

Old Testament Survey

Teacher's Manual

Old Testament Survey

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Lesson 1

Why Study the Old Testament?

A. Introduction

For many people the Old Testament of the Holy Bible is cloaked in mystery. When people become Christians, they are encouraged to read the Bible, but they are often directed exclusively to the New Testament and, perhaps, the Psalms of the Old Testament. There are even versions of the Bible that only contain the New Testament and the Psalms.

Many Christians spend their whole life reading primarily the New Testament books. If they do start reading in the Old Testament, they usually only make it through the first few books of the Pentateuch before getting frustrated and jumping back to the New Testament.

Part of the difficulty is that very few people understand the link between the Old and the New Testament and do not see them as one book. In our normal course of life, no one sits down to read a book by starting in the middle and reading to the end. If this were done, so much would be lost in the sense of the book. In fact, one would run the risk of missing the whole point of the book.

It is no different with the Bible, the most unique book in the entire world. Even though it is comprised of 66 books, written by multiple human authors over a period of nearly 2000 years, it is one book and can only be truly understood and appreciated when seen in that light.

B. Why Study the Old Testament?

1. Because it is part of the “All Scripture” that is given by inspiration of God that is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness (II Tim. 3:14-17).

“But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

- a. The Scripture of the Old Testament provides a source of wisdom.
 - b. The Scripture of the Old Testament leads us to salvation.
 - c. The Scripture of the Old Testament guides our steps.
 - d. The Scripture of the Old Testament equips us to fulfill our destiny.
2. Because “whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4; I Pet. 2:12-13).

“Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that,

not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.” I Peter 1:12-13

- a. The Scripture of the Old Testament was written for our learning.
 - b. The Scripture of the Old Testament was written specifically for us in the Church Age not simply those who lived in Old Testament times.
 - c. The Scripture of the Old Testament was written to bring comfort to us as we walk in faith in the New Testament Age.
3. Because “all these things happened to them as examples, and they “were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come” (I Cor. 10:6, 11).
- a. The Scripture of the Old Testament gives us examples of both the positive and the negative to bring admonition to our lives.
 - b. The Scripture of the Old Testament is especially written for the last generation before the return of Christ to inspire the faith needed to fulfill the unique challenges of that era.
4. Because the whole Old Testament was a shadow of the real (Heb. 10:1). It is the purpose of the shadow to point us to the real or the substance that has come to us in Christ (Col. 2:16-17; Heb. 8:5).

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Colossians 2:16-17

- a. The Scripture of the Old Testament gives us tangible or visible expressions of invisible realities.
- b. The Scripture of the Old Testament points us to and help us to visualize all that we have been given in Christ.

Old Testament or Covenant	New Testament or Covenant
Natural	Spiritual
Flesh	Spirit
Testimony	Things Spoken After
Shadow	Image
Figure	Things to Come
Made with Hands	Not Made with Hands
Patterns	Heavenly Things
Figures	True
For a Time	Eternal
Visible (Seen)	Invisible (Unseen)
Temporal	Eternal
By Sight	By Faith

Study the chart above in relation these verses: John 3:5-6; II Corinthians 4:18; Hebrews 3:5; 8:7, 13; 9:9, 23-24; 10:9.

- c. The Scripture of the Old Testament presents the natural that precedes and paves the way for the spiritual (I Cor. 15:44-47).

However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.

I Corinthians 15:46

- Natural birth precedes spiritual birth (Jn. 3:5).
 - Natural Israel precedes spiritual Israel (Gal. 6:16).
 - Natural Jerusalem precedes spiritual or heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22).
 - Natural temple precedes the spiritual temple (I Pet. 2:5).
 - Natural priesthood precedes a spiritual priesthood (I Pet. 2:5).
 - Natural sacrifices precede spiritual sacrifices (Heb. 13:16).
 - Natural enemies and warfare precede spiritual enemies and warfare (Eph. 6:12).
5. Because the entire Bible, including the Old Testament is the story of Jesus Christ our Redeemer (Mt. 5:17; Lk. 24:27, 44; Jn. 1:45; 5:39, 46-47; Acts 10:43; Gal. 3:24; Heb. 10:7).

“You study the Scriptures, because you think that in them you will find eternal life. And these very Scriptures speak about me!” --Good News Translation

Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24:25-27

- a. The entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is His—Story (History). He is the unifying theme of the whole Bible.
- b. The entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is an unfolding of the plan of redemption. The first two chapters of Genesis and the last two chapters of Revelation are history before sin and after sin with everything in between covering the redemption of man.
- c. The entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments, relates the unfolding struggle between the two seeds—the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15).

