

V. THE SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: The Holy Writings

A. Some general notes:

1. This is the third section of the Old Testament canon. In Hebrew it is simply the "writings" and in Greek "the holy writings." It is the more intensely personal and devotional portion of the Canon. It is sub-divided into three sections like this:

Poetry: Psalms  
          Proverbs  
          Job

Rolls: Ruth  
          Song of Solomon  
          Ecclesiastes  
          Lamentations  
          Esther

Histories: Daniel  
          Ezra-Nehemiah  
          Chronicles.

2. In terms of general characterization, the poetic books are marked with parallelisms: repetitions of various sorts for emphasis. The histories and full of the evidences of God's providence and the "rolls" (Hebrew: Megilloth) are marked for God's intervention (happily) in the life of His people.

3. The essential message is that of the importance of life experiences in fellowship and communion with God. A great emphasis is given to the necessity of translating that life experience into the more practical events of the daily life with the acceptance of the Lord's control and a hearty yieldedness to Him. (Some themes seem continuous in the whole of the Scripture.)

Remember our panorama: The Law reveals God's will  
                          The prophets show how it is acted out  
                          These holy writings show how it blesses God's people.

B. A Survey Study of the Poetry

1. The Book of Psalms (God's Music)

- a. An overview (Notes from the Eternity articles by F.C. Putnam, and used by permission)

The book of Psalms poses unique problems of authorship and date because, unlike the books which precede it, it is not a unified composition coming from the pen of one author or even from one time period. For background study information, two factors are important.

The first concerns the titles of the psalms which often allude to the authors. (These should not be confused with subject titles provided by the editors of many modern English translations.) The original titles tend to be short---