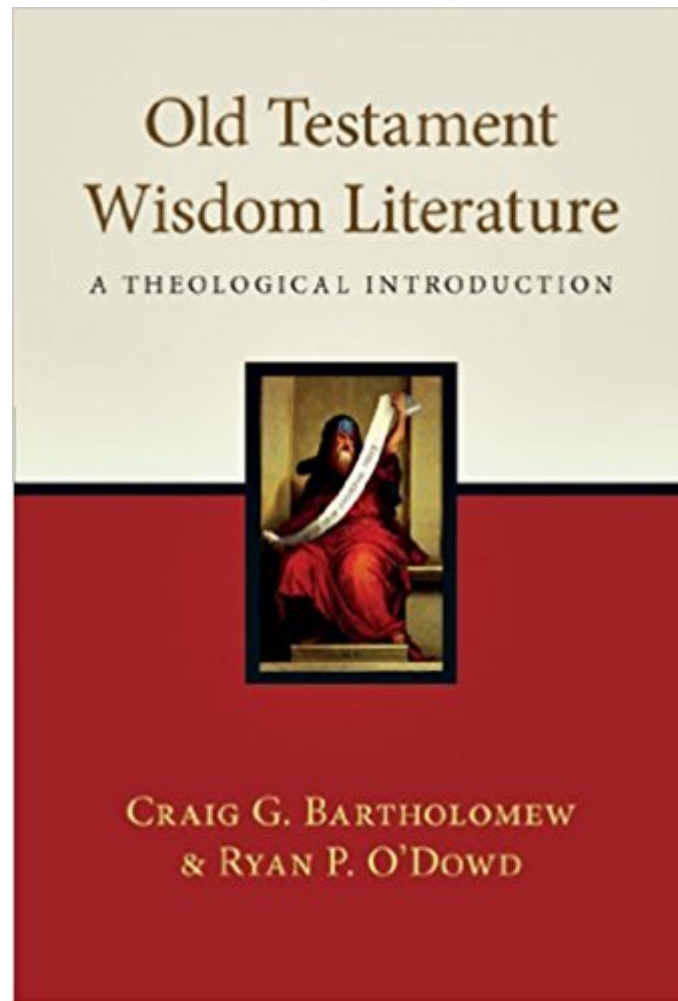


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Old Testament Wisdom Literature: A Theological Introduction



Synopsis

The books of Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are rooted in the order created by the one true God. Their steady gaze penetrates to the very nature of created reality and leads us toward peace and human flourishing. Craig Bartholomew and Ryan O'Dowd tune our ears to hear once again Lady Wisdom calling in the streets. Old Testament Wisdom Literature provides an informed introduction to the Old Testament wisdom books Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Job. Establishing the books in the context of ancient Near Eastern wisdom traditions and literature, the authors move beyond the scope of typical introductions to discuss the theological and hermeneutical implications of this literature.

Book Information

Hardcover: 336 pages

Publisher: IVP Academic (May 27, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0830838961

ISBN-13: 978-0830838967

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 1.2 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (5 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #254,486 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #81 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Wisdom Literature](#) #3741 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Bible Study](#) #58559 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality](#)

Customer Reviews

Few Old Testament books are more puzzling than Job and Ecclesiastes. And few books are more frequently misunderstood and misapplied than Proverbs. The Wisdom literature of the Hebrews may be challenging for Western minds to grasp, but it is very rewarding. Craig Bartholomew and Ryan O'Dowd have helped the student of the Bible's Wisdom literature immensely with their new book "Old Testament Wisdom Literature: A Theological Introduction", from IVP Academic. The authors aim to introduce the reader to Wisdom literature and the theology behind it. This is not just a commentary, although they do offer plenty of insights and comments along the way. Rather it is an introduction and orientation after which one will be more prepared to pick up a commentary and study the Wisdom books more closely. After the author's preface and introduction, the book starts with an introduction to Old Testament Wisdom. They compare Egyptian and Babylonian wisdom writings

with that of the Hebrews, showing the similarities and differences. The authors appreciate the insights such comparisons provide but make no apologies for the unique approach that the Bible presents. Rather than a pantheon of gods and contradictory wisdom writings, Israel is presented with the one true God, in whose fear is the only place where wisdom can be found. Next the book gives a helpful treatment of poetry, its role in life and the three OT books which are the focus of this work (Job, Ecclesiastes and Proverbs), as well as a discussion of the techniques of Hebrew poetry. After these introductory chapters, each OT book is discussed as a whole followed by a more in-depth treatment of one special passage - Prov. 31, Job 28, and Eccl. 3:1-15.

I currently live in Louisville, Kentucky. It is the smallest city I have ever lived in. I grew up outside Detroit in a town of nearly 100,000. I spent four years in downtown Chicago (Chicago proper: 3 million; Chicago metro: nearly 6 million) and nearly two in Houston (4 million). I love big cities. I love the diversity, the uniqueness that each large city has. I could spend days exploring block after city block of Chicago. I hope to spend my life ministering in a major city. But, I have one complaint: they have no stars. The next time you're in a major city (NYC, Chicago, London) at night, look up. You may see a star or two. If you can, get in a car and drive two hours out of the city. What will you see? stars. Hundreds, maybe thousands of them. It's breathtaking. I have found myself spending hours staring at the stars on family vacations to the country. There's something inexplicably wonderful about them. As a Christian, there is nothing mysterious about this. Through Christ I know a wonderful, powerful, creative and mysterious God. His ways are breathtaking. But, living the Christian life in the modern world is difficult. Scientific advancement has been a wonderful gift of God's common grace. But, in our lust for absolute knowledge we have sacrificed wonder. C.S. Lewis was an expert in ancient and medieval literature. He wrote about understanding them and their view of the universe and then contrasted it with our own. The 'space' of modern astronomy may arouse terror, or bewilderment or vague reverie; [but] the spheres of the old present us with an object in which the mind can rest, overwhelming in its greatness but satisfying in its harmony.

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