The Seed of the Woman	The Seed of the Serpent
Children of Light	Children of Darkness
Mystery of Godliness	Mystery of Iniquity
Spirit of Truth	Spirit of Error

Children of Promise	Children of the Flesh
Kingdom of God	Kingdom of Satan
Life	Death
Godly Seed or Line	Godly Seed or Line
Christ	Antichrist

d. The entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments, could be labeled the ***Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ***.

6. Because the Old Testament is the foundation on which the house of the New Testament is built (Heb. 3:1-6; Eph. 2:20).

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22

a. God has only ever had one people—His chosen ones. The saints of the New Testament are inseparably connected to the saints of the Old Testament (Heb. 11:40; Mt. 8:11).

b. The prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament were all working on the same spiritual temple made of both Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2:19-22).

7. Because the first church was build upon the revealed Scriptures of the Old Testament (Acts 6:2-7; 18:11; 28:23).

“Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.” Acts 17:11, NIV

a. The Scripture of the Old Testament is the only word that shaped the New Testament church because it was the only Bible they had.

b. Rightly dividing the Scripture of the Old Testament was essential for the success of the Early Church (II Tim. 2:15). Without adherence to the principles contained in the Old Testament, the New Testament workman will end up being “ashamed.”

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” (NIV)

Lesson 2

Introduction to the Old Testament

A. Background of the Old Testament

The term “Old Testament” is most commonly used to apply to what is known as the Hebrew Bible consisting of 39 individual books, covering the time from the creation of the world to approximately 400 years prior to the birth of Jesus Christ.

1. Authorship

While there is some debate about the authorship of some of the books, it is generally accepted that over thirty writers over a period of approximately 1200 years contributed to the content of the Old Testament as we know it today.

2. Language

Most of the Old Testament was written originally in Hebrew. A few minor portions in books like Ezra, Daniel and Jeremiah seem to have been written in Aramaic, a near language to that of Hebrew and very likely the language which Jesus spoke in the New Testament era.

The Old Testament was translated into Greek somewhere in the middle of the third century B.C. The Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament is known as the Septuagint (in reference to some 70 Jewish elders who worked on the translation). This version was in common use during the time of Jesus especially among the Jews of the dispersion.

3. Culture

The Old Testament comes to us out of a very different culture to that of the modern western experience and, therefore, can only be understood fully by understanding certain elements of early eastern culture. The culture of the Bible is a shepherding and agricultural culture. Most of the marriage customs of the Bible times are very different to our western understanding of things.

B. Division of the Books of the Old Testament

1. The Old Testament is categorized in the New Testament in various ways including:

- The Law and the Prophets (Mt. 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Lk. 16:16)
- Moses and the Prophets (Lk. 16:29-31)
- The Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (Lk. 24:44).

⁴⁴ *Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.”* Luke 24:44

- The more common way of looking at them for the purpose of study is to divide the books into five sections including The Pentateuch, Historical Books, Poetical Books, The Major Prophets and The Minor Prophets (See Chart on page 10).

C. Approximate Chronology of the Old Testament

The books of the Old Testament are not arranged in chronological order. They are arranged by category as listed above. When reading any of the books, especially the prophets, it is important to tie them together with the historical books of the same era. The following timeline will serve as a guide for the student of the Old Testament (See Chart on page 11).

D. Outline of History Covered in the Old Testament

Event(s)	Location	Historical Books
Creation	Garden of Eden	Genesis
Fall of Man	Garden of Eden	Genesis
Man Expelled from Garden	Mesopotamia	Genesis
Populating of the Earth	Widespread	Genesis
Flood of Noah	Worldwide	Genesis
Call of Abraham	Chaldea	Genesis
Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Twelve Sons	Mesopotamia (Nomadic)	Genesis
Joseph, Israel to Egypt	Egypt	Genesis
Israel in Bondage	Egypt	Exodus
Israel in Wilderness	Sinai Peninsula (Nomadic)	Exodus-Deuteronomy
Israel under Joshua	Canaan/Palestine	Joshua
Israel under Judges	Canaan/Palestine	Judges, Ruth
Israel United under Kings, Saul, David, Solomon	Canaan/Palestine	I & II Samuel, I Kings, I Chronicles
Israel Divided, Northern, Southern	Canaan/Palestine	I & II Kings, I & II Chronicles
Northern Kingdom Captive to Assyria (10 Tribes)	Assyria	II Kings, II Chronicles
Southern Kingdom Captive to Babylon (3 Tribes)	Babylon	II Kings, II Chronicles
Restoration of Judah to Land	Canaan/Palestine	Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

E. Ways to Study the Old Testament

1. Chronologically

In this format of study the books of the Old Testament are arranged in chronological order and studied in regards to their historical settings and the local prophetic context.

