

Psalms & Wisdom Literature

Dr. V. Philips Long
Covenant Theological Seminary

Course Information

I. Course Description

The focus of this course is on the Psalms and the Wisdom Books of the Old Testament (namely Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Lamentations). These lectures were recorded in 1996.

II. Objectives

- * Provide a brief overview of the Psalms and Wisdom Books of the Old Testament
- * Provide representative samples of the various types of poetry, their function, and interpretive issues associated with each
- * Apply appropriate interpretive principles to various forms of literature
- * Identify and briefly describe major theological themes addressed in the literature
- * Identify points of contemporary relevance of these books

III. Themes & Keywords

Introduction to the course and its contents; hermeneutical guidelines for biblical poetry; the wisdom tradition in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East; Psalms; Proverbs; Job; Song of Songs; Ecclesiastes; Lamentations

IV. Texts

These books can be purchased from most Christian booksellers, or you can order them online from the Covenant Seminary bookstore by visiting www.covenantseminary.edu or by calling the bookstore at 314-434-0110 (toll-free 877-213-3353).

Primary Literature:

- * Bible (You may use one English Bible as your primary resource, but you should have one or two more available for consultation at home.)
- * Matthews, Victor H. and Don C. Benjamin. *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*. New York: Paulist Press; Revised Edition, 1997.

Secondary Literature:

- * Evans, John F. *A Guide to Biblical Commentaries and Reference Works: For Students and Pastors*. 1996. (available in seminary bookstore)
- * Kidner, Derek. *An Introduction to Wisdom Literature: The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job & Ecclesiastes*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1985.
- * Longman, Tremper, III. *How to Read the Psalms*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1988.
- * McCann, J. Clinton, Jr. *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.
- * Webb, Barry. *The Song of Songs: A Love Poem and as Holy Scripture*. *The Reformed Theological Review* 49 (1990): 91-99.

V. Class Calendar

Lecture 1— Course Information & Syllabus (*Reading: Psalms 1; Longman, chs. 6-8; Psalms*)

Lecture 2— Introduction to Course

Lecture 3— How to Read & Apply Biblical Poetry, I (*Longman, ch. 1; Mathews & Benjamin, pp. 231-*

261; Psalms)

- Lecture 4— How to Read & Apply Biblical Poetry, II
- Lecture 5— How to Read & Apply Biblical Poetry, III
- Lecture 6— How to Read & Apply Biblical Poetry, III (cont.)
- Lecture 7— The Psalms, I (*Longman, ch. 2; McCann, pp. 13-50; Psalm 2; Psalms*)
- Lecture 8— The Psalms, II
- Lecture 9— The Psalms, III (*Longman, chs. 3-5, 9-11; Psalm 22, 137; Complete Psalms*)
- Lecture 10— The Psalms, IV
- Lecture 11— The Psalms, V
- Lecture 12— The Psalms, VI (*Kidner, ch. 1; Appendix A; Proverbs*)
- Lecture 13— The Psalms, VII
- Lecture 14— The Psalms, VIII
- Lecture 15— The Psalms, IX; Imprecatory (*Kidner, chs. 2-3; Proverbs*)
- Lecture 16— Wisdom in the OT and the ANE, I
- Lecture 17— Wisdom in the OT and the ANE, II
- Lecture 18— Proverbs, I (*Complete Proverbs; Matthews & Benjamin, pp. 265-294*)
- Lecture 19— Proverbs, II (*Kidner, ch. 4; Job*)
- Lecture 20— Proverbs, III
- Lecture 21— Proverbs, IV (*Complete Job; Kidner, ch. 5; Matthews & Benjamin, pp. 203-228*)
- Lecture 22— Proverbs, V; Conclusion
- Lecture 23— Job, I (*Ecclesiastes; Kidner, ch. 6*)
- Lecture 24— Job, II
- Lecture 25— Job, III
- Lecture 26— Job, IV (*Kidner, chs. 7-8; Song of Songs*)
- Lecture 27— Job, V
- Lecture 28— Ecclesiastes, I (*Webb; Appendix 17; Lamentations*)
- Lecture 29— Ecclesiastes, II
- Lecture 30— Ecclesiastes, III
- Lecture 31— Song of Songs & Lamentations
- Lecture 32— Song of Songs
- Lecture 33— Lamentations

Appendix 1: Handout on Parallelism

Appendix 2: Psalm 1

Appendix 3: What Reviews Have Said about the Psalms

Appendix 4: The Psalms: Classification Schemes

Appendix 5: Psalm 2

Appendix 6: Psalm 14 and Psalm 53

Appendix 7: Recent Theories on the Editing of the Psalms

Appendix 8: Proverbs on Personal Prosperity

Appendix 9: Job Inductive Survey

Appendix 10: One Man Among a Thousand...

Appendix 11: A Thematic Overview of the Book of Ecclesiastes

Appendix 12: Ecclesiastes 3: Life's (Un)Certainties

Appendix 13: The Song of Solomon Illustrated

Appendix 14: Song of Songs

Appendix 15: Bibliographic Sampling

VI. About the Professor

Philips Long, former Professor of Old Testament, B.A., Wheaton College; M.Div., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; Ph.D., University of Cambridge (England).

Professor Long joined the Covenant Theological Seminary faculty in 1986 after serving for four years as lecturer in Biblical Languages and Old Testament Exegesis at the Freie Theologische Akademie in Germany. This teaching experience together with additional graduate studies at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, and the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, give him a breadth of perspective as a teacher. Dr. Long has worked on the Old Testament translations for *The New Living Bible* and Tyndale's *New Dynamic Translation* project. A specialist in languages and history, Dr. Long is also known for his special memory techniques and classroom wit as he makes these subjects surprisingly personal. He is the author of the well-received *The Art of Biblical History* and other books and articles.

Dr. Long has recently accepted a position as Professor of Old Testament at Regent College, Vancouver, Canada.