Module 7 AVP Transcript

*Ketuvim*, the name of the third section of the *Tanakh*, means simply "writings," which hardly does justice to the variety of religious expression found there. Below will be a brief summary of various types of material found in the *Ketuvim* as well as a brief summary of the various books in the writings.

In the writings, the reader will find poetry referencing temple ritual, private prayer, wisdom, national tragedy, and even love. There is philosophical exploration of the wisest path in life and of God's goodness and justice. There are historical retellings and short stories. *Ketuvim* might better be translated as "the anthology," the canonical collection from the post-prophetic age (Ditewig 1).

Unlike the Torah and the books of Prophets, what makes books like Psalms and Job so remarkable is the humanity they illustrate (Murphy 290). Ultimately, each of the Ketuvim affirms a hard-won commitment to God and covenant. Without divine miracles or national glory, there were only the words of Torah and Prophets to which to hold. The writings had proven reliable by Israel's difficult history, and they were carried forward by people of wisdom. Certain of the *Ketuvim* were associated with figures from *Nevi'im*, the prophets, probably from early on—Proverbs and Song of Songs with King Solomon, Lamentations with Jeremiah, and Psalms as a whole with King David.

*Ketuvim* opens with Psalms. These poems include liturgies for public celebrations in the Temple, individual meditations at times of danger or suffering, and expressions of awe at Creation (Murphy 291). Taken together, the Psalms leave the impression of an "official theology" of Temple, priesthood, and nation; but what makes them timeless is the personal voice expressing peril, doubt, and celebration.

The books of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes come out of what scholars termed the "wisdom tradition." Wisdom was an international literature in the biblical Near East, nurtured by scribes in every culture from Egypt to Mesopotamia. Its characteristics included the observation of nature and the world as the source of understanding and the use of reason to determine the best course for human happiness. This literature seems to have a single pragmatic objective: "to instruct how one ought to live a long, happy, and successful earthly life" (Glicksman 835).

Two stories and one poem are set at particular points in Jewish history. Ruth represents a narrative set in the time of the book of Judges about a Moabite woman who follows her mother-in-law back to Bethlehem when her own husband dies. She joins her destiny with Israel and becomes the ancestor of King David. Esther, set in Persia, is well-known as the *megillah* (scroll) that tells the story behind the holiday of Purim. Lamentations is a series of poems set in Jerusalem in the days after the Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians.

Unlike any of the other books are Song of Songs and Daniel. The former is a collection of passionate love poetry that tells the dynamic story of mutual desire and courtship (Glicksman 1054). Traditionally, it is considered an allegory of the love affair between God and Israel. Daniel is an eclectic book most often noted as the earliest apocalyptic text in Judaism. Divided into two parts, the first (chapters 1 – 6) is a collection of five stories about Daniel's career in the palace of Babylon. The second part (chapters 7 – 12) share the symbolic visions and dreams of Daniel (Walsh 1401).

Here, you will note the work cited information.

Works Cited

