

CARIBBEAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Educating and training ministerial leadership



BIB332 Wisdom Literature

Mission Statement

CST is committed to connect, serve, and train for Pentecostal ministry, leadership, and missions throughout the world.

Professor

Course Description

This course introduces the student to the ancient pursuit of wisdom, both in Israel and among her neighbors, and the genre, content, and social context of the wisdom writings. The course examines both Old Testament wisdom books and wisdom writings produced in the period between the Testaments. Particular attention is given to themes that run throughout the wisdom tradition and the ways these themes develop and change in successive wisdom writings. The course also considers the ways wisdom writings helped shape the New Testament and continue to influence the church today.

Resources

In addition to *Wisdom Literature* by Scott Ellington as the Independent- Study Textbook for the course and *The Holy Bible*, the apocryphal books used in this course are required reading: *The Wisdom of Solomon* and *Ecclesiasticus*. The apocryphal books may be found under such titles as *The New English Bible: the Apocrypha*; *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha, New Revised Standard Version*; *The Jerusalem Bible*; or in numerous Internet sources. Some assignments require you to access the Global University Library Web site or other academic resources. Instructions for accessing the ORC are provided in the Undergraduate Writing Assignment Guidelines (UWAG) in the Student Packet.

Objectives

The key concepts presented in the lesson are derived from the objectives. Study each objective carefully as you begin each lesson. First, identify the key concepts presented in the objective, and second, identify what each objective is asking you to do with the key concepts. For example, in the objective, *Assess the positive and negative ways that colonialism affected the spread of Christianity*, the key concept is colonialism affected Christianity. In this objective you are asked to assess positive and negative ways—or show the good and bad effects colonialism had on the spread of Christianity.

Course Procedures

Classroom lectures, group discussion, audio-visual presentations, handouts, and case studies constitute some of the various methods that will be utilized in order to attain the course objectives.

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Course Introduction

Wisdom literature teaches us to live full and happy lives with God and with the people around us. Wisdom literature tries to answer the question, “How can I live a godly life outside the church building—in my home, school, job, and community?”

Because wisdom writers are concerned with living life and relating to people, they spend much of their time asking and answering questions that are important for our daily lives. They want to know how to live with other people through the good times and the bad, in such a way that life can be happy and prosperous. They ponder the best way to raise children so they can succeed and be content in life. They ask such questions as, *Why do the innocent suffer while the wicked so often have comfortable lives?* They consider daily choices in life, both those that will lead to contented old age and those that will destroy us. They marvel at God’s creation and at the fullness of joy found in the love between a man and woman. They face sickness and death as openly and honestly as they do prosperity and blessing. In short, they seek to tear down the walls between our time in church and the rest of our lives so every part of life becomes the arena in which we meet God.

The wisdom tradition is not confined to the Old Testament. Wisdom strongly influenced the writers of the New Testament as they sought to understand Jesus’ life and ministry and the mission of His church. Jesus adopted the teaching methods of the wisdom writers, teaching in proverbs and parables, asking questions, and speaking in riddles. Many of the apostles’ descriptions of Christ, such as the Word of God, the creator of the world, a husband seeking his bride, and the bread of life are all taken from the wisdom writers. In many ways, the wisdom tradition finds its fullest expression in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

This textbook invites us to enter the world of the wisdom writers so we can understand who they were and what triumphs and challenges caused them to write about their experiences with God and with neighbors. Rather than focusing extensively on background issues, our text looks at the message of each wisdom book and its application for today. The author’s intent is to give just enough information to make us good readers. The final goal is to draw us back into the Bible where we can learn to pursue wisdom and abide in her company.