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## 1.4 Why Study Wisdom Literature?

### 1.4.1 Wisdom is Rooted in the Reality of Creation.

“Yet there was much more here than just a response of faith, belief, obedience, and worship. **It was the entrée into the understanding and enjoyment of the created realm.** One of God’s blessings was his work of creation; this too was part of his work in history! . . . And the very wisdom by which he had formed the world originally, he offered to men and women as his wisdom. **Without that wisdom, humanity was destitute of effective leadership and bankrupt in its appreciation or apprehension of God, humanity, and things; in fact, life itself became meaningless and devoid of satisfaction and joy.** But when the fear of the Lord led the way, then life was a blessing from God.

{Walter C. Kaiser Jr, *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 136}

### 1.4.2 Wisdom Nourishes the Soul.

#### **Proverbs 24:13–14**

My son, eat honey, for it is good,  
and the drippings of the honeycomb are sweet to your taste.  
14 Know that wisdom is such to your soul;  
if you find it, there will be a future,  
and your hope will not be cut off.

1.4.3 Wisdom is More Valuable than Riches.

**Proverbs 16:16**

How much better to get **wisdom** than gold!

To get **understanding** is to be chosen rather than silver.

1.4.4 Wisdom and Good Understanding are Vitally Linked.

**Psalm 111:10**

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;

all those who practice it have a good understanding.

His praise endures forever!

! the phrase “good understanding” has the term *sekel* that we discussed earlier in Genesis 3.

1.4.5 Wisdom Opens the Way to The Truly Good Life.

1.4.6 The Search for Wisdom Opens the Way to Righteous Wonder.

1.4.7 Wisdom is Essential to Character Development.

## 2 The Book of Job

*Is God Worthy?*

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### 2.1 A Basic Outline for Job

#### 1 Prologue (chaps. 1–2)

- 1.1 Job's Character (1:1–5)
- 1.2 Job's Testing (1:6–2:10)
- 1.3 Job's Friends (2:11–13)

#### 2 The Cycles of Speeches (3:1–42:6)

- 2.1 Job's Lament (3)
- 2.2 The Speeches: Round 1 (4–14)  
*The Lord's Governance of the World*
- 2.3 The Speeches: Round 2 (15–21)  
*The Place of the Wicked in the World*
- 2.3 The Speeches: Round 3 (22–31)  
*The Communication Breakdown*

#### **Job's Meditation on Wisdom (28)**

Job's Summary of the Situation (29–31)

- 2.4 Elihu's four speeches (32–37)

#### **2.5 God's two speeches and Job's replies (38:1–42:6)**

#### 3 Epilogue (42:7–17)

- 3.1 God Condemns Job's Friends (42:7–9)
- 3.2 God Restores Job's prosperity and family (42:10–17)

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## 2.2 Chapters 1-2: The Core Questions

### Job 1:9

Then Satan answered the LORD and said,  
**“Does Job fear God for no reason?”**

### Job 2:9

Then his wife said to him, **“Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.”**

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## 2.3 The Key Characters

### 2.3.1 Job

#### Job 1:1

There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.

#### Job 2:9

But he said to [his wife], “You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?” **In all this Job did not sin with his lips.**

“The narrator makes explicit the connection between Job’s integrity and his discourse: “In all this Job did not sin or give offense<sup>23</sup> to God” (1:22); “In all this Job did not sin with his lips” (2:10). **Thus the outcome of the test will be determined by what Job has to say about and to God.**”

{William P. Brown, *Wisdom’s Wonder: Character, Creation, and Crisis in the Bible’s Wisdom Literature*, 73}

“... the story cannot find resolution until someone can satisfactorily answer the question posed by Job’s last words in the prologue: “*Should we accept only good from God and not accept evil?*” The rest of the book strains to explain how those who are “honest,” of “absolute integrity,” “revere God,” and “avoid evil,” can construct any sort of meaningful affirmation that connects the words God, good, and evil.”

{Samuel E. Balentine, *Wisdom Literature*}

**! The ultimate expression of faith in the Scriptures is the long-suffering commitment to not abandon the LORD God even if it *appears or seems like* He has abandoned us.**

### 2.3.2 The LORD God (YHWH)

**Job 1:8** And the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?”

- The LORD is shown to be a “**Tester**” throughout the Hebrew Scriptures:

#### **Abraham in Genesis 22**

#### **David in Psalm 26**

##### **Psalm 26:1–3**

Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity,  
and I have trusted in the LORD without wavering.

2 Prove me, O LORD, and try me;

**test my heart and my mind** [Heb: *my kidneys and heart*].

3 For your steadfast love is before my eyes,  
and I walk in your faithfulness.

**! The LORD does not tempt people to Evil:**

**James 1:13** Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

! **We might say that where the Adversary tempts us to evil, the Lord uses the same events to test/ approved our righteousness.**

- Throughout this whole ordeal, the LORD takes *responsibility* for what happens to Job even as it comes directly from the hand of the Adversary:

**Job 2:3**

And the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him **without reason.**”

### 2.3.3 The Satan (The Accuser/Adversary)

“The satan’s accusation operates on two levels. On the one hand, if Job “fears God” for *something*, then his integrity is a facade. The question turns on whether Job’s reverence has ... a taint of self-interest, .... **On the other hand, the satan’s questioning of Job’s integrity points an accusing finger at YHWH**, Job’s benefactor. ... YHWH stands accused of two interrelated “crimes,” according to this “inciter” and bona fide member of the divine council: affording Job and his family special protection and effecting their prosperity. YHWH does not refute these charges. The question is whether YHWH’s blessings have had a decisive hand in shaping Job’s integrity, in motivating Job’s fear of God.

{William P. Brown, *Wisdom’s Wonder: Character, Creation, and Crisis in the Bible’s Wisdom Literature*, 72}