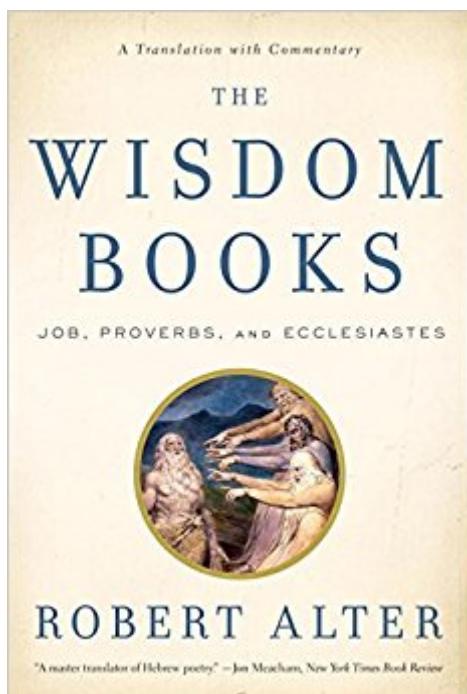


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# The Wisdom Books: Job, Proverbs, And Ecclesiastes: A Translation With Commentary



## Synopsis

First time in paperback: "One of the most ambitious literary projects of this or any age." • Adam Kirsch, *New Republic* Here in Robert Alter's bold new translation are some of the most magnificent works in world literature. The astounding poetry in the Book of Job is restored to its powerful ancient meanings and rhythms. The creation account in its Voice from the Whirlwind is beautiful and incendiary. By contrast, a serene fatalism suffuses Ecclesiastes with a quiet beauty, and the pithy maxims of Proverbs impart a worldly wisdom that is satirically shrewd. Each of these books addresses the universal wisdom that the righteous thrive and the wicked suffer in a rational moral order; together they are essential to the ancient canon that is the Hebrew Bible.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Masterfully translated.--John TimpaneA master translator of Hebrew poetry.--Jon

MeachamMasterfully translated. --John TimpaneMagnificent: This translation is superb [and] the commentary is rich in linguistic, historical, and literary insights that immeasurably enrich the reading of these texts. "Masterfully translated. --John Timpane" A master translator of Hebrew poetry. --Jon Meacham"

Robert Alter's ongoing translation of the Hebrew Bible, the magnificent capstone to a lifetime of distinguished scholarly work, has won the PEN Center Literary Award for Translation. His immense achievements in scholarship ranging from the eighteenth-century European novel to contemporary

Hebrew and American literature earned Alter the Robert Kirsch Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Los Angeles Times. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Philosophical Society, Alter is the Class of 1937 Professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley.

The Wisdom Books are always a joy to read and to ponder. Wisdom belongs to Man - not to the animals. I find it impossible to think of the Bible without the Wisdom Books. I have loved them since my youth. To be able to read the original Hebrew is a boon!! To catch the rhythm, the cadence, the allusions and the alliterations- something to be greatly desired. If you cannot create beauty the next best thing is to be able to appreciate beauty made by others. In Robert Alter's translation of the Wisdom Books we have an excellent example. We thank him for his Translations- the immense amount of time, work, labour and just sweat it all involved is known to him alone. Obviously, Robert Alter is a man steeped in Hebrew and the Hebrew Language. It is wonderful to have Translations by such competent men. You have to read them to get the "taste". Sometimes the translation is somewhat different- but his grip of the Hebrew Language compels him to search for the correct and even exact translation. When I find enough money I am going to buy his translation of the Psalms and the David Story. I recommend these Translations. Read them as Literature first of all- but what I really want you to do is to read them for the sake of gaining Wisdom. The seat of Wisdom is the fear of God. I hope continues to make available such high class Books. Ignotus

For all of the issues with applying Biblical teaching in the modern world, there is something refreshing about its Wisdom literature. And, of course, Robert Alter's translations and commentary were a pleasure to read, continually providing me with new ways of looking at particular verses/passages, and also a wealth of background information and plenty of English vocabulary to look up. It's scholarly without being tedious. This particular collection contains Job, Proverbs, and Qohelet (Ecclesiastes). Each of them had their own unique style, but also key similarities. In particular, Job and Qohelet espouse a more nuanced, realistic perspective of how the world works. Proverbs was still as dry and full of platitudes as I remembered, but there was the occasional pearl of wisdom, so to speak. My only issue with the book, the Kindle version, is that there aren't direct links to the notes, so I would have to read the chapter and then read the notes instead of going back and forth. Otherwise, this is a great book worthy of your time and money.

I'm a great admirer of Alter and have read several of his translations, as well as a little of his other

work. Reading for pleasure, I still prefer the King James Bible, which I'm pleased to see that he also admires. But if I were preparing a lecture or a serious essay and needed a clear translation with an authoritative commentary, this is where I'd turn. I'm not competent to judge his scholarship, but it's evident that he takes care with every line, including places where he mentions that no one is quite sure what a word means.

Well written, clear notes. Alter is one of those rare scholars who can write so that we all can garner new information, and find pleasure in deepening our backgrounds. At the same time, those of us who are academics and scholars will not find the text lacking. I will say that, if you have a working knowledge of Hebrew, it will further expand and deepen your experience to have a copy of the text under study also open in the Hebrew. Excellent volume. Thanks.

I was brought up in a mixed household so the family bible was the King James but I also got a healthy reading of the Talmud as well. Alter's work is truly impressive but there are some passages that lack the beauty and magnificence of the KJV...language of Shakespeare afterall. So, I trust Alter's translations more and it is a book that needs to be savoured and read slowly to fully enjoy...and a rich brew it is. Still...I miss the poetry of KJV, errant though it may be.

Ordered this book as a supplement to my Bible. Great price and the author was terrific.

Alter's book on biblical narrative is one I return to again and again as I try to see the patterns, beauty and depth of Jewish writings. I wanted to have Alter's insights captured and applied to a translation of Ecclesiastes - a book that I think is too much translated from a Western mindset. I hope that you will grab this book and be thrilled as you read the opening lines fresh for the first time.

This boook is being used as the text for a course I am taking at the temple. I find it clearly written, well footnoted and easy as any text to follpw

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