2. Covenantally

In this format of study the Old Testament is looked at in relation to God's nine covenants with man culminating in the New Covenant laid out for us in the New Testament.

3. Messianically

In this format of study the each book of the Old Testament is seen as a unique revelation of the Messiah who was to come. Each book is highlighted with regard to how Christ is seen in that book.

F. The Relationship of the Old Testament to the New Testament

Both the Old and New Testaments are parts of one book or one divine revelation. Genesis 1-2 gives us the creation of man apart from sin, Revelation 21-22 gives us the state of things after sin and everything in between is the unfolding of God's plan of redemption for man. It has been stated this way:

The New is in the Old concealed;
The Old is in the New revealed.

The New is in the Old contained;
The Old is in the New explained.

The New is in the Old enfolded;
The Old is in the New unfolded.

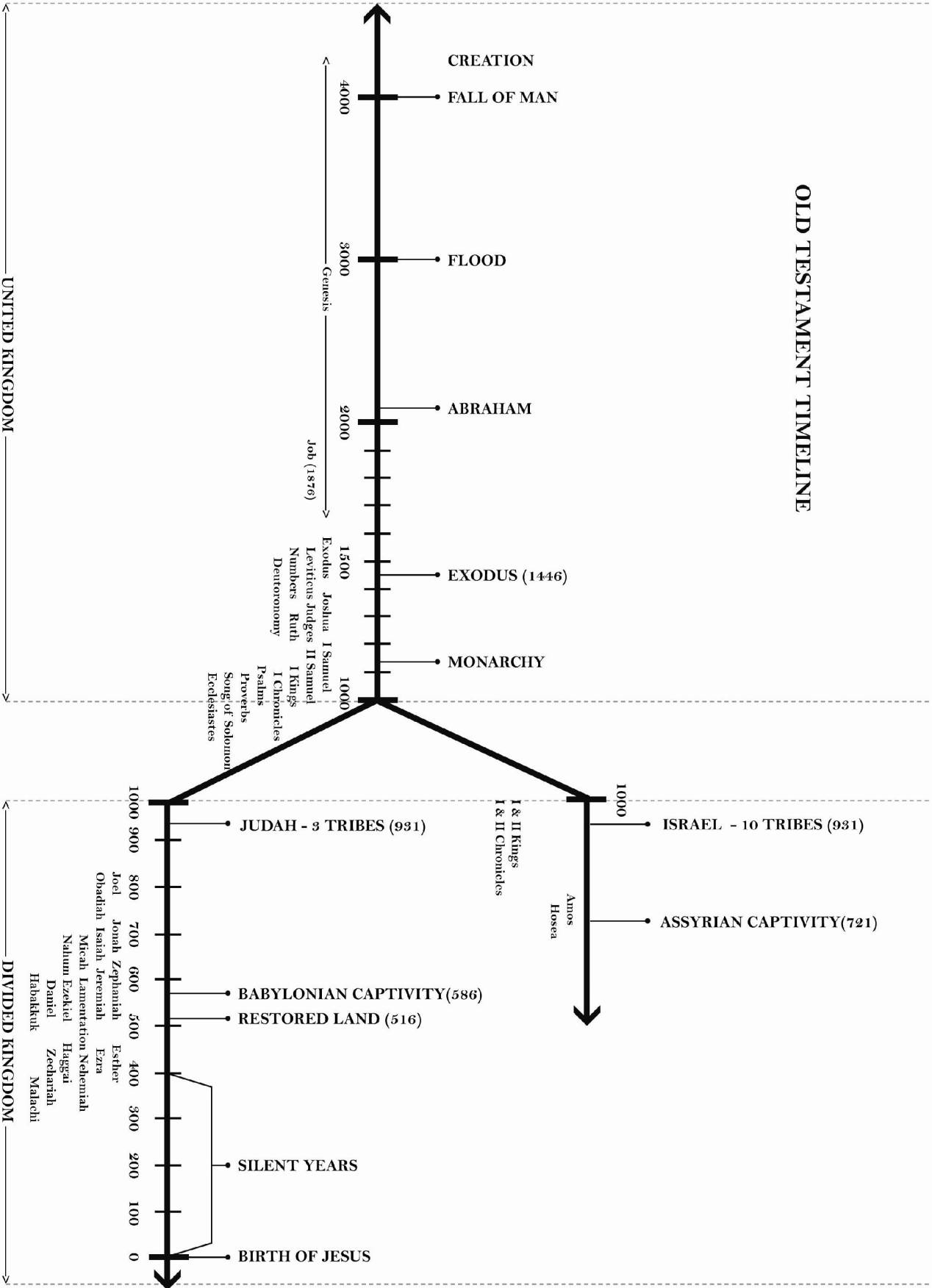
G. Our Approach to the Old Testament

In this course we will survey of all the Old Testament books, emphasizing their historic setting and thematic content. Each book will be highlighted for its relationship to Christ and to its special contribution to the rest of Scripture.

THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE LAW	HISTORY 17	PENTATEUCH 5	HISTORICAL PENTATEUCH 5	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy
		HISTORICAL BOOKS 12	PRE-EXILE HISTORY 9	Joshua Judges Ruth I Samuel II Samuel I Kings II Kings I Chronicles II Chronicles
				POST-EXILE HISTORY 3
THE PSALMS	POETRY 5	POETICAL BOOKS 5	POETRY (THE HEART) 5	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon
THE PROPHETS	PROPHECY 17	MAJOR PROPHETS 5	PROPHETICAL PENTATEUCH 5	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel
		MINOR PROPHETS 12	PRE-EXILE PROPHECY 5	Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah
				POST-EXILE PROPHECY 3

OLD TESTAMENT TIMELINE



Lesson 3-4

Genesis—The Book of Beginnings

A. What is the significance of the name “Genesis?”

1. The word “Genesis” means “beginning, origin or birth”.
2. Genesis is the *Book of Beginnings*.
