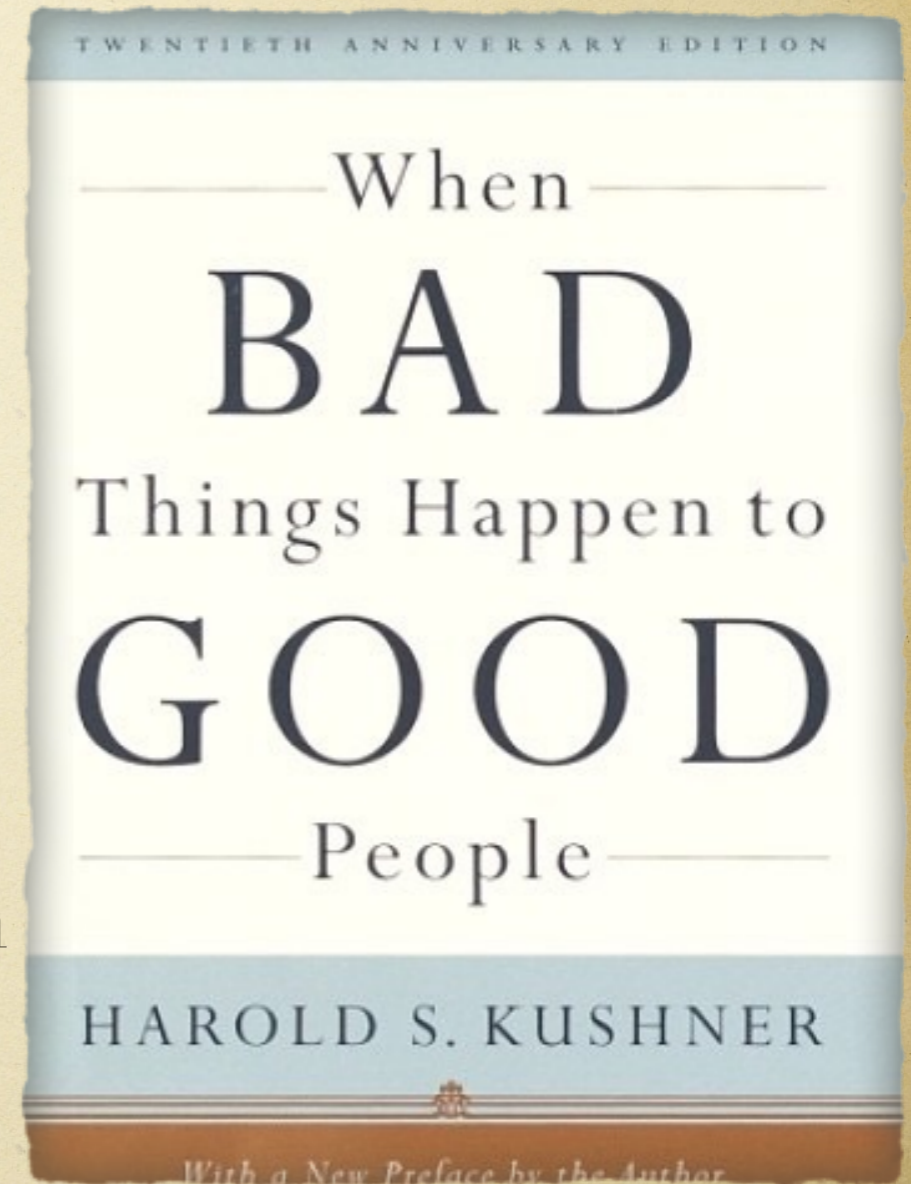


Process-Relational Theology

Theodicy: Reconciling God's knowledge/love/power

Why do bad/good things happen to good/bad people?

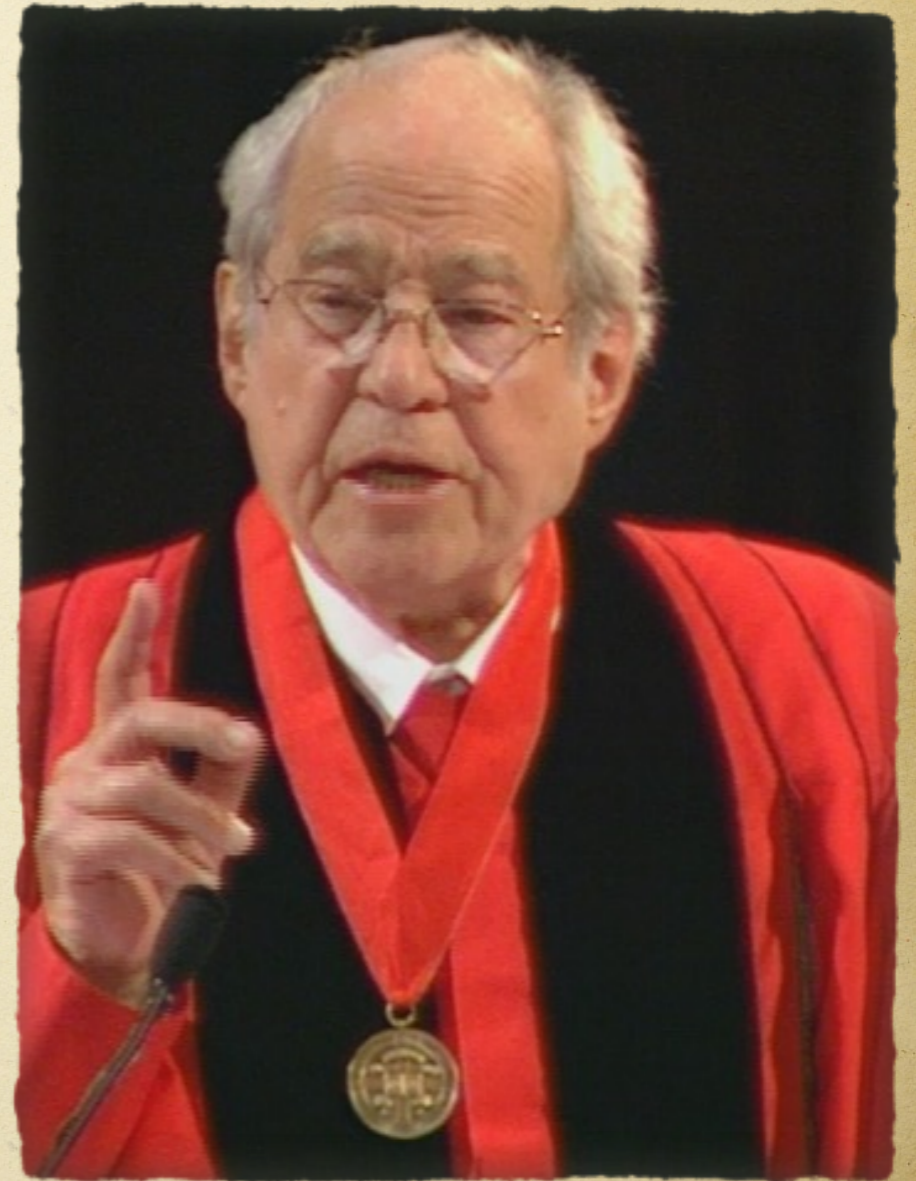
- God created us with free-will to be co-creators; therefore, God can't do everything, but God can do some important things.
- The "answer" to the problem of evil may be an answer of *our response* more than an answer of "explanation."
- God suffers with us (compassion).



