



Old Testament Wisdom Literature: A Theological Introduction

By Craig G. Bartholomew, Ryan P. O'Dowd

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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.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The book's strengths, including its rigorous exegesis, faithfulness to the Biblical text, readability, recommended reading lists, thorough indices, and accessibility and applicability to Christians across the spectrum--laity, pastors, and scholars--make this an essential volume for studying the Old Testament Wisdom Literature." (Russell L. Meek, *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, 56,1)

"Within their discussion of aesthetics, Bartholomew and O'Dowd argue for the value and role of the arts. They demonstrate how wisdom unites heart and mind, as well as how poetry is a primary vehicle for conveying wisdom. Although written for pastors and seminary students, this book is accessible for anyone interested in Wisdom literature." (Stephen M. Vantassel, *BibleStudy Magazine*, July & August 2011)

"Clear, accessible and insightful. Bartholomew and O'Dowd have teamed up to produce an introduction to the theology of wisdom that will not only inform the readers' minds but encourage their spiritual development as well. Great for classroom use." (Tremper Longman, Robert H. Gundry Professor of Biblical Studies, Westmont College)

"For an introductory level book, there are rich pickings to be found in *Old Testament Wisdom Literature!* The tone of the book is accessible enough to make it an appealing and stimulating experience for any 'reading Christian,' but there are also depths here to engage even the most seasoned student of the Old Testament's Wisdom literature. The key to this book's success is in its title--it is truly a *theological* introduction, and this sets it apart from other introductory volumes to the Wisdom literature. Careful explanation of critical issues regarding Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes is followed by close readings of specific texts and consideration of their lasting theological significance. And the concluding chapters on Jesus as the Wisdom of God, and the theology of the Wisdom literature both in the original and in today's context are, quite simply, masterful. If you want to 'get wisdom' (Proverbs 4:5), then this book will be a tremendously helpful companion for the journey." (Jamie Grant, vice principal, Highland Theological College)

"Be not misled: this is much more than a theological introduction to the Old Testament wisdom books. It is a wide-ranging survey of their significance against their ancient Middle Eastern background and in the context of modern study. It stresses and explicates their poetic nature, and it makes illuminating links with modern and postmodern thinking." (John Goldingay, Fuller Theological Seminary)

"Craig Bartholomew and Ryan O'Dowd have given the church a theology of Wisdom literature that is like apples of gold in settings of silver. Its apples of gold are its profound, penetrating and accurate insights into Old Testament wisdom. These are set in the silver settings of discerning evaluations, an engaging style, and the best of ancient and modern scholarship." (Bruce Waltke, Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies, Regent College, and Distinguished Professor of Old Testament, Knox Theological Seminary)

About the Author

Craig G. Bartholomew is H. Evan Runner Professor of Philosophy and professor of religion at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario. He is dean of the St Georges Centre for Biblical and Public Theology as well as adjunct faculty at Trinity College, Bristol. He has written and edited numerous books, including *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*, *The Drama of Scripture* (with Michael Goheen), *Old*

Testament Wisdom Literature (with Ryan O'Dowd), and a commentary on Ecclesiastes. He initiated and directed the Scripture and Hermeneutics Seminar, which now continues as part of the St Georges Centre.

Ryan O'Dowd is senior visiting lecturer in aerospace studies at Cornell University. Previously he taught Old Testament at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario, and was on the faculty of the Paideia Centre for Public Theology. He is author of *The Wisdom of Torah* and chair of the Scripture and Hermeneutics Seminar, which is part of the Paideia Centre.

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