

## 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:

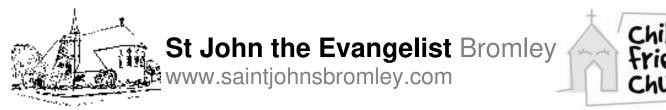
- allegorising
- character studies
- 'world behind the text' readings
- fundamentalist over-simplification (insensitivity to genre)
- reader response

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?



## Bible passages for reflection and discussion

#### Proverbs 1:1-7

New International Version

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

#### James 1:1-5

New International Version

- <sup>1</sup> James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.
- <sup>2</sup> Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. <sup>5</sup> 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

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering,

yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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

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