

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSE
Northwest College
Kirkland, Washington
September 23-27, 2002**

**BOTE 540 SPECIAL STUDIES IN THE OT: WISDOM LITERATURE
(2 Credits)**

Bob Stallman

Fall 2002

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the concept and literary expression of Israelite wisdom. Attention will be paid to the similarities and differences between wisdom in Israel and the wisdom of the ancient Near East. Emphasis will fall on an exegetical examination of key texts in the book of Proverbs.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The student who completes this course should:

1. Know God better through the study of OT wisdom and the book of Proverbs.
2. Reflect on the prominence, nature, and extent of biblical wisdom in his or her own Christian training.
3. Be able to describe the idea of wisdom with reference to the contexts of the OT and the literature of the ancient Near East.
4. Become familiar with key wisdom texts in the book of Proverbs.
5. Be aware of some of the scholarly literature relevant to the study of wisdom.
6. Reflect on the role of wisdom thinking in relation to the biblical canon as a whole.
7. Be able to interpret biblical wisdom texts and themes and then apply these findings to modern situations.
8. Explore the possible applications of this study in the contexts of local church ministry.

TEXTBOOK

Murphy, Roland E. *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Pre-session

1. It is recommended that you read through the book of Proverbs during the month before the class sessions.
2. Carefully read through pages 1–179 of Murphy’s *the Tree of Life*. As you read, compile summary notes that will help you recall the salient points of the book. Length should be about 5 single-spaced pages. Avoid copying the text into your notes. Try to process the meaning and express it in your own words.
3. Write a personal reflection paper on the prominence, nature, and extent of biblical wisdom in your own Christian training. Consider the input of family and church-related experiences. If you don’t have much history to draw from then reflect more upon the personal effect of this lack. Length should be 2–3 double-spaced pages (650–1,000 words).
4. Write a personal outlook paper in response to the question “What does wisdom have to do with gospel of Jesus Christ?” Length should be 2–3 double-spaced pages (650–1,000 words). You will certainly reflect on this issue as the course progresses but consider this a provisional statement which can at least provide a starting framework.

DUE DATE: All Pre-session work is due at the first class session, September 23

B. Session

1. Attend and actively participate in all sessions at Northwest College.

Monday, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday through Friday, 1:00p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
2. Suggest plans for your post-session work and receive preliminary approval.
3. Compile a preliminary research bibliography for your biblical essay.

C. Post-session

1. Research a prominent theme in the book of Proverbs. Employ sound tools and skills of biblical interpretation to analyze key words, figures of speech, and discourse-level features where appropriate. Write an original study that accurately reflects the comprehensive teaching of Proverbs on this subject. Further instructions will be given in class and the topic must be cleared with the professor ahead of time. Length should be 10–12 double-spaced pages (3,200–4,000 words plus a Works Cited page).
2. Apply what you have learned in your subject study to a particular ministry context in the local church. Consider ministries such as preaching, corporate worship, music and the arts,

BOTE 540 Special Studies in the Old Testament: Wisdom Literature

Bob Stallman

Page 3

evangelism, counseling, or discipleship of children, youth, young adults, or adults. Again, we will consider the possible shapes of this project in class and a preliminary version your plan must be cleared with the professor before the end of the session. Length should be 10–15 double-spaced pages (3,200–5,000 words).

DUE DATE: All post-session assignments must be postmarked no later than January 3, 2003.

Send all work to: Dr. Robert Stallman
 Northwest College
 5520 108th Ave. NE
 Kirkland, WA 98083-0579

D. Grading Policies

1. The reading assignment must be completed and accounted for by signing the accountability sheet which will be provided at the beginning of the session at Northwest College.
2. All written work will be graded on the following criteria:

Form

- a) Each essay must be clearly written following all conventions of quality writing (organization, grammar, and style).
- b) Research papers and all bibliographic citations must conform to the 6th edition of Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.
- c) Where appropriate, include a Works Cited page (rather than a Bibliography).

