

The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe
Week #13 – Adult Bible Study – 2025 & 2026

Discovering the Bible

January 6 & 7, 2026

Review – The Law

1. When we are speaking in biblical terms, the meaning of “the Law” is not only or merely about the “rules and regulations” of life, but also about the history of God with God’s people, especially that history which is covered in the first 5 books of the Old Testament.
2. The Law does encompass the Ten Commandments, the Great Commandment, the Holiness Code (of Leviticus), and other ordinances as given by God
3. The Law also encompasses the great Holy Days of Israel, such as the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Booths, and the Festival of Unleavened Bread
4. The theme of “remembering” is central to everything revealed in The Law. Every generation of the people of God must learn, remember, and then teach, about the foundational experiences with and understandings of God.

The Wisdom

5. General Thoughts
 - a. The Wisdom literature focuses on helpful information that helps people live their daily lives
 - b. As such, this literature looks at certain common questions and issues of life: how to be happy, why there is suffering and pain, whether or not there is any meaning to life at all
 - c. Much of what is in the Bible’s Wisdom is found in other places, but this does not diminish the holy or inspired nature of the message.
 - d. “If in the Law Israel separates itself from the other nations, then in the Wisdom Literature it is at one with the ancient world.” (Boyd Lien)
6. Psalm 49 – Words to the Wise
 - a. “Hear this, all you peoples; give ear, all inhabitants of the world, both low and high, rich and poor together. My mouth shall speak wisdom; the meditation of my heart shall be understanding.” (v 1 & 2)
 - b. This is a “wisdom psalm” about the transience of life and wealth
 - c. The wealthy & powerful in the world are not special or to be feared
 - d. Even the wealthy & powerful ultimately have no control over their lives, and they end up in the same place as everyone else
7. Proverbs 1:1-7 – The Beginning of Wisdom
 - a. From the Hebrew word *mashal*, a comparison or likeness
 - b. The entire book of Proverbs is concerned with Wisdom
 - c. While the book is attributed to King Solomon, it is most likely a collection of sayings that developed over a long period of time
 - d. Here, Wisdom is personified, and contrasted with Dame Folly (ch. 9) and the “loose woman” (2:16) – the Hebrew word is cast in the feminine
 - e. NB: the fear of the Lord (worship, reverence) is the basis of all Wisdom
 - f. Wisdom is about being smart, righteous, just, knowledgeable, prudent, skilled in living
8. Proverbs 19:1-29 – A collection of Sayings
 - a. V8 – “To get wisdom is to love oneself: to keep understanding is to prosper.”
 - b. V13 – “A stupid child is ruin to a father, and a wife’s quarreling is a continual dripping of rain.” (try replacing father and wife with mother and husband!)
 - c. V17 – “Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and will be repaid in full.”
 - d. V22 – “What is desirable in a person is loyalty, and it is better to be poor than a liar.”
9. Ecclesiastes 1:1-18 – Nothing New under the Sun
 - a. From the Greek that means “one who sits in the company (*ecclesia*) and teaches or preaches”

- b. Attributed to Solomon
 - c. “Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. What do people gain from all the toil at which they toil under the sun?” (v 2 & 3)
 - d. The entire book considers whether humanity’s work means anything
 - e. The “Preacher” (Hebrew – *Qoheleth*) tries to find meaning and pleasure in all the things of the world – and concludes that it has no ultimate meaning
10. Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 – A Time for Everything
- a. “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...” (v1)
 - b. Here is an observation that life contains many things, both good and bad, and all have their duly appointed time, or season
 - c. A wise person simply enjoys what is enjoyable and endures what is not
 - d. Through it all, human beings cannot know the ultimate meaning – only God knows
11. Ecclesiastes 9:1-12 – One Fate Comes to All
- a. “the same fate comes to all, to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and to the evil” (v2)
 - b. “whoever is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion.” (v4)
 - c. “Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart...” (V7a)
 - d. Upshot – enjoy life as best you can and leave the rest to God
12. Job 1:1 – 2:13 – Job is Tested
- a. One of the major Wisdom books of the Old Testament
 - b. A book based on a true story, and then language was expanded and edited
 - c. The book “does not explain the mystery of suffering or ‘justify the ways of God’ with human beings, but it does probe the depths of faith in the midst of suffering.” (Oxford Bible)
 - d. The context is about a “bet” between God and Satan as to whether or not Job is faithful because his life is good or because he is just faithful
 - e. Satan – literally “the adversary”
 - f. Job is tested by the removal of everything good in his life
13. Job 3:1-10 – Job Curses His Birth
- a. “After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth.” (v1)
 - b. After losing everything, Job feels that it would be better had he not even be born
14. Job 38: 1-18 – God Responds
- a. “Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind; ‘Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?’ Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding” (v 1-4)
 - b. Message: A mere human being cannot understand the ways of God and therefore cannot (and should not) attempt to find answers to the deepest questions
15. Job 42:1-6 – Job Answers
- a. “...I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.” (v3b) and “I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, and now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” (v5-6)
 - b. Job remains faithful to God, *despite the loss of everything dear to Job*, and finally sees himself in the proper position of all human beings before God.

Questions for Your Life Today

- A. What are the 3 most important pieces of advice one can follow in order to live a good life?
- B. Do you find any comfort or helpfulness in the Wisdom literature?
- C. Was Job right to say what he finally said to God? What would you say?
- D. Does the Good News about Jesus change your understanding of life in such a way that the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament could not?

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Primary Source: Discovering the Bible: A New Generation, published by The Kerygma Program, Pittsburgh, PA. Boyd Lien, author.