

BAC Podcast Notes

Episode 6: “The Poetical Books”

This week’s episode covers the five poetical books of Scripture: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

- **Psalms**

- A “Psalm” is simply a religious song
- The Psalms are Israel’s “hymnal”
- David composed 73 of the 150 Psalms
- But they were written and collected over a long period of time, starting as early as Moses (Psalm 90) until after the exile—record the prayers and songs of Israel throughout much of its history
- Grouped into five books, each ending with a statement of praise
 - Book 1: Psalms 1–41
 - Book 2: Psalms 42–72
 - Book 3: Psalms 73–89
 - Book 4: Psalms 90–106
 - Book 5: Psalms 107–150
- This structure likely parallels the structure of the Pentateuch (“five books”)
- Two main types of Psalms
 - Praise Psalms: contain statements of praise and thankfulness for who God is and what he’s done
 - Lament Psalms: record honest expressions of pain and sorrow
 - The Psalmists are brutally honest, asking questions such as “Where is God?” “Why doesn’t he deliver me?” “How long will he be angry?”
 - Part of being in a relationship with God is being honest and expressing our hurts, sorrows, and doubts
 - Usually as the Psalmist cries out, he slowly comes to grip with the fact that God is in control and ends the Psalm with a statement of trust
- The Psalms teach us how to better express praise and adoration to God and how to cry out to him during hard times
- **Key theme:** God wants to have a real relationship with us
- Note: The historical books of Scripture (Genesis–Esther) provide the backdrop for the Psalms
 - Record praise for God rescuing Israel from Egypt, praise for God’s Law, praise for the Promised Land, and praise for the establishment of Israel’s kingdom
 - Psalm 51: David confesses and repents of his sin with Bathsheba
 - Some Psalms also contain references to the coming Messiah (Psalm 2, 22, 110)

- **Proverbs**

- Most of the Proverbs were composed or assembled by King Solomon (see Proverbs 1:1)
- **Main Idea:** “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7)
 - “Fear of the LORD” does not mean cowering fear of God’s punishment; it means having reverence for him and humbly submitting to his rule
- **Remember:** Proverbs gives general principles, not promises
 - **The Wise:** someone who submits to God’s rule and seeks to live all of life in the Fear of the LORD
 - **The Fool:** someone who doesn’t submit to God’s rule and is wise in his/her own eyes
 - **The Simple:** someone who is easily led astray and is not willing to commit to the discipline of growing in wisdom

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- Major Sections:
 - Proverbs 1:8–9:18 – a father’s wisdom to his son
 - Proverbs 10:1–29:27 – short, one-verse proverbs
 - Proverbs 30 – attributed to an unknown wise man named Agur
 - Proverbs 31 – attributed to King Lemuel (taught to him by his mother); contains a mother’s advice to her son and a description of a wise, noble wife
- **Job**
 - Likely takes place during the time of the Patriarchs (e.g., Abraham)
 - Talks about the suffering of the righteous
 - The book starts with Job, a faithful and righteous man, who has wealth, a large family, and good health
 - God allows Satan to test Job (Job 2:6)
 - Job loses his children, his property, and his health
 - The story is told through the dialogue of Job and his friends
 - Job’s friends make the mistake of assuming that Job must have committed a major sin
 - Job begins to question God
 - God answers Job with a series of questions that demonstrate God’s power and sovereignty
 - The book ends with Job repenting and with God restoring Job’s life—he receives twice the wealth he had before and has many more children
 - **Takeaways**
 - God is sovereign and in control over all our circumstances
 - God is always just in what he does, but he doesn’t always explain his justice to his people
 - God expects his people to trust his character and sovereignty when our circumstances are difficult—we may not have all the answers, but we can trust him
- **Ecclesiastes**
 - Written by Solomon
 - Records Solomon’s search for meaning in life
 - Says that life lived apart from God’s rule is meaningless
 - Concludes with, “Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13)
- **Song of Solomon**
 - Written by Solomon
 - Celebrates physical intimacy enjoyed within marriage
 - Three main characters
 - The woman: “Beloved”
 - The man: “Lover”
 - The woman’s companions: “daughters of Jerusalem”
 - Consists of short songs that the man and woman sing to each other; the friends also sing
 - Three main sections:
 - The Courtship (1:1–3:5)
 - The Wedding (3:6–5:1)
 - The Honeymoon (5:2–8:14)
 - Gives us a picture of how wonderful physical intimacy can be when done on God’s terms and under his rule