

## THE WRITINGS OF ISRAEL IN THE BIBLICAL STORY

### OVERVIEW:

Writings is about how Israel responded to God's inspired words and deeds as recorded in the Law and the Prophets.

### JOB

The Book of Job is set in the period of the Patriarchs. It grapples with human suffering and God's justice.

Wisdom is ultimately found in God alone; human wisdom can never fathom the ways of God except enabled by God and the only path to true wisdom is in fearing God.

Job demonstrates that God is under no obligation to explain everything to us. There aren't easy answers on the subject of pain and suffering.

The Book exhorts us to put our total trust in God, no matter the situation we find ourselves in.

### PSALMS

The Book of Psalms was composed from the time of the early monarchy to the time after the exile (between 1000-400 B.C.).

It emphasizes the following: trust in and praise of God for His goodness and mercy; God is Creator of the universes and the nations and lamentation over wickedness and injustices.

While majority of the psalms were pre-exilic, the collection we now have, which served as hymn book is from the Second Temple (post-exilic) Judaism.

Psalms can be described as the voice of God's people praying and singing to Him in praise; a reminder of the central role of worship in the biblical story.

### PROVERBS

The Book of Proverbs is a series of poems by Solomon, various wise men, Agor, and Lemuel's mother praising wisdom and warning against foolishness.

Wisdom is about making judicious choices, and it begins with fear and trust of God.

Even though there are similarities between many of the proverbs with those of other cultures, the Book of Proverbs is distinct in that the proverbs in it are tailored to the community of Israel in a covenant relationship with God.

The Book of Proverbs teaches not just how to live a beneficial and fruitful life on earth but also gives practical instructions and help on how to follow God.

## ECCLESIASTES

Vanity on vanities: wealth, pleasures and wisdom are all vanity because in the end, death claims both the rich and the poor and the wise and the foolish.

It speaks about life in God, humanity's need to fear God, the futility of life without God, and the futility of all human pursuits if God is not taken into account.

The Book fits into the biblical story because it reminds all of us of the brevity of human life when compared to eternity.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil (Ecclesiastes 12:13-1 NKJV).

## SONG OF SONGS

The Book is a love poem comprising several episodes between Solomon and the Shulamite woman. It is about delight and longing in courtship and marriage.

Song of Songs fits into the biblical story; it is a reminder that God created sexual love and that sexual love is good when embraced between married couples in holy fidelity and delight.

## LAMENTATIONS

The Book of Lamentations is a series of laments over the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. It emphasizes personal sufferings, spiritual agony, and God's justice in allowing the Babylonian conquest.

The siege on Jerusalem had lasted for two years before the city fell; several thousand had huddled in the city still hoping that God would come to their rescue during that period.

Babylonian troops had breached the walls of Jerusalem, sacked the temple, raped the women and killed many people.

The author of Lamentations presumably Jeremiah, while acknowledging that the punishment was well deserved, still agonized over the reality and enormity of the sufferings and the resulting devastation.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.

14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

(Ecc 12:13-1 NKJ)