Theodicy: Reconciling God's knowledge/love/power

Why do bad/good things happen to good/bad people?

➤ "As almost all of you know, a week ago last Monday night, driving in a terrible storm, my 24 year old Alexander, who enjoyed beating his old man at every game and in every race, beat his father to the grave.... The one thing that should never be said when someone dies in such circumstances is, 'It is the will of God.' Never do Christians know enough to say that. My own consolation lies in knowing that it was not the will of God that Alex died; that when the waves closed over the sinking car, God's heart was the first of all hearts to break."

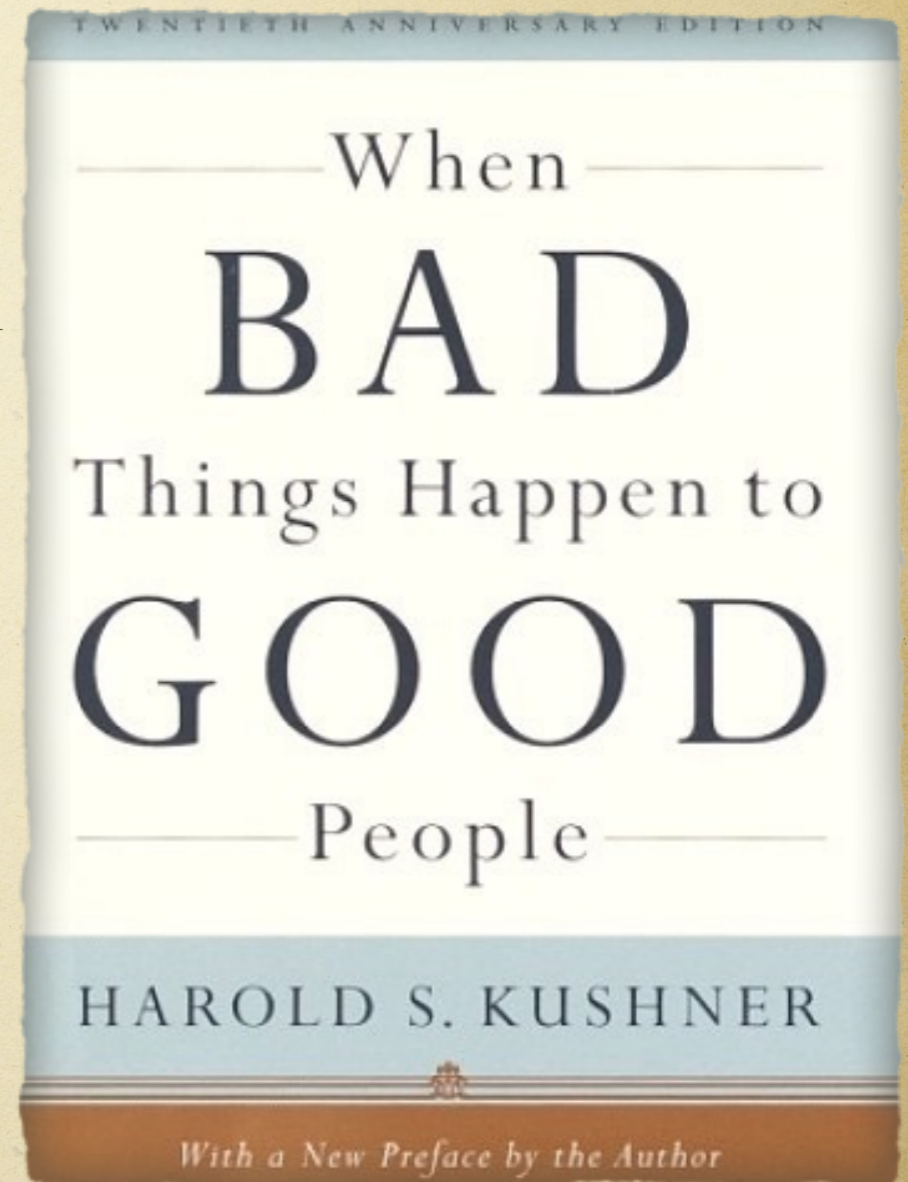


William Sloane Coffin

The Problem of Good

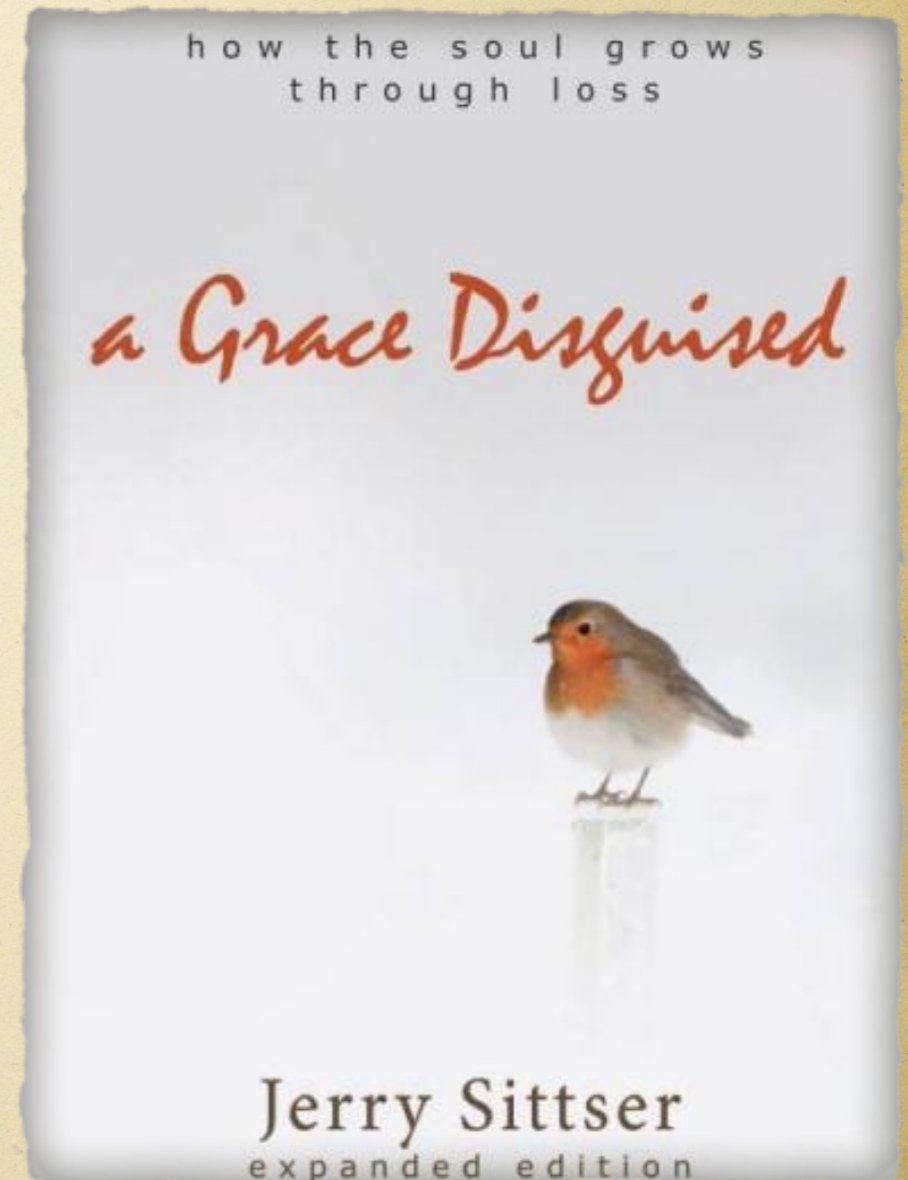
➤ We find life's disasters upsetting, not only because they are painful, but because they are the exception. God has created a basically good and livable world. Most illnesses are curable. Most airplanes land safely. Most of the time, our children come home safely.

➤ Contra: Niel DeGrasse Tyson



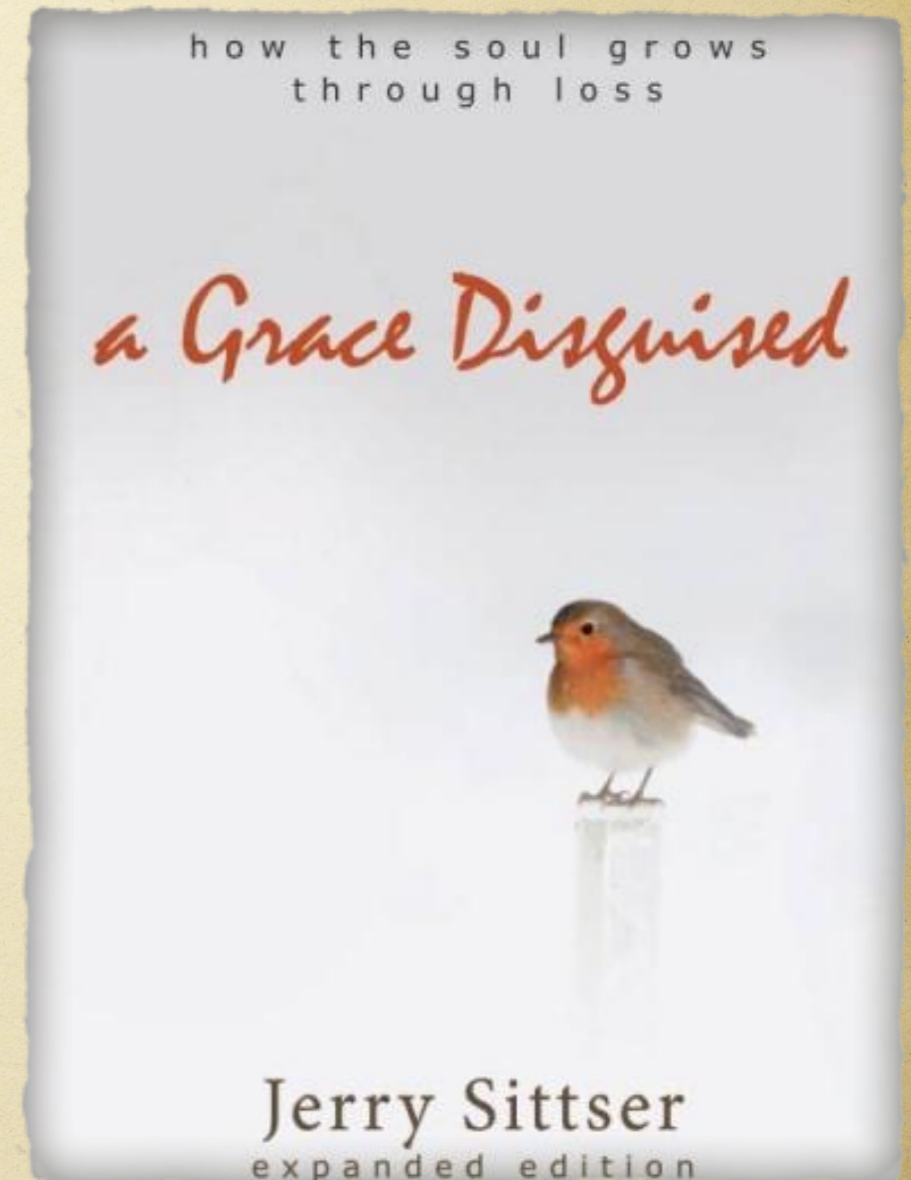
Why me? Why Not Me?

