



**CHURCHES TOGETHER
IN CENTRAL BROMLEY**

CTCB Lent Course 2022

God's Big Picture

5: Wisdom and Prophets

Some common mistakes in Bible interpretation...
...and how to avoid them

Various mistakes of the past:

- allegorising
- character studies
- 'world behind the text' readings
- fundamentalist over-simplification (insensitivity to genre)
- reader response

The big mistake is to read out of context

Note that there are many contexts, including:

- locational context
- historical
- literary
- situational

The key question to ask is always:
what is the Bible actually saying here?



St John the Evangelist Bromley
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Bible passages for reflection and discussion

Proverbs 1:1-7

New International Version

- ¹ The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:
- ² for gaining wisdom and instruction;
for understanding words of insight;
- ³ for receiving instruction in prudent behaviour,
doing what is right and just and fair;
- ⁴ for giving prudence to those who are simple,
knowledge and discretion to the young –
- ⁵ let the wise listen and add to their learning,
and let the discerning get guidance –
- ⁶ for understanding proverbs and parables,
the sayings and riddles of the wise.
- ⁷ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

James 1:1-5

New International Version

- ¹ James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.
- ² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

1. What common themes are found in these two passages?
2. What can a person do in order to attain wisdom and maturity?

Closing prayer

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the Love of God
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all evermore. Amen.

Chronology of the Prophets (all dates given as *approximate* years BC)

	To Israel	To Judah	To a foreign nation
Assyrian Age	Amos (760) Hosea (760-730)	Isaiah (740-700) Micah (737-690)	Jonah (770)
Babylonian Age		Habakkuk (630) Zephaniah (627) Jeremiah (627-580) Daniel (605-530) Ezekiel (593-570)	Nahum (650)
Persian Age		Haggai (520) Zechariah (520-518) Joel (500) Malachi (433)	Obadiah (500)

From John H Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*
Revised and Expanded edition (Zondervan, Grand Rapids 1994)

Isaiah 53:3-6

New International Version

³ He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.
⁴ Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.
⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.
⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

These words are one of the best-known prophecies about the work of the Messiah (God's king).

1. What things does Isaiah say will happen to the Messiah?
2. What is the significance for us of these events?

Fact File 1: Wisdom literature: the Life of Blessing

Basic message of Wisdom literature:
God has so ordered his world that things fit in with his ways

Proverbs and the path of wisdom

- Practical wisdom = knowing how to go with the grain of God's creation
- Fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7)
- Wisdom is a *person* (Proverbs 8:22, cf Colossians 2:3)

Song of Songs and the joy of relationships

- Celebrating the goodness of creation, especially physical sexual love
- Points forward to Jesus – bride/bridegroom language eg Ephesians 5:22-33, Revelation 22:17

Ecclesiastes, Job and the mystery of suffering

- Sin affects everything in our world
- Frustration inherent in every area of life (Ecclesiastes)
- Laws of cause and effect sometimes break down (Job)
- The innocent suffering according to God's will – points ahead to Christ

Fact File 2: Prophetic literature

The role of prophets

- God's mouthpiece
- Covenant enforcers
- Writing prophets

Two main themes of prophetic literature

- Judgment
- Hope

For further details about this course or other events please contact:
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