 - a. The Book of Genesis marks the beginning of the universe. It lets us know that the universe had an actual beginning, that matter is not eternal and that God was the active force in creation.
 - b. The Book of Genesis details three new beginnings.
 - 1) The original creation (Gen. 1-9) that was followed by the fall of mankind, rebellion and ultimately God’s judgment in a worldwide flood.
 - 2) The new beginning with Noah and his family that was followed by the tower of Babel rebellion and ultimately God’s judgment in the confounding of languages (Gen. 10-11).
 - 3) The new beginning with Abram (Gen. 12-50) when God put His hand on a nation and set them apart as His instrument in the earth to fulfill His purposes.
 - c. Key words in the Book of Genesis include: Begat (67), Generation (21) and some form of begin or beginning (12).

3. Genesis is the Seed Plot of the Bible.

Themes that begin in Genesis are developed in the rest of the Bible only to end up in the Book of Revelation. Note the following:

- a. The Seed of the Woman becomes Christ and His Church (Rev. 12:17).
- b. The garden or paradise of God gives way to the foursquare city of God, the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10-21).
- c. The creation of the first heavens and earth give way to the creation of the new heavens and earth (Rev. 21:1).
- d. The rivers in the garden become the river of life for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:1-2).
- e. The tree of life gives way to the ultimate tree of life (Rev. 22:2, 14).
- f. The serpent introduced here is ultimately cast into the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:2-3).

B. What significant questions does the Book of Genesis answer?

The Book of Genesis answers many of the questions that have plagued philosophers throughout the ages.

1. What is the source of the universe?
2. Is there a God in heaven?
3. Where did the seven day week come from?
4. Where did men and woman come from?
5. What is the purpose of man's existence?
6. What is the origin of marriage in humans?
7. What is the difference between animals and man?
8. How did sin enter the human race?
9. What is the source of all of the various languages in the world today?
10. Is there a real devil and how does he work?
11. What is the origin of the Hebrew race?
12. How did the children of Israel get into Egypt?

