**Divine and Human Wisdom in Job: A Reconsideration**

In recent years, biblical wisdom has been the focus of intense scholarly debate. Is there such a thing as a wisdom genre? What is wisdom in the Bible, really? Can we identify a separate wisdom way of thinking, distinct from that found in the rest of the Bible? One of the most central questions in this debate concerns the source of wisdom: Can we differentiate in the Bible between human wisdom and wisdom derived from a divine source? Did the ancients themselves make this distinction?

In my lecture, I will attempt to tackle the issue of divine and human wisdom in the most intriguing case of all: the book of Job. Several of the most basic questions concerning the definition of wisdom literature reach their fruition in this book, which is often identified as a “stepson” or “distant cousin” of Parables and Ecclesiastes. The book’s proliferation of literary types and styles led a number of scholars to claim that it should not be ascribed to wisdom literature at all, even if such a category existed in antiquity, but instead to other genres such as personal lamentation, the versified contest, and others. The books concluding theophany also casts doubt on its classification as wisdom—if indeed it is based primarily on human wisdom and not wisdom originating from God.

I will attempt to approach these questions from a new perspective, connected to the basic definition of the wisdom genre. In the first part of the lecture I will propose that the three wisdom books in the Hebrew Bible belong to the core wisdom genre, based on the self-definition of the books’ speakers as sages and of their speech as words of wisdom. These three are the only books in the entire Bible that present themselves in this way, and this self-definition provides the frame through which readers should approach them. Then, I will enumerate some of the central features of the core wisdom genre, in particular the internal debate over the relationship between human and divine wisdom. I will argue that in order to correctly identify the various shades of wisdom literature and to understand the relationship between them, it is necessary, by using the tools of semantic research and in-depth analysis of the literary context, to define the specific weight of human and divine wisdom expressions in the various books.

In the second, and more central, half of the lecture, I will point to the unexpectedly central role of wisdom in Job, and will attempt to prove that, by using the sub-genre of contest literature, the book’s author brings the discussion of one of the most essential issues in biblical wisdom literature to its fullest realization. In this portion of the lecture, I will offer a detailed analysis of passages from Job’s speech, the speeches of the friends, and God’s answer from the whirlwind, and I will show how they present different approaches to the question of the origin of wisdom.