- “I received many cards and letters after the car accident that took the lives of my wife, my four-year-old daughter and my mother.
- Could no more explain why his life had turned bad than he could explain why his life had been so good up to that point.
- The former Soviet Union lost nearly 20 million people during World War II, and that on top of the millions Stalin had exterminated in the 1930s.
- Virtually every family was touched by death. Europe lost a quarter of its population during the first phase of the Black Death from 1347-50.



Why me? Why Not Me?

- Hundreds of millions of people in the Third World live under conditions of such deprivation that they rarely see prosperity, to say nothing of experiencing it.
- Youth growing up in many inner cities witness violence and drug addiction so often that it is as common to them as green lawns and friendly neighbors are to most of us who live in the suburbs.
- Millions of people endure abuse of one kind or another.
- The accident was really a brief, albeit dramatic, interruption in an otherwise happy, secure and prosperous life. I am still white, still male, still American, still middle-class, still employed, still established, still loved.



Five Megillot (“Scrolls”)

- ❧ Song of Songs
- ❧ Ruth
- ❧ Lamentations
- ❧ Ecclesiastes
- ❧ Esther



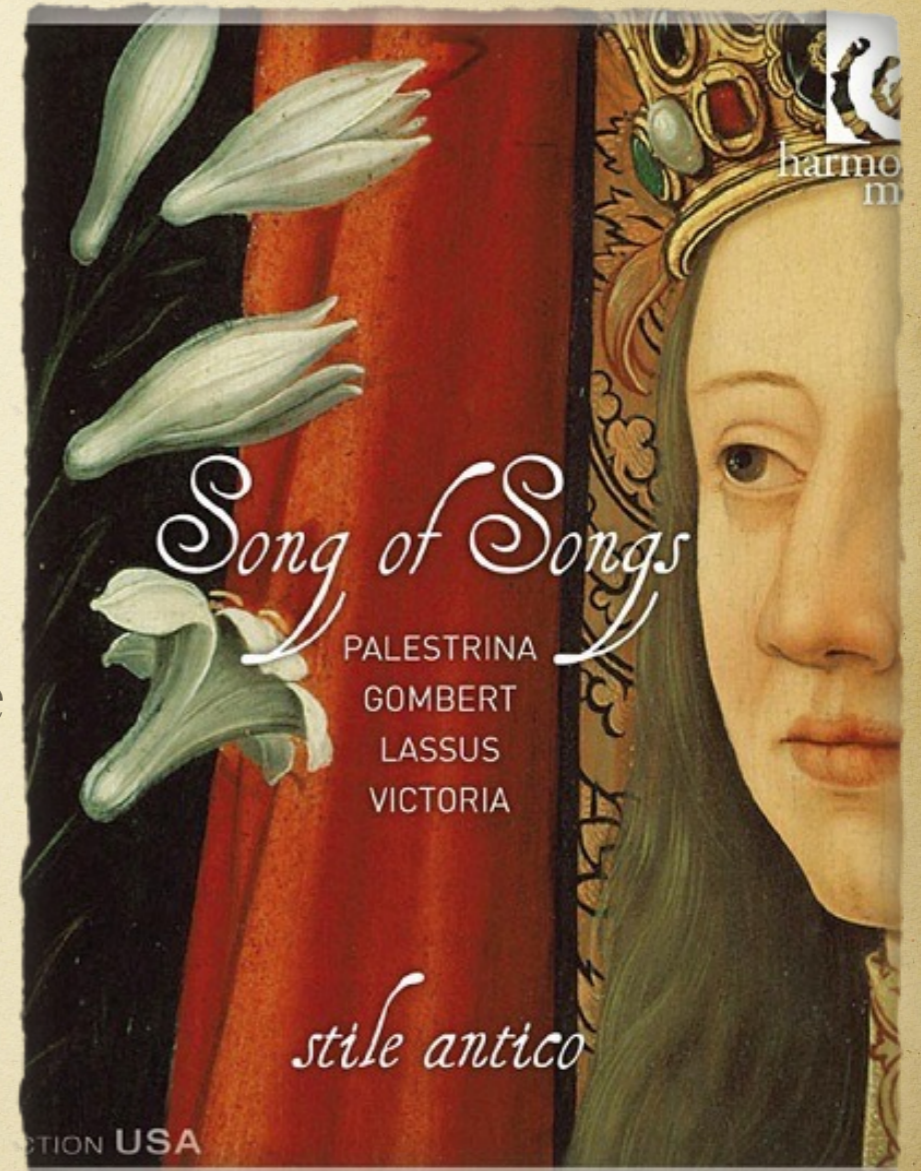
The Idealism of Solomon:
The Passionate Song of Youth

- ❧ Title is a superlative
- ❧ The “Songest” Song (best)