C. What is a simple outline of the Book of Genesis?

1. Four Predominant Events (Genesis 1-11)

- a. The Creation (Genesis 1-2)
- b. The Fall (Genesis 3-5)
- c. The Flood (Genesis 6-9)
- d. The Babel Crisis (Genesis 10-11)

2. Four Predominant Persons (Genesis 12-50)

- a. Abraham (Genesis 12-25)
- b. Isaac (Genesis 25-26)
- c. Jacob (Genesis 27-36)
- d. Joseph (Genesis 37-50)

D. Who wrote the Book of Genesis?

There is very little debate among conservative theologians that Moses was the author of this book. All Jewish literature attributes the writing to Moses. The New Testament and the early church fathers confirm this same conclusion (Lk. 24:44).

E. What is the date of the writing?

Most scholars would place the writing of the Book of Genesis around 1400 B.C. most likely during the wilderness wanderings when God instructed Moses to write things down in book form (Ex. 17:14; 24:4; 34:27). Moses covers at least 2400 years of human history from the sin of Adam to the death of Joseph.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua..." Exodus 17:14a

F. How could Moses write this book when he was not alive at the time of the events recorded in this book?

There are two possible sources from which Moses got his understanding of the events described in the Book of Genesis.

1. From oral tradition. It was not uncommon in those days, due to the lack of developed writing skills, to pass down oral tradition from generation to generation through the use of storytelling. Moses was educated in the best that the world had to offer while in Pharaoh's house which made him a good candidate for writing.
2. From God himself. It is clear in Moses case that he had some direct input from God, Who was indeed there when these events occurred (Acts 7:37-38).

“This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.’ “This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected.

G. What is the key verse in the book of Genesis?

The key verse in the Book of Genesis is Genesis 3:15. Actually, this is the key verse of the entire Bible.

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

H. How do we see the struggle between the Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent in Genesis?

From the fall of Adam and Eve into sin and the promise given to them by God of the Seed of the Woman Who would crush the seed of the serpent, there was a struggle between the two seeds right up to the coming of Messiah. This struggle continues until the Second Coming of Christ when Satan will be dealt with permanently. In the Book of Genesis, this struggle is seen in the following ways:

1. The struggle was foretold by God Himself (Gen. 3:15).
2. Satan seeks to destroy the first offspring of Eve by entering the heart of Cain who kills his brother Abel (Gen. 4).
3. Eve brings forth another son named Seth (appointed) who becomes the promise bearer (Gen. 4:25-26).

*She bore a son and named him Seth, “For God has appointed **another seed** for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.”*

4. The line of Cain produces an anti-Christ progeny.

5. The line of Seth produces a godly line leading to Noah.
6. Satan seeks to corrupt the whole human race seen in the ungodliness of Noah's day (Gen. 6:1-7).
7. God destroys the seed of the serpent in the flood and preserves the godly seed through Noah (Gen. 6:8-9).
8. Noah gets off of the ark with his family including three sons—Shem, Ham and Japheth (Gen. 9:18-19).
9. Ham sins against his father and becomes an instrument of Satan to perpetuate the seed of the serpent (father of anti-Christ nations), culminating in Nimrod—the father of Babylon (Gen. 10:8-10).
10. God thwarts Satan's design by judging Nimrod's kingdom and confounding the languages at Babel (Gen. 11:4-9).
11. The seed line of Shem continues through to Abram who God called out to be His covenant partner in the earth (Gen. 11:10-32; 12:1-3).
12. Abraham now becomes the channel through the Messiah is to come. Notice the promises to Abraham and his seed (Gen. 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:5-6; 17:4-8; 22:15-18).
Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Genesis 12:1-3
13. The promises given to Abraham extend to Isaac and his seed (Gen. 24:60; 26:2-4).
14. Isaac has two sons, Jacob and Esau. Esau is the firstborn and rightful heir to the promise, but because he despised his birthright the promises passed to Jacob (Gen. 25:29-34; 28:13-14).
15. From Jacob the promise of the Seed of the Woman extended to his son Judah (Gen. 49:8-10; 38:8-9).

I. What covenants with man were established by God in the Book of Genesis?

Four of the nine great covenants that God established with man were set forth in the Book of Genesis.

1. The Edenic Covenant (Gen. 1).
2. The Adamic Covenant (Gen 3).
3. The Noahic Covenant (Gen. 9).
4. The Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12-15).

J. How is Christ seen in the Book of Genesis?

In Genesis Christ is seen in the following:

1. The Tree of Life. When you partake of Him you will live forever (Gen. 2:9; John 6:54).

Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

2. Adam. Christ was the new Adam and the head of a new race call the New Creation in Christ Jesus (Rom. 5:14; I Cor. 15:45; II Cor. 5:17). We are all born in Adam. We are reborn in Christ. All people find themselves in either Adam (old creation) or in Christ (new creation).

