

Chapter 14

Answer Key for Double-Check Questions

1. *How are the Wisdom and Poetry Books different from the rest of the writings of the Old Testament?*

Other Old Testament books focus on Israel's history, laws, and religious values, while the Wisdom and Poetry Books explore the mysteries for which there are no easy answers. They offer moral lessons and sage advice, and they guide us in our search for happiness and harmony in life.

2. *What is meant by "fear of the Lord," and why is it useful?*

"Fear of the Lord" refers to the sense of awe and reverence we should have for the Lord. "Fear of the Lord" is the foundation for attaining wisdom; it helps us turn away from evil, prolongs life, and helps guide our actions.

3. *What belief does the Book of Job address?*

The Book of Job challenges the Israelites' belief in divine redemptive justice: God rewards those who do good and punishes those who do wrong during this lifetime.

4. *How does the Book of Job respond to the question of why good people suffer?*

In regard to why good people suffer, the Book of Job suggests that there are some things humans cannot completely understand because we are not God. Some things will always be a mystery, including why bad things happen to good people. It is not a mystery to be solved but a mystery to be accepted.

5. *What does the author of Ecclesiastes suggest we do in the face of the constantly repetitive cycles of good and bad times?*

The author of Ecclesiastes suggests that despite our sufferings, we should do everything we can to enjoy the life God has given us. We can walk around with a sour face and complain, or we can accept our struggles, continue to do good, and enjoy the good things present in our life.

6. *What two things might the imagery in Song of Songs symbolize?*

Song of Songs affirms the goodness of human sexuality, and the sexual imagery also symbolizes the intimate and passionate relationship between God and his people. As a husband and wife are bound in the covenant of marriage, we have a covenant with God and we are called to be faithful to him as he is to us.

7. *Describe the historical situation in which the Book of Wisdom and the Wisdom of Ben Sira were written.*

The Book of Wisdom and the Wisdom of Ben Sira were written during a time when the Jewish communities began to spread in the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. These communities were facing cultural conflicts with the dominant Greek culture. Wisdom and Ben Sira encouraged them to maintain their Jewish culture and wisdom.

8. *What might have been a factor in leading to the Jewish People's growing belief in the afterlife?*

The Jewish People's newly found belief in the afterlife may have sprouted from their experiences in the Babylonian Exile and their persecution from the Greeks. Because many faithful Jewish People died for refusing to give up their faith, it became harder to believe that their suffering in this life was God's punishment. So if they were not rewarded for their faithfulness in this life, there must have been an afterlife in which they would be rewarded.