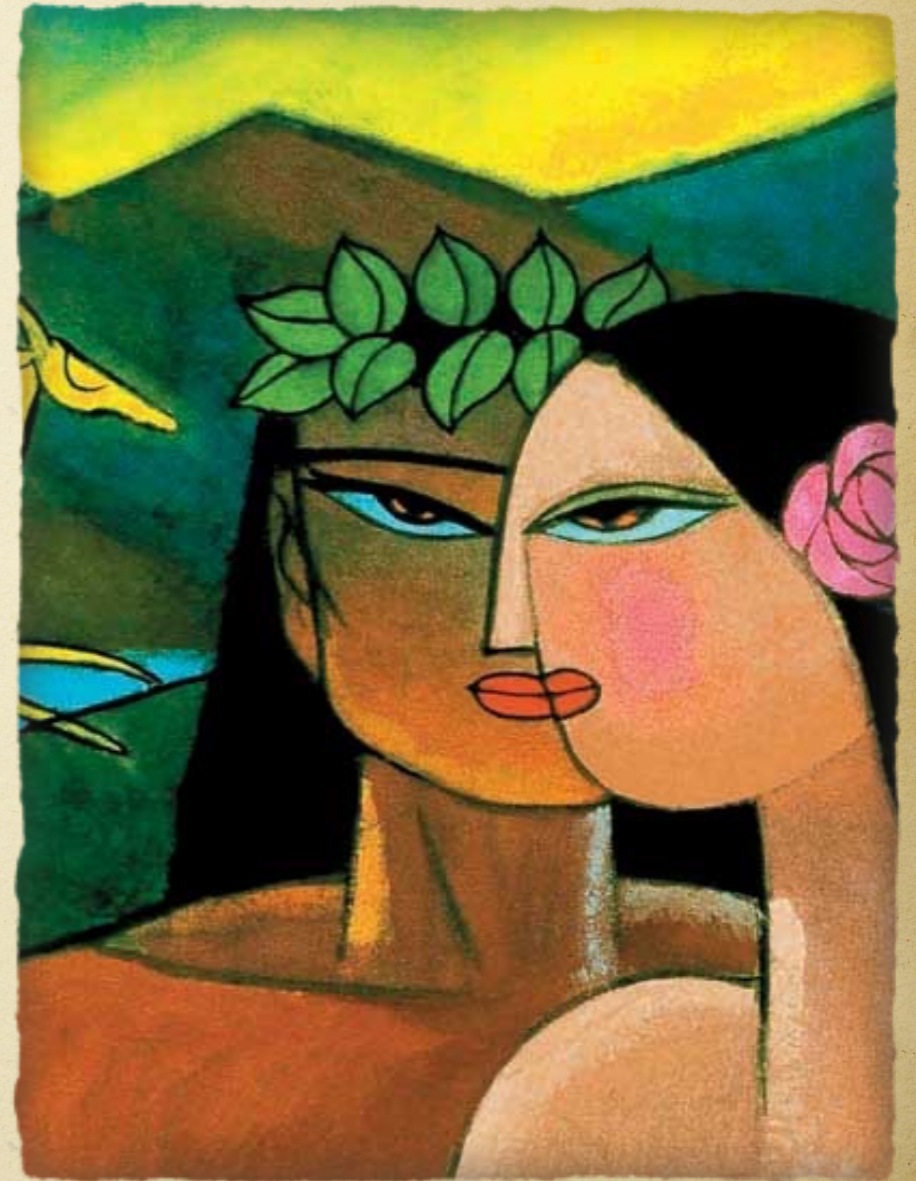
Opening Poetry (SoS 1:1-3)

1 The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's. 2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine, 3 your anointing oils are fragrant, your name is perfume poured out; therefore the maidens love you.



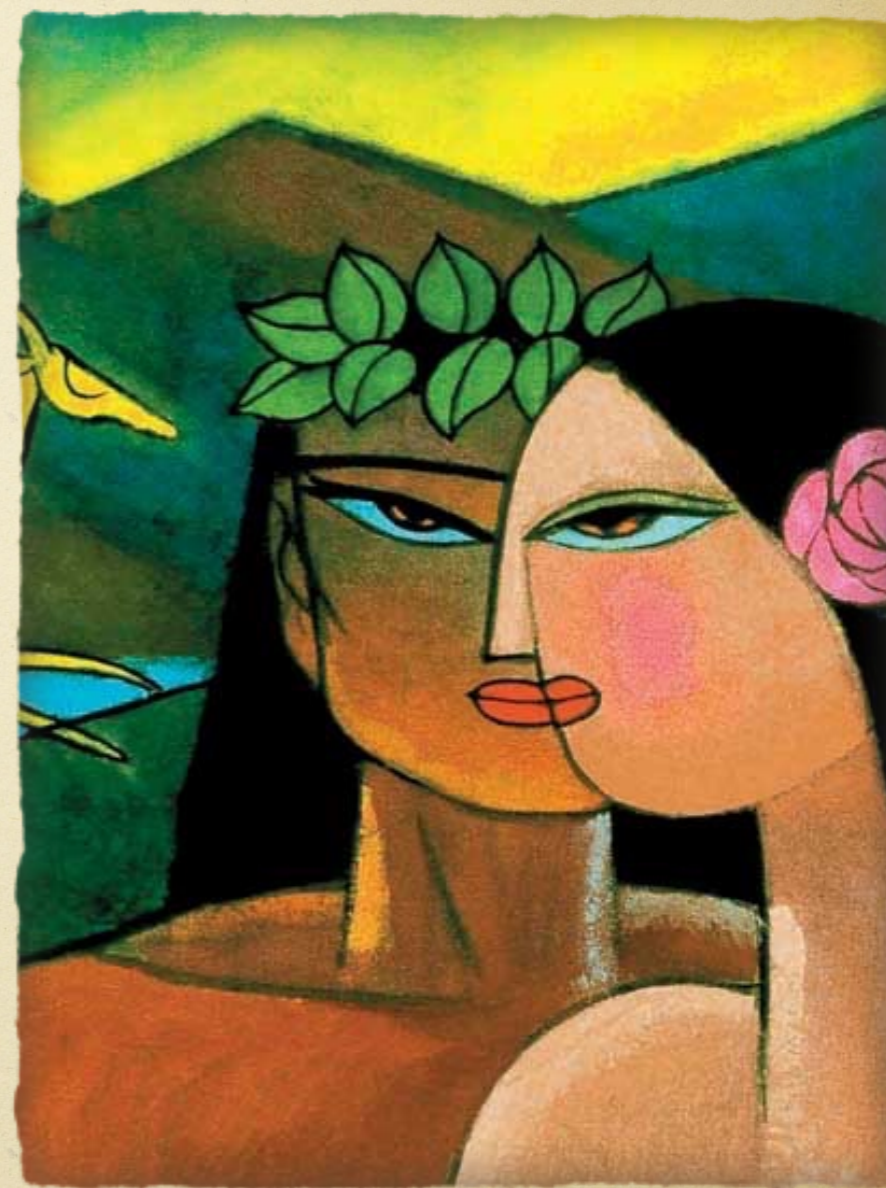
Womanism (SoS 1:5)

- ❧ NRSV: “I am black and beautiful”
- ❧ KJV: “I am black, but comely”



Probably Unmarried (SoS 1:5)

- Traditional: Love poetry between God and Israel/church
- Plain Sense: Heterosexual love poetry of mutuality
- 3:11, “11 Go forth , O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart” — only reference to marriage



Strong Female Imagery (SoS 4) not “weaker” sex

1 Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead. 2 Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them. 3 Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks. 4 Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.



Term of Endearment (SoS 4:9) not incest

“9 Thou hast ravished my heart , my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. 10 How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!”

↳ Bride is likely future hope.