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. Romans 5:14

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. II Corinthians 5:17

3. The Seed of the Woman. Christ fulfilled the prophecy of the Seed of the Woman when He was born of a virgin by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:22-23; Lk. 1:35).

So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

Matthew 1:22-23

4. The Coats of Skin. Jesus and His shed blood became our covering so that we could stand before God clothed in His righteousness and escape judgment (Gen. 3:21; Rom. 5:12-21).
5. Isaac. Isaac was the only begotten son of the Old Testament who was symbolically offered up by the exalted father as a sacrifice to God and symbolically raised again to life (Heb. 11:17-19; Jn. 3:16; I Jn. 4:9).

But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.

Romans 9:6-9

6. The Lamb in the Thicket. When the child of Abraham was slated to die, a ram (male lamb) caught in the thicket was found to take his place. When we as the children of Abraham were destined to die for our sins, the Lamb of God, crowned with thorns, stepped in to take our place (Gen. 22:13).

Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-

Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, “In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided.” Genesis 22:13

7. The Curse Bearer. As a result of sin, a curse came on the earth (Gen. 3:14-19). Jesus became a curse for us and in effect reversed the curse (Gal. 3:13-14).

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Galatians 3:13-14

Notice the following:

The Curse	Christ’s Relationship to the Curse
Ground Cursed	Christ became a curse (Gal. 3:13).
Eat in Sorrow	Christ was a man of sorrows (Is. 53:3).
Thorns & Thistles	Christ was crowned with thorns (Jn. 18:8).
Sweat	Christ sweat drops of blood (Lk. 22:44).
Return to Dust	Christ brought to dust of death (Ps. 22:15).
Flaming Sword	Christ was pierced with a sword (Zech. 13:7).
Man to Die	Christ tasted death for every man (Jn. 18:14).
Cut off from Tree of Life	Christ is the tree of Life (Jn. 6:47-58; 14:6).

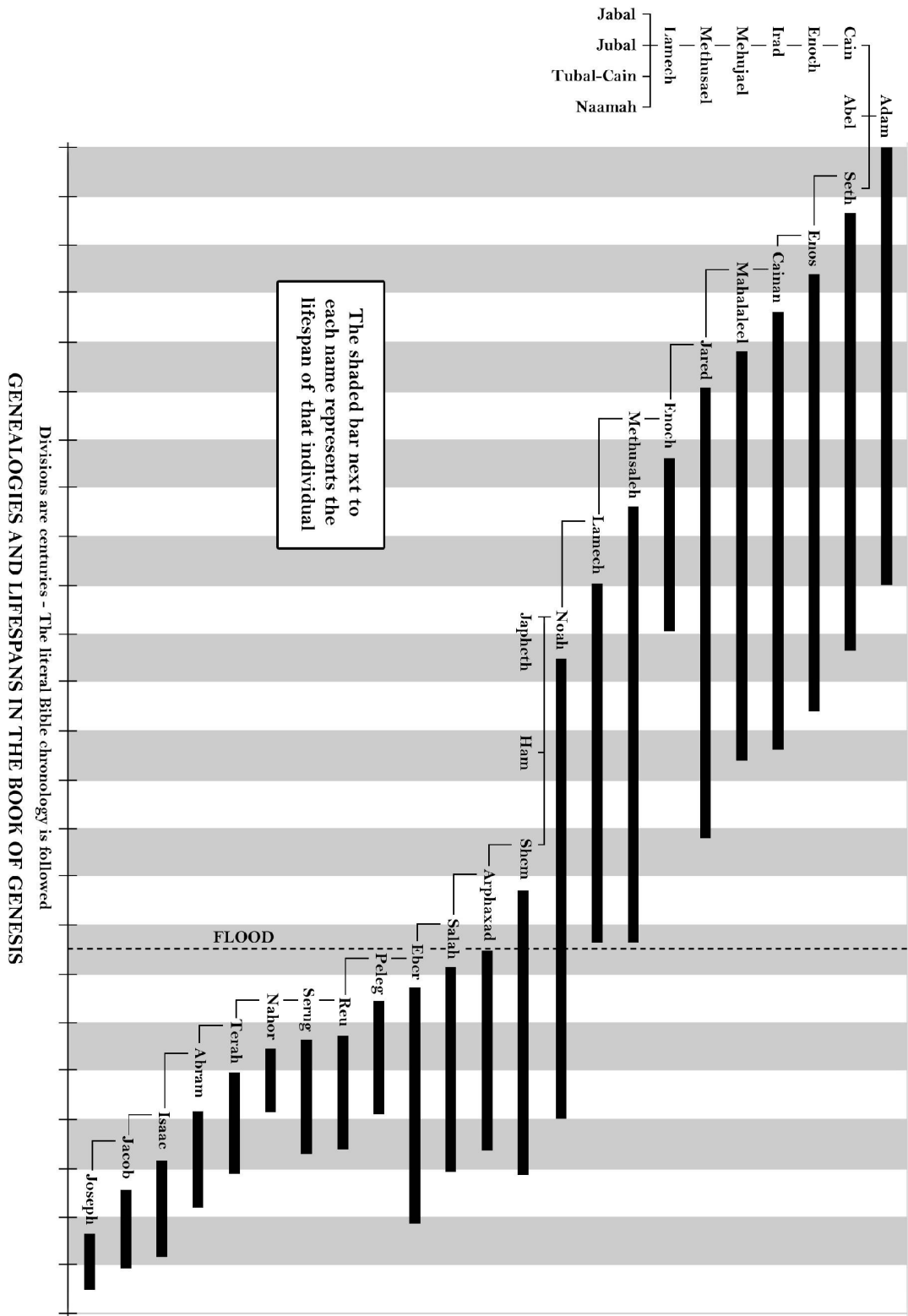
8. The Ark of Salvation. When man was destined for destruction, God provided a place of salvation. The only way into God’s provision was through the door. Jesus is the door. When we enter in through Him we are saved from judgment.
9. Jacob’s Ladder. Jacob’s ladder formed a bridge or a point of access from heaven to earth (Gen. 28:12). Jesus is our bride and point of access to the Father (John 1:51).

