

COURSE SYLLABUS

The Book of Proverbs

Course Lecturer: Bruce K. Waltke, ThD, PhD
Distinguished Professor of Old Testament at Knox Theological Seminary

Course Description

“Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding” (Proverbs 3:13). In this course, learners discover the role of wisdom in the Book of Proverbs by doing an exegetical study of its contents in their cultural, historical, and literary settings. The course begins with an analysis of the book’s structure and purpose, focusing on the forms of wisdom literature as seen in the literary structure of Proverbs. Dr. Waltke then moves to poetic analysis and finally to the prominent theme of wisdom that permeates the book. Students are encouraged to apply wisdom themes to life.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, you should be able to do the following:

- Understand the Book of Proverbs in its historical, canonical, and contemporary contexts.
- Recognize the forms of wisdom literature in the Book of Proverbs in light of Ancient Near Eastern collections of sayings and admonitions.
- Define “wisdom” and understand the relationship of God and man to wisdom.
- Understand the interpretive issues in the Book of Proverbs.
- Know God by doing His will as expressed in this book.

Course Lecturer



Bruce K. Waltke, ThD, PhD

Education:

- Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, postdoctoral fellow
- Harvard University, MA and PhD
- Dallas Theological Seminary, ThM and ThD
- Houghton College, AB

Teaching Career:

- Distinguished Professor of Old Testament, Knox Theological Seminary
- Professor Emeritus, Regent College in Vancouver (beginning in 1976)
- Professor, Reformed Theological Seminary (1996-2010)
- Professor, Westminster Theological Seminary (1985-1991)
- Professor, Criswell Bible Institute (1970-1976)
- Professor, Dallas Theological Seminary (1958-1976)
- Visiting professor/guest lecturer at institutions around the globe, including Bethel Seminary, Columbia International University, Covenant Theological Seminary, Denver Seminary, Geneva Bible College, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Vancouver School of Theology, Western Seminary, and Wheaton College

Other Career Highlights:

- Recognized as one of the preeminent scholars in Old Testament Studies
- Speaker at numerous Bible conferences across the United States and Canada
- InterVarsity Christian Fellowship
- Campus Crusade for Christ
- Area field supervisor at excavations at Tel Gezer, Israel
- Leader of several field study trips to the Middle East and the classical world
- President, Evangelical Theological Society (1975)
- Helped in the translation and production of over a dozen versions of the Bible, including the *New American Standard Bible*, *The New Geneva Study Bible*, and the *New International Version*
- Honorary member of the committee responsible for *Today's New International Version*

Publications:

- More than 1,000 articles and several books, including *Knowing the Will of God, An Old Testament Theology* (which garnered an ECPA Christian Book Award in 2008), and *Genesis*, a book he coauthored with C. J. Fredricks (which won the Gold Medallion Award in 2002)
- The work *The Way of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Bruce K. Waltke*, published by Zondervan in 2000 and edited by J. I. Packer and Sven K. Soderlund, honors Dr. Waltke's countless contributions to Christian scholarship.

Recommended Reading

Though not required, you may choose to read the textbooks shown below to supplement your learning.

Bryce, G.E. *A Legacy of Wisdom: The Egyptian Contribution to the Wisdom of Israel*. London: Associated United Press, 1979, pp. 80-87.

Clements, Ronald E. *One Hundred Years of Old Testament Interpretation*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976, pp. 99-117.

Crenshaw, James L. *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

Kidner, Derek. *Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentary, Vol. 15. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1964, pp. 36-38, 57-59.

_____. *The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes: An Introduction to Wisdom Literature*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1985, pp. 11-55, 90-124.

Malchow, Bruce V. "A Manual for Future Monarchs." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 47 (1985): 238-245.

Ruffle, John. "The Teaching of Amenemope and its Connection with the Book of Proverbs." *Tyndale Bulletin* 28 (1977): 29-68.

The Teaching of Amenemope (found in either ANET, pp. 421-425; or DOTT, pp. 172-186).

Von Rad, Gerhard. *Wisdom in Israel*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972. Reprint, Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993, pp. 53-319.

Waltke, Bruce K. "The Book of Proverbs and Ancient Wisdom Literature." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 136 (1979): 221-238.

Whybray, R. N. *Proverbs*. New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994. pp. 3-431.

Textbooks can be ordered through your local bookstore, various online bookstores, or through your preferred eReader when available.

Course Methods

The lecture content for each lesson is provided in two easy-to-use formats: audio and PDF text (if available). Students can choose the medium (or combination of media) that most closely aligns with their individual learning styles.

Course Assessment and Requirements

To earn a Certificate of Completion, you must complete the course requirements. Course requirements include:

1. Listening to all 24 audio lectures.
2. Completing a final self-assessment form in which you will reflect on the content in the course and evaluate your life in light of what you have learned. The specifics of this assessment are provided in the course materials.

Course requirements noted in this syllabus will be validated before a Certificate of Completion is awarded to any student.