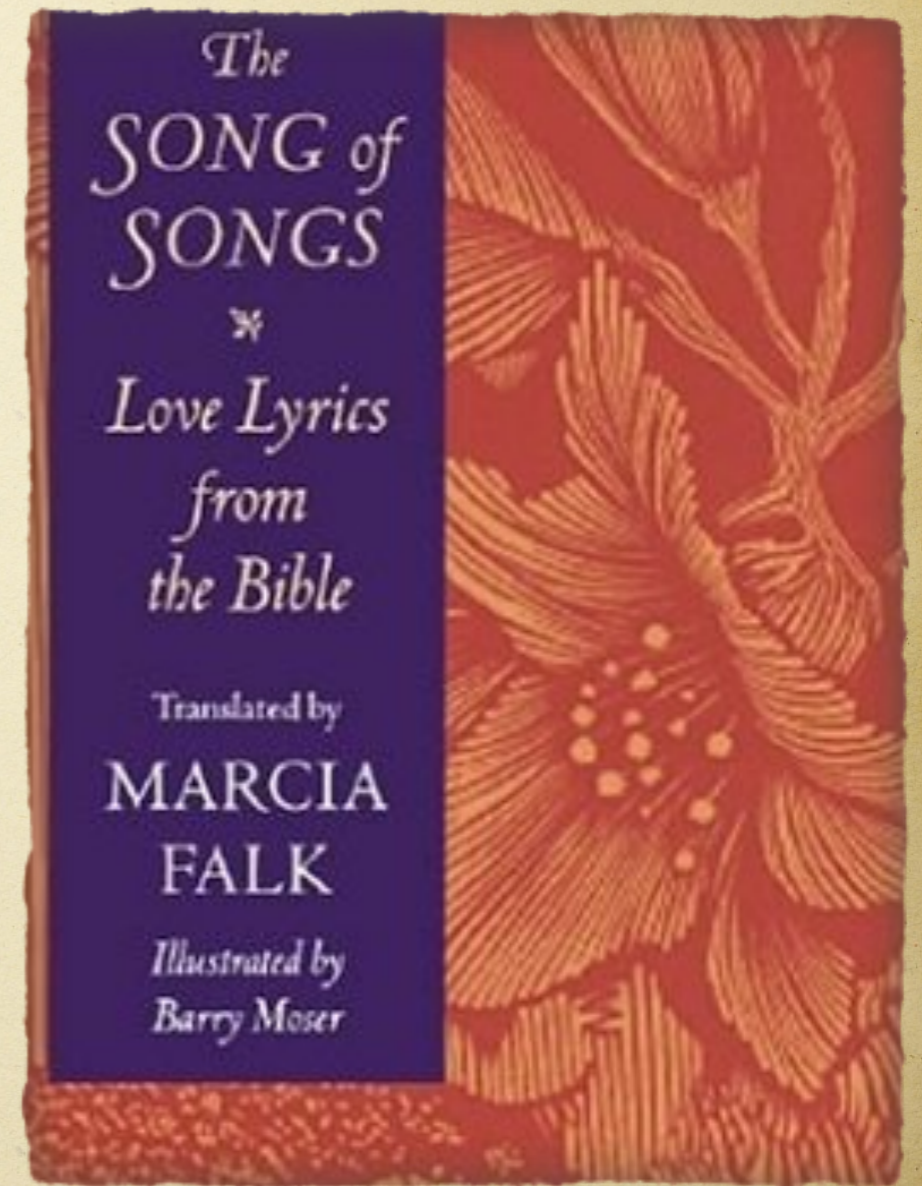


NC-17 (SoS 5)

➤ Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. 3 I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? 4 My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. 5 I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. 6 I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone

Final Chapter (SoS 8)

➤ “6 Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. 7 Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.”



The Realism of Solomon:

The Grizzled Wisdom of Quohelth (“The Teacher”)

➤ 1:1 The words of the **Teacher**, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. 2 Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher, vanity of vanities! **All is vanity.** 3 What do people gain from all the toil at which they toil under the sun? 4 A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever. 5 The sun rises and the sun goes down, and hurries to the place where it rises.... 8 All things are wearisome; more than one can express; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, or the ear filled with hearing. 9 What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun.”

The Realism of Solomon:

The Grizzled Wisdom of Quohelth ("The Teacher")

10 Is there a thing of which it is said, "See, this is new"? It has already been, in the ages before us. 11 The people of long ago are not remembered, nor will there be any remembrance of people yet to come by those who come after them. 12 I, the Teacher, when king over Israel in Jerusalem, 13 applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to human beings to be busy with. 14 I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun; and see, all is vanity and a chasing after wind. 15 What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted. 16 I said to myself, "I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge." 17 And I applied my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a chasing after wind. 18 For in much wisdom is much vexation, and those who increase knowledge increase sorrow.

Tension/Spectrum

- Proverbs 3:13, “Happy are those who find wisdom, and those who get understanding.”
- Ecclesiastes 1:18, “For in much wisdom is much vexation, and those who increase knowledge increase sorrow.”
- Contradiction vs. *Anthology*