Content

- d) Each essay should reflect quality engagement with the intent of the assignment and the appropriate tools of study, where applicable.
 - e) Each essay must be your own work and the result of having paid careful attention to the course materials. Use thoughtful planning, cogent reasoning, clear expression, appropriate research, and accurate documentation.
 - f) In the case of the biblical essay, employ appropriate hermeneutical methods, skills, and tools. Pay attention to historical-cultural background. Carefully observe the features of the text on your own. Judiciously use modern scholarship.
3. In-session participation will be measured by the professor's evaluation and each student's self evaluation of the contribution that he or she has made.

BOTE 540 Special Studies in the Old Testament: Wisdom Literature

Bob Stallman

Page 4

4. All assignments must be satisfactorily completed. Calculation of the final grade will be based on this plan:

Textbook reading	5%
Reading notes	5%
Reflection paper	10%
Outlook paper	15%
In-session participation	15%
Subject study	25%
Application paper	25%

5. Late work may be penalized one grade per week late. Please call or eMail the professor in a timely manner if it appears that you cannot make the due date.

NOTE: The student will be charged a \$15 change-of-grade fee if work is turned in after the January 3rd due date, even if permission has been granted by the instructor.

COURSE OUTLINE

A. Wisdom in Israel

1. Hermeneutical introduction
2. Word study of “wisdom” (*ḥokmah*, חכמה)
3. Social location of wisdom
4. Wisdom and kingship

B. Wisdom in the Ancient Near East

1. Texts
2. Hebrew *ḥokmah* and Egyptian *ma'at*

C. Studies in the Book of Proverbs

1. Prologue to wisdom (Prov 1:1–7)
2. The way of sinners (Prov 1:8–19)
3. Wisdom’s first appeal (Prov 1:20–33)
4. The acquisition of wisdom and its protections (Prov 2:1–22)
5. Wisdom’s commands and benefits (Prov 3:1–12)
6. Tribute to wisdom (Prov 3:13–20)
7. Warning against the adulteress (Prov 5:1–23; 7:1–27)
8. Wisdom’s second appeal (Prov 8:1–36)
9. The dual invitations of wisdom and folly (Prov 9:1–18)

D. Wisdom and Biblical Theology

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aitken, Kenneth. T. *Proverbs*. DSB. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986.
- Alden, Robert L. *Proverbs: A Commentary on an Ancient Book of Timeless Advice*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983.
- Alt, Albrecht. "Solomonic Wisdom." In *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom*, ed. James L. Crenshaw, 102–112. New York: Ktav, 1976.
- Barré, M. L. "'Fear of God' and the World View of Wisdom." *BTB* 11 (1981) 41–43.
- Bridges, C. *Proverbs*. 1846; reprinted London: Banner of Truth, 1968.
- Brown, William P. *Character in Crisis: A Fresh Approach to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Bryce, G. E. *A Legacy of Wisdom: The Egyptian Contribution to the Wisdom of Israel*. Lewiston, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1979. See "Wisdom and Kingship in the Religion of Israel," 189–249.
- Camp, Claudia, V. *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs*. Decatur: Almond, 1985.
- Childs, Brevard S. "Proverbs," 545–59. In *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.
- Clements, R. E. *Wisdom in Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.
- Clifford, Richard J. "Woman Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs." In *Biblische Theologie und gesellschaftlicher Wandel* (FS Norbert Lohfink), ed. G. Braulik, 1993, 61–72.
- _____. *Proverbs*. OTL. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999.
- Crenshaw, James L. *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1981.
- Enns, Peter. *Poetry and Wisdom*. IBR Bibliographies. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997.
- Estes, Daniel J. *Hear, My Son*. NSBT. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998.
- Fox, Michael V. *Proverbs 1–9*. AB 18A. New York: Doubleday, 1999.
- Gammie, John C. and Leo G. Purdue, eds. *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
- Goldingay, John. "The Arrangement of Sayings in Proverbs 10–15." *JSOT* 61 (1994) 75–83.
- Hubbard, David A. *Proverbs*. CC. Dallas: Word, 1989.
- Humphreys, W. Lee. "The Motif of the Wise Courtier in the Book of Proverbs." In *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien*, ed. John G. Gammie and others, 177–90. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978.
- Keil, C. F. & F. Delitzsch. *Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol 6: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989, reprinted from Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.
- Kidner, Derek. *The Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary*. TOTC. Chicago: InterVarsity, 1964.
- _____. *The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1985.
- Kitchen, K. A. "Proverbs and Wisdom Books of the Ancient Near East: The Factual History of a Literary Form." *TynBul* 28 (1977) 69–114.
- Malchow, Bruce V. "A Manual for Future Monarchs." *CBQ* 47 (1985) 238–45.
- McKane, William. *Proverbs: A New Approach*. OTL. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970.
- Murphy, Roland E. "What and Where is Wisdom?" *CurTM* 4 (1977) 283–87.
- _____. "Wisdom—Thesis and Hypothesis." In *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom*, ed. James L. Crenshaw, 35–42. New York: Ktav, 1976.
- _____. *Proverbs*. WBC 22. Dallas: Word, 1998
- _____. *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