And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

10. Joseph. Joseph is perhaps the fullest type of Christ in the Old Testament. A complete study will find over 100 comparisons between Joseph and Christ from being the beloved son of the father (Gen. 37:3; Matt. 3:17); to his rejection by his brethren and being sold out for silver (Gen. 37:4, 27-28; John 15:24; Matt. 27:9), to his being exalted in power to become the savior of the world.

K. What does the Genesis family tree look like?

Note the following chart:



Lesson 5

The Book of Exodus—The Book of Redemption

A. What is the significance of the name “Exodus?”

1. The word “Exodus,” which comes from the name given this book in the Septuagint means “the going out” or “departure.”
2. The Book of Exodus, sometimes called “The Second Book of Moses,” records for us the going out or the departing of the Children of Israel from Egypt under the leadership of Moses.
3. The Book of Exodus begins with the Children of Israel in a coffin in Egypt (Gen. 50:26) and it concludes with the manifest presence of God descending among His people at the dedication of the Tabernacle of Moses (Ex. 40:34-38; Lev. 9:23-24).

B. What key events took place in the Book of Exodus?

1. The persecution of the Children of Israel (Ex. 1)
2. The preservation and development of Moses (Ex. 2)
3. The commissioning of Moses as deliverer (Ex. 3-4)
4. God reveals Himself as the “I AM” to Moses (Ex. 3)
5. The ten plagues of judgment on the gods of Egypt (Ex. 7-12)
6. The coming out of the nation of Israel from Egyptian bondage (Ex. 12-15)
7. The giving of the Ten Commandments and the establishing of the Mosaic Covenant (Ex. 19-33)
8. The supernatural guidance of Israel in the pillar of cloud and fire (Ex. 13:21-22)
9. The building of the Tabernacle of Moses according to God’s command and pattern (Ex. 25-40)
10. The Tabernacle filled with the glory of God (Ex. 40:34-38).

C. What is a simple outline of the Book of Exodus?

1. The Need for Redemption—The People Enslaved (Ex. 1-6)
2. The Strength of the Redeemer—The Plagues on Egypt (Ex. 7-12)
3. The Nature of Redemption—Purchased by Blood (Ex. 12-18)
4. The Relationship of the Redeemed—A Covenant of Obedience with the Lord (Ex. 19-24)
5. Provision Made for Man’s Failure—The Tabernacle of the Meeting (Ex. 25-40)

D. Who wrote the Book of Exodus?

There is very little debate among conservative theologians that Moses was the author of this book. All Jewish literature attributes the writing to Moses. The New Testament and the early church fathers confirm this same conclusion (Lk. 24:44).

