

# Lesson 11: Writings

This week, we finish The Bible Made Simple series by studying the Old Testament Writings. As we begin, remember these questions from Lesson 2. Would you answer them differently now?

What are your current Bible study habits? Do you interact with the Bible through sermons, personal study, or something else?

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What do you think are the steps in a good personal Bible study?

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How would you like to see your Bible study habits change?

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# The Writings

The Writings are a large collection of books that traditionally came at the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Old Testament. They include Ruth, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, and Daniel. In this grouping, \_\_\_\_\_ were actually the last books in the Old Testament. The final chapter, 2 Chronicles 36, ends on a hopeful note: God had delivered His people from the \_\_\_\_\_, brought them back to the Promised Land, and was working out His plan for them.

A large part of the Writings are what we call "\_\_\_\_\_ books": Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. These are different than the laws, stories, and prophecies that we've seen so far. While the books of Law and the Prophets told the Israelites what to believe and how to obey, the wisdom books told them how to \_\_\_\_\_ and appealed to their \_\_\_\_\_. While Proverbs outlines the general truths of life, Job explores what happens when life doesn't work like we think it should. Ecclesiastes searches for the meaning of life, and Song of Solomon celebrates the intimacy that a husband and wife experience in marriage. Finally, the Psalms give us an example of prayers and hymns to God.\*

## *Poetry in the Writings*



Much of the Writings is written in poetry. Instead of using rhyming words like we do, Hebrew poets used different techniques to write poetry. Here are the three most common:

- Hebrew poets used fewer words. They chose each one carefully: "Make your ways known to me, LORD; teach me your paths" (Psalm 25:4, CSB).
- Hebrew poets used two lines to communicate the same idea: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands" (Psalm 19:1, CSB).
- Hebrew poets wrote in figures of speech: "The ropes of death were wrapped around me; the torrents of destruction terrified me" (Psalm 18:4, CSB).

\*Much of this paragraph comes from *Grasping God's Word*.

# *Writings and the Interpretive Journey*

On the Interpretive Journey, we try to answer three questions: What does it say? What did it mean to the original audience? What does it mean for us? When it comes to answering these questions for a passage in the Writings, there are a few things we should keep in mind.\*

## WHAT DOES IT SAY?

There are two genres in the Writings: stories and poetry. For stories, see Lesson 9. For poetry, remember that "the author is not writing an essay, but painting a picture." Read carefully, looking for repeated words or phrases and figures of speech.

## WHAT DID IT MEAN?

Visualize the picture that the author is painting and try to imagine the emotion that he is experiencing. The meaning may also be connected to the order of the verses. Does the author's tone seem to change between the beginning and the end?

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Generally, the wisdom books are easy to apply to our lives today. When you're finding the main point for your passage, remember that it could relate to our emotions, or to how we think (about God or the world around us).

For the story sections of the Writings, your main point might be related to the actual characters, or to how God is working behind the scenes to accomplish His plan.

\*Much of this material comes from *Grasping God's Word*.

# Reflection & Application

This week, walk through each step of the Interpretive Journey for Psalm 19:1-14. See the outlines in lessons 2-4 for reference, and try to have a study Bible handy for step 2.

**Step One: Read carefully. (What does it say?)** Make 10 observations about these verses on a separate sheet of paper. Are there repeated words, sentences, or phrases? Do the sentences seem to fall into a certain pattern? If you had to divide these verses into three groups, how would you split them up?

**Step Two: The author's perspective. (What did it mean to them?)** Use a study Bible to learn if there are important historical notes about this chapter. What figures of speech is David using to "paint a picture"? How would you describe the emotion he is expressing? Try to write one or two sentences that answer the question, "What did Psalm 19:1-14 mean to David and his original audience?"

**Step Three: Our perspective. (What does it mean for us?)** Find the main point(s) of Psalm 19:1-14 and write each one in a single sentence. How does this psalm teach us to think about God? About God's Word? About our sin? To answer the question, "What does Psalm 19:1-14 mean for us?", try to be as specific as possible about how you should live differently in light of these verses.