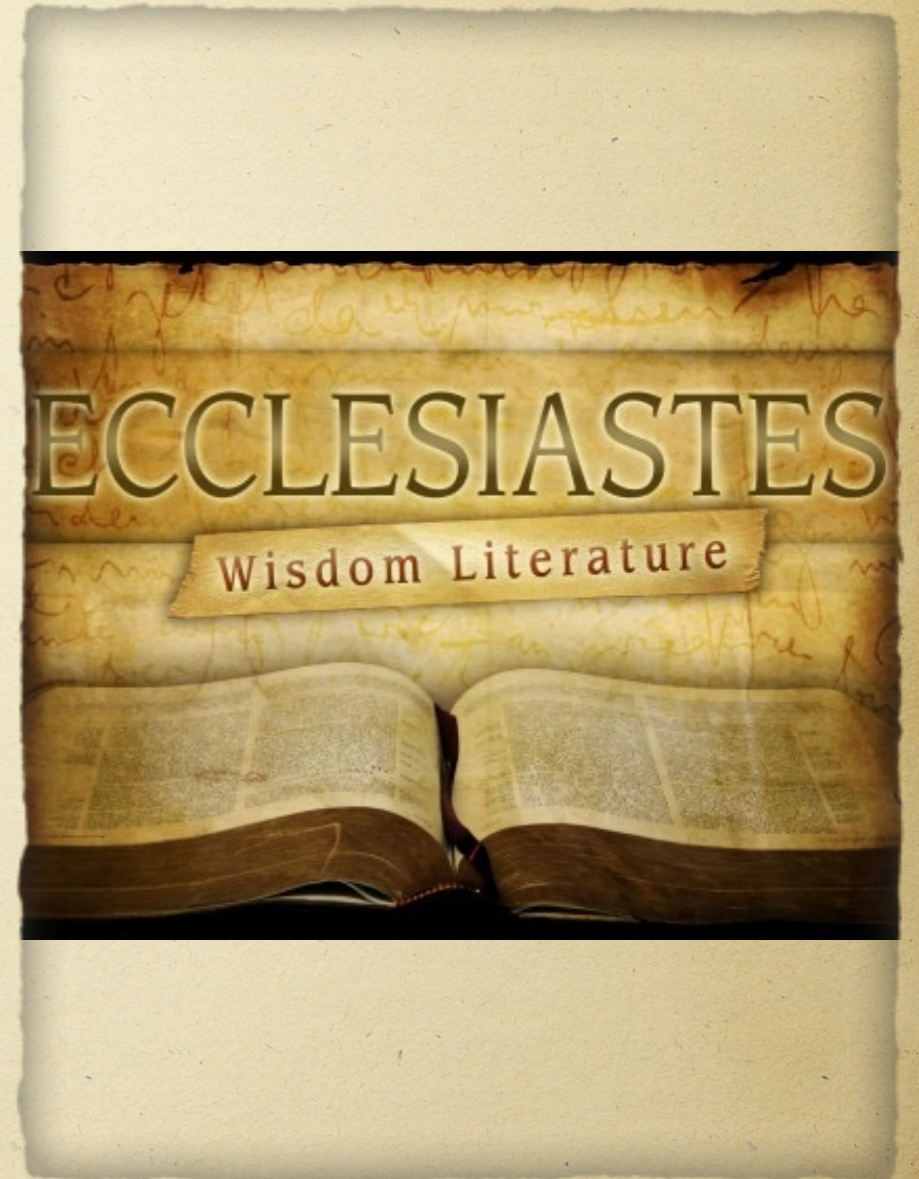
Tension/Spectrum

	Proverbs 3:13	Ecclesiastes 1:18
Human experience	Wisdom = happiness	Wisdom = sorrow/vexation
	Hard work = reward	Hard work = nothing new / vanity
	Deuteronomist	Job
God's revelation	Obey covenant = blessing	Good acts = failure
	Break covenant = curse	Bad acts = prosper

Proto-Scientific (Eccl 2:1)

“1 I said to myself, "Come now, I will make a test of pleasure; enjoy yourself." But again, this also was vanity.”

Proverbs and Ecclesiastes — knowledge from the bottom up based on human experience, instead of revelation down from God.



Time for Everything (Eccl 3)

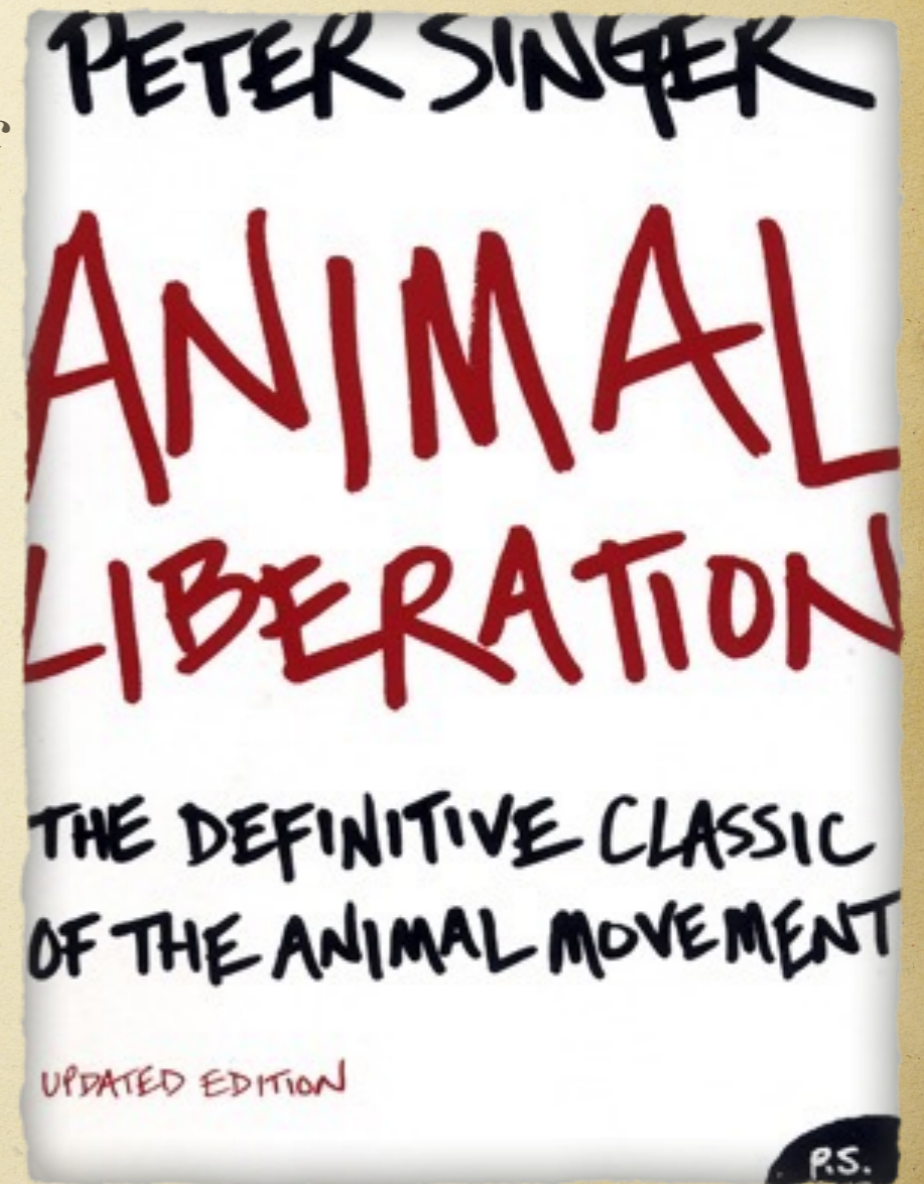
“Turn, Turn, Turn” — by The Byrds



All Dogs Go to Heaven? (Eccl 3:19-21)

“19 For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and humans have no advantage over the animals; for all is vanity. 20 All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again. 21 Who knows whether the human spirit goes upward and the spirit of animals goes downward to the earth?”