E. What is the date of the writing?

1. Unlike Genesis, the date of the writing would correspond to the material that is covered in the book. For this reason the date of the writing is usually placed sometime between 1440 and 1400 B.C.
2. The Book of Exodus covers a period of approximately 215 years from the going of Jacob's family to Egypt to the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai.

F. What is the key verse of the Book of Exodus?

While a number of important verses could be selected as the key verse including Exodus 3:8 or Exodus 19:5-6 (See Text), the verse we will use is Exodus 15:13 which summarizes the content of the entire book.

“You in Your mercy have led forth the people whom You have redeemed; You have guided them in Your strength to Your holy habitation.

G. What are the key miracles recorded in Exodus that reveal God's commitment to the deliverance of His people?

The Book of Exodus records the following signs, wonders and miracles that demonstrate the power of the Lord being instrumental in bringing deliverance to His people. They demonstrate that we cannot affect our own deliverance. They demonstrate God's mercy, grace and strength toward the redeemed.

1. The Burning Bush (Ex. 3:2)
2. The Rod into a Serpent (Ex. 4:3-5)
3. The Leprous Hand (Ex. 4:6-7)
4. The Ten Plagues (Ex. 7-12)
5. The Dividing of the Red Sea (Ex. 14)
6. The Pillar of Cloud and Fire (Ex. 14:19-20)
7. The Bitter Water Made Sweet (Ex. 15:23-25)
8. The Morning Manna (Ex. 16)
9. The Evening Quail (Ex. 16:12-13)
10. The Water from a Rock (Ex. 17:1-7)
11. The Upheld Rod of God (Ex. 17:8-13)
12. The Tables of Stone—Twice (Ex. 31:18; 32:16 and Ex. 34:1, 27-28).
13. The Manifest Glory of God (Ex. 40:34-38)

H. How do we see the struggle between the Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent in Exodus?

The Book of Exodus continues the struggle initiated in Genesis 3:15 in the following ways.

1. The Seed of the Woman enters into Egypt (Gen. 46:1-7).
2. The Seed of the Woman multiplies in Egypt (Ex. 1:7, 12, 20).
3. The Seed of the Woman is attacked by the seed of the serpent through Pharaoh (Ex. 1:22).
4. Moses is miraculously saved to be a deliverer of the God's people (Ex. 2:1-10).
5. God delivers His Seed from Egyptian bondage (Ex. 12:33-36).
6. God preserves the Seed in the wilderness with manna from heaven (Ex. 16:15; water from a rock (Ex. 17:6) and clothes that did not grow old (Neh. 9:20-21).
7. The seed of the serpent tries to use Amalek to destroy the Seed (Ex. 17:8).
8. God gives the law to His people as a hedge to preserve the Seed (Ex. 20 with Gal. 3:24).

I. How is Christ seen in the Book of Exodus?

In Exodus Christ is seen in the following ways:

1. Moses. Moses is a type of Christ, our Deliverer (Heb. 3:1-6; I Cor. 10:1-3).
2. Aaron. Aaron is a type of Christ, our Great High Priest (Heb. 5:1-11).
3. The Passover Lamb. Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. When we eat of Him spiritually, we find safety, protection and deliverance from all that would seek to destroy us (I Cor. 5:7).
4. The Manna from Heaven. Christ is the bread of life who gives us strength for our wilderness wandering and eternal life (John 6:31-51).
5. The Smitten Rock. Paul clearly tells us that the Rock that followed the children of Israel was Christ (I Cor. 10: 4). Jesus is not only the Bread of Life but He is also the Water of Life (John 4:10-14). As the Rock of our salvation He was only to be smitten once (Num. 20:7-13).

J. How does the experience of the Children of Israel parallel the experience of New Testament believers?

Paul indicates in I Corinthians 10 that what happened to Israel in the natural happens to us in the spiritual.

“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.”

NATURAL ISRAEL	SPIRITUAL ISRAEL
Under bondage to Pharaoh	Under bondage to sin/Satan
God provided a deliverer—Moses	God provided a Deliverer—Jesus
Experienced the Passover lamb	Christ becomes our Passover Lamb
Passed through the waters of separation	Passed through the waters of baptism
Baptized into the cloud	Baptized in the Holy Spirit
Old