BOTE 540 Special Studies in the Old Testament: Wisdom Literature

Bob Stallman

Page 6

- Packer, J. I. and Soderlund, Sven K., eds. *The Way of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Bruce K. Waltke*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- Pritchard, James B. "Egyptian Instructions," 412–25; "Akkadian Proverbs and Counsels," 425–27; "Aramaic Proverbs and Precepts," 427–30. In *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. 3d ed. with supplement. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
- Ruffle, John. "The Teaching of Amenemope and Its Connections with the Book of Proverbs." *TynBul* 28 (1977) 29–68.
- Scott, R. B. Y. "Solomon and the Beginnings of Wisdom in Israel." In *Wisdom in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. M. Noth and D. Winton Thomas, 262–79. VTSup 3. Leiden: Brill, 1955.
- _____. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. AB 18. Garden City: Doubleday, 1965.
- _____. *The Way of Wisdom in the Old Testament*. New York: Macmillan, 1971.
- Shehan, Patrick W. *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom*. CBQMS 1. Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1971.
- Toy, Crawford H. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs*. ICC. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904. Dated in method and results.
- Van Leeuwen, Raymond C. "Proverbs." In *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III, 256–67. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.
- _____. "The Book of Proverbs." In *The New Interpreter's Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1997.
- _____. *Context and Meaning in Proverbs 25–27*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986.
- von Rad, Gerhard. *Wisdom in Israel*. Translated by James D. Martin. Valley Forge: Trinity, 1972.
- Waltke, Bruce K. "Lady Wisdom as Mediatrix: An Exposition of Proverbs 1:20–33." *Presbyterion* 14 (1988) 1–15.
- _____. "The Authority of Proverbs: An Exposition of Proverbs 1:2–6." *Presbyterion* 13 (1987) 65–78.
- _____. "The Book of Proverbs and Ancient Wisdom Literature." *BibSac* 136 (1979) 221–38.
- _____. "The Book of Proverbs and Old Testament Theology." *BibSac* 136 (1979) 302–17.
- _____. "The Fear of the Lord: The Foundation for a Relationship with God." In *Alive to God: Studies in Spirituality Presented to James Houston*, ed. J. I. Packer and Loren Wilkinson, 17–33. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992.
- Westermann, Claus. *Roots of Wisdom: The Oldest Proverbs of Israel and Other Peoples*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995.
- _____. *Roots of Wisdom: The Oldest Proverbs of Israel and Other Peoples*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995.
- Whybray, R. N. *Proverbs*. NCBC. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- _____. *Wealth and Poverty in the Book of Proverbs*. Sheffield: JSOT, 1990.
- _____. *Wisdom in Proverbs: The Concept of Wisdom in Proverbs 1–9*. SBT. Naperville: Alec R. Allenson, 1965.
- Williams, James. G. *Those Who Ponder Proverbs: Aphoristic Thinking and Biblical Literature*. Sheffield: Almond, 1981.

SPECIFIC DATA

Course syllabus prepared by Robert Stallman, Ph.D., Northwest College, July, 2002

Contact information: (425) 889-5347; bob.stallman@ncag.edu

bob.stallman@ncag.edu