Do pets have souls? Should we eat them if they do?



Positives tested in crucible of realism

—so can trust them (Jeff Rogers)

- Test Conventional Wisdom (1:13), “I applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to human beings to be busy with.”
- Recognize Dissent and minority opinions—“tyranny of majority”
- Revere God (3:14), “I know that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before him.”
- Be prepared for death (7:2-4) “2 It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting; for this is the end of everyone, and the living will lay it to heart. 3 Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness of countenance the heart is made glad. 4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.”

Positives tested in crucible of realism

—so can trust them (Jeff Rogers)

- Be moderate (7:15-18), “15 In my vain life I have seen everything; there are righteous people who perish in their righteousness, and there are wicked people who prolong their life in their evildoing. 16 Do not be too righteous, and do not act too wise; why should you destroy yourself? 17 Do not be too wicked, and do not be a fool; why should you die before your time? 18 It is good that you should take hold of the one, without letting go of the other; for the one who fears God shall succeed with both.”
- Live Life to its fullest (8:15; 9:7), “I commend enjoyment, for there is nothing better for people under the sun than to eat, and drink, and enjoy themselves, for this will go with them in their toil through the days of life that God gives them under the sun.” “Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has long ago approved what you do.”
- Work Hard (9:10), “Whatever your hand finds to do, do with your might; for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.”

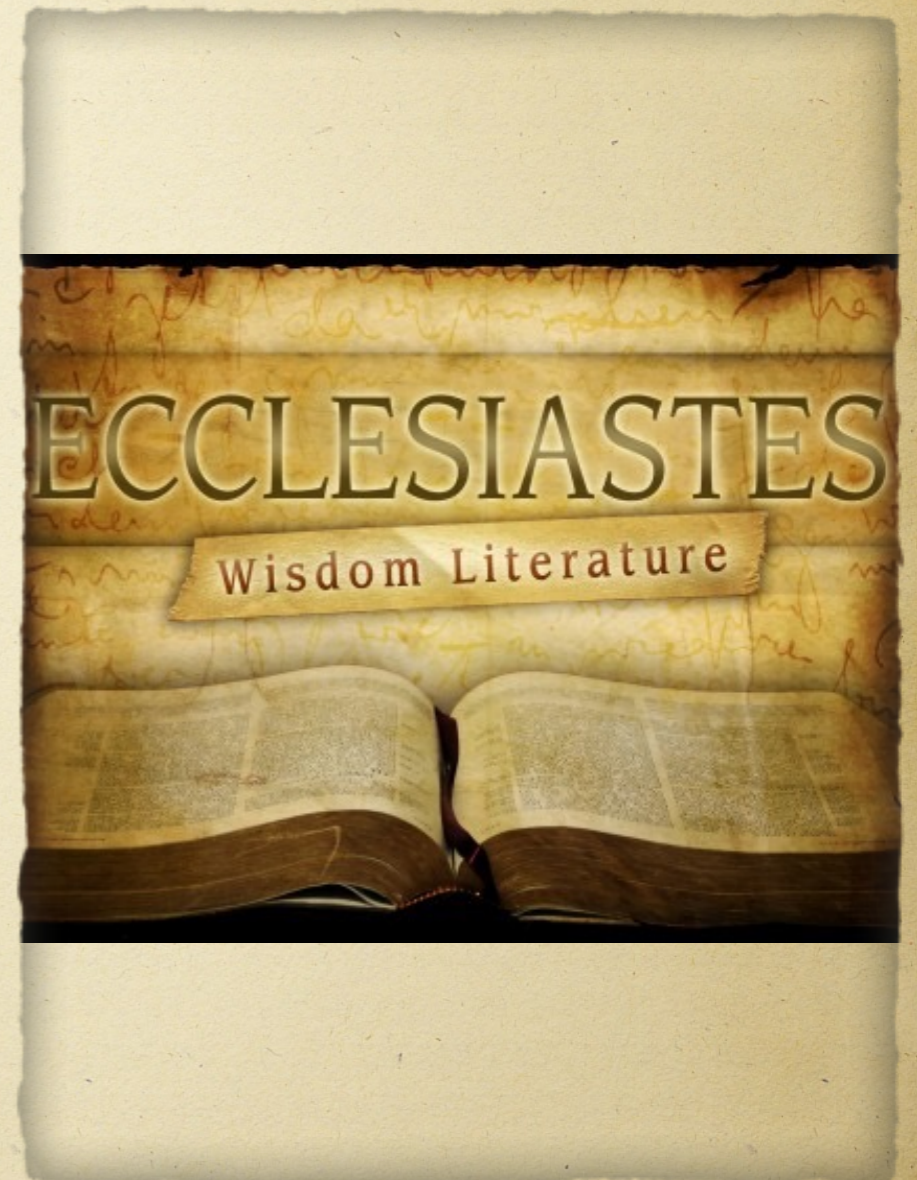
Positives tested in crucible of realism

—so can trust them (Jeff Rogers)

- Accept the Unchangeable (and change the unacceptable) (9:11-12)—, “11 Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to the skillful; but time and chance happen to them all. 12 For no one can anticipate the time of disaster. Like fish taken in a cruel net, and like birds caught in a snare, so mortals are snared at a time of calamity, when it suddenly falls upon them.”
- Enjoy your spouse and Seek out companionship (9:9), “Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that are given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun.”; (4:9-12), “9 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. 10 For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. 11 Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone? 12 And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.”
- Be humble in wisdom (11:5)—realize limits of your knowledge, “5 Just as you do not know how the breath comes to the bones in the mother's womb, so you do not know the work of God, who makes everything.”

Epilogue (Eccl 12:12)

“12 Of anything beyond these, my child, beware. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. 13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone.”



Upcoming Classes

- *Session 7: Introduction (to Prophetic Literature)*
- *Session 8: Isaiah*
- *Session 9: Jeremiah, Ezekiel*
- *Session 10: The Twelve*
- *Session 11: Psalms & Proverbs; Job; Five Scrolls*
- **Session 12: (Finish Five Scrolls), Daniel, and “After the Hebrew Bible”**
- **Spring 2015: 6-weeks on Jesus, the Gospels, and Acts**
- **Fall 2015: 6-weeks on Paul & the rest of the NT**



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