

How to Study the Bible
**Class 5: Poetic & Wisdom
Literature**



“My heart overflows with a pleasing theme; I address my verses to the king; my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.” (Ps 45:1 ESV)

I. Why Poetic and Wisdom Literature together?

II. Wisdom Literature

A. What is Wisdom Literature?

i. Proverbial Wisdom

ii. Speculative Wisdom

B. Starting Point – Proverbs

C. Ecclesiastes tests the wisdom claims of Proverbs through observation

D. Job tests the wisdom claims of Proverbs through suffering

How To Study the Bible Schedule

- I. Section One: First Things
 - a. What Is the Bible and Is It Reliable?
 - b. The Inductive Study Method, Part 1
 - c. The Inductive Study Method, Part 2
- II. Section Two: Anatomy of the Bible
 - a. Interpreting the Old and New Testaments
 - b. Genres I: Poetic and Wisdom Writings
 - c. Genres II: Gospels/Epistles & Prophetic/Apocalyptic Literature
 - d. Genres III: Narratives and Histories
- III. Section III: Interpretive Tools
 - a. Purpose and Context
 - b. Structure and Parallels
 - c. Linking Words and Repetition
 - d. Using Extra-Biblical Resources / Difficult and Familiar Passages

E. Main Features of Wisdom Literature

- Comparison (Prov 17:1)
- Numerical Sequences (Prov 6:16–19)
- Alliteration and Acrostic Patterns (Ps 37; Prov 31:10–31)
- Riddles (Judg 14:12–18)
- Fables (Ezek 17:3–24)
- Parables (2 Sam 12:1–4)
- Allegories (Isa 5:1–7)

III. Poetic Literature

A. What is Poetic Literature?

B. Main Features of Poetic Literature

- Figures, metaphors & hyperbole (Ps 97)
- Couplets (Ps 27:1)
- Meter is absent
- Parallelism
 - a. Synonymous (Ps 19:1)
 - b. Antithetic (Prov 13:9)
 - c. Synthetic (Ps 3:5,6)
- Acrostic (Ps 119)

C. Why poetry?

Practical Exercise: Psalm 1 ESV

- ¹ Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
- ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
- ³ He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.
- 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 knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.