

# *How We Got The Bible*

Understanding the Process  
& History of the  
Canonization of the Bible

Part VII

# Jonah

- ✓ Dating is uncertain, believed to be a disciple of Elisha who lived around 850 BC
- ✓ Some scholars argue that Jonah is not a real story about a real person but rather a parable
- ✓ Raises the issue of *hermeneutics* = interpretation of the Bible

# The Writings

Job, Psalms, Proverbs,  
Ecclesiastes, Songs of Solomon

## *Nevi'im* The Writings

- ✓ Wisdom Literature
  - a. Job
  - b. Proverbs
  - c. Ecclesiastes
- ✓ Poetry
  - a. Psalms
  - b. Songs of Solomon

# Challenges

- Dating
- Authorship
- Context
- Imagery
- Structure and Translation
  - Redacting
- Canonical Status

# Themes in Wisdom Literature

- Nature of God
- Cosmic Order
- Creation & Revelation
- Problem of Evil
- Consequence of Choice
- Value of Wisdom
  - Practical in its use
  - Limitations on how much we can have
  - Acquired through obedience and experience from God alone

## Ecclesiastes

- ✓ In Hebrew Bible – *Koheleth* = the preacher
- ✓ Commonly attributed to Solomon but doubtful because of post-exilic themes
- ✓ Philosophical reflection and debate on the meaning and purpose of life
  - ✓ Vanity of life and the enjoyment of pleasure
  - ✓ Obligation to God
- ✓ Key verse: 12:13
- ✓ Almost left out because of its dark reflections

## Proverbs

- ✓ Commonly attributed to Solomon as a letter/writing to his son, possibly Rehoboam, to pass on moral instruction
- ✓ Dating is uncertain
- ✓ Collection of maxims & wise sayings
- ✓ Sometimes the sayings are seemingly contradictory
- ✓ Parallels: Wisdom/Folly & Righteousness/Sin

# Job

- ✓ Thought to be the oldest book of the Bible (8<sup>th</sup> BC)
- ✓ Dating is difficult because of no internal references to Judaic history or culture
- ✓ Commonly considered to have evolved over time from a common oral tradition to a redacted literary one
  - ✓ The Elihu Monologue (32-37)
  - ✓ Similarities with “Babylonian Theodicy” (10<sup>th</sup> BC)

# Job

Job is predominantly a book of dialogues

- 4-27: 3 stage dialogue between Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Job
- 29-31: Job's declaration of innocence and demand for justice from God
- 32-37: Elihu's words to Job
- 38-42: God's reply to Job from the whirlwind

# Job

- ❖ What is our motivation for serving and worshipping God?
- ❖ What can/should we rightfully expect from God?
- ❖ Should we serve God unconditionally without question or fear?
- ❖ How do we assuredly know the character of God?

# Job

- ❖ What is the meaning of suffering and is it communication from God?
- ✓ Judgment (15:20-35)
- ✓ Warning (33:14-30)
- ✓ Discipline (5:17-19)
- ✓ Something to be endured with faith (4:4-7)
- ❖ What is the appropriate conduct while suffering?

# Sovereignty

## Songs of Solomon

- ✓ Commonly attributed to Solomon
- ✓ A love poem/dialogue between the author and his “beloved”
- ✓ Highly controversial in its canonicity
  - Use of erotic language
  - No mention of God
  - Female dominant voice

## Psalms

- ✓ Collection of 150 poems/songs used as the hymnal in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple
- ✓ Various authors, not all written by David: Sons of Korah, Asaph, Heman, Solomon, Moses, etc
- ✓ 117 of 150 have *superscripts*
  - a. Personal names (23)
  - b. Contextual info (54)
  - c. Liturgical info (22)
  - d. Genre (90)

# Psalms

- ✓ Divided into five sections (~5 books of the Torah), each ending with a doxology

I.	1 – 41	41:13
II.	42 – 72	72:19
III.	73 – 89	89:52
IV.	90 – 106	106:48
V.	107 – 150	

# Psalms

- ✓ Several Collections within the Psalter
  - Davidic: 3-41, 51-72
  - Korah: 42-45
  - Ascent: 120-134
  - Hallel: 113-118; 146-150
- ✓ Several different genres of Psalms

## Genres of Psalms

- Lament: Individual (38) & Communal (74)
  - ✓ Description of trouble, plea unto God, declaration of trust in God, vow to praise God
- Thanksgiving / Deliverance (56,57)
  - ✓ Expression of gratitude, description of trouble, testimony of God's deliverance, exhortation for other to praise

## Genres of Psalms

- Praise (100)
  - ✓ Exhortation to praise, invitation to praise, reason to praise
  - ✓ Enthronement – reign of God (24)
  - ✓ Zion – the Holy City (122)
- ✓ Royalty (72) – about the King or Monarchy
- ✓ Wisdom (37) – reflection on righteousness

