

NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Spring, 2008
OTL742 Wisdom Literature: Job and Proverbs

Joseph E. Coleson, Professor
Phone: (816) 268-5482
e-mail: jecoleson@NTS.edu

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

The meaning and value of Hebrew wisdom as presented in Job and Proverbs, including attention to the institution of the “wisdom school,” to outside sources that influenced Hebrew wisdom, and to Hebrew wisdom’s place and influence within the biblical canon.

II. COURSE RATIONALE

The Church of the Nazarene, together with the larger Wesleyan/Holiness movement and most Christian denominations, views the Bible as a foundational document, informing all the life of the church. The Hebrew Wisdom Literature is part of the total Christian canon of Scripture; for that reason alone it deserves our study.

Job raises the eternal question of theodicy, of the reason(s) for the existence of evil, and therefore for human pain and suffering. Since the question of theodicy is the most serious obstacle to faith in the lives of many people, Job’s consideration of this issue is a vital component of the Christian minister’s equipping.

Proverbs is the quintessential “wisdom book” of the biblical canon. Its admonitions to the young believer to pursue wisdom at all costs are invaluable to all believers of all ages. Its collections of aphorisms and its discourses on practical wisdom can help to guide us, individually and as the body of believers, in wise conduct, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, you will:

1. Be familiar with the content of Job and Proverbs;
2. Be able to summarize the important positions regarding authorship, provenance, dating, occasion, and audience of both books;
3. Be able to identify both books’ major theological themes, and discuss their contributions to the life and thought of God’s people;
4. Have experience with the exegesis of both books;
5. Use your knowledge of and “feel” for Job and Proverbs in your ministry assignment(s).

IV. REQUIRED TEXTS

- A. Hartley, John E. *The Book of Job*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1988.
- B. Kidner, Derek. *The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job & Ecclesiastes*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1985.

V. STUDENT EVALUATION

Your course grade will be determined by the following:

- A. Absence from one class session should not affect a course grade; two or more absences almost certainly will lower it.
- B. Short exegetical projects and readings will be assigned weekly. On issues of mechanics, NTS follows Turabian's guide.
- C. An end-of-semester exegetical project on a single passage from Job or Proverbs will be assigned. Expectations for this project will be discussed at the beginning of the course.

VI. COURSE SCHEDULE

Feb. 5 - Syllabus; Course introduction; Job 1-4

Feb. 12 - Job 5-12

Feb. 19 - Job 13-20

Feb. 26 – Small group work

Mar. 4 - Job 21-28

Mar. 11 - Job 29-37

Mar. 18 - Reading and Research Week; no class session

Mar. 25 – Job 38-42

Apr. 1 - Proverbs 1-4

Apr. 8 - Proverbs 5-9

Apr. 15 - Proverbs 10-17

Apr. 22 - Proverbs 18-25

Apr. 29 - Proverbs 26-31

May 6 - Course wrap-up