

# God, Wisdom, and Difficult Times

A Study of Job

**Reading Wisdom Literature**

# Assignments

- ▶ **Read the book of Job through twice. Use a different translation each time.**
- ▶ **Read at least one other book relating to suffering.**
  - ▶ The book may come from the supplied reading list.
  - ▶ If you have another book you would like to read, come talk with me.
- ▶ **Be prepared toward the end of the series to share insights you have gained from Job, and from the other book(s) you have read.**

# Job and God's Justice

- ▶ We want to know the whole picture of our lives - but don't.
- ▶ We want to know why seemingly senseless suffering takes place - but don't.
- ▶ The question we ask: Where is God's justice?

## **THEODICY -**

**How does human suffering relate to divine justice?**

# Wisdom Literature in the Ancient World

- ▶ Wisdom literature was in many countries of the ancient world.
- ▶ Many braved difficult travel circumstances to hear Solomon's wisdom - 1 Kg 4:34.
- ▶ Solomon wrote 3,000 songs and 6,000 proverbs.

**Wisdom was important to much of the ancient world!**

# Wisdom Literature in Scripture

## ▶ Categories of Books

- ▶ Christians - Law, History, Poetry, Major Prophets, Minor Prophets
- ▶ Jews - Law, Prophets, Writings (or Psalms)
- ▶ Different order and groupings in the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures.
- ▶ Example: Luke 24:44; Matt 5:17.

## ▶ But what is Wisdom Literature?

# What is Wisdom Literature?

## ▶ A Broad Grouping of Books

- ▶ Job
- ▶ (Psalms)
- ▶ Proverbs
- ▶ Ecclesiastes
- ▶ (Song of Solomon)

## ▶ A Unique Type of Writing

- ▶ Very different from Law or History
- ▶ The great issues of life
- ▶ How to live life

# What Wisdom Literature is About

- ▶ **Not like self-help literature**
- ▶ **Two Main Things**
  - ▶ Reflection on the meaning of life (e.g. Job, Ecclesiastes)
  - ▶ Practical wisdom in everyday living (Proverbs, some Psalms)
- ▶ **Wisdom is not merely intellectual discernment**

<sup>NIV</sup> **Job 28:28** And he said to man, 'The fear of the Lord--that is wisdom, and to shun evil<sup>a</sup> is understanding.<sup>b</sup> "'

# What Wisdom Literature is About

- ▶ No distinction between religious wisdom and secular wisdom
- ▶ There was simply *Life Wisdom!*
- ▶ The word for wisdom denotes skill.



# The Foundation of Wisdom Literature

- ▶ **The fear of YHWH is the beginning of wisdom**
  - ▶ Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 15:33
- ▶ **True wisdom in understanding suffering has to do with fearing God and shunning evil**
  - ▶ Job 28:28
- ▶ **True wisdom in living our lives, the “vapor” God has given us, has to do with the fear of God**
  - ▶ Eccl. 12:13-14

# Three Principles for Reading Wisdom Literature

- ▶ **PRINCIPLE ONE:** Ask God for wisdom as you read it (Jas 1:5)
- ▶ **PRINCIPLE TWO:** Live out each day what you read (Jas 3:13)
- ▶ **PRINCIPLE THREE:** Mark wisdom at the right price (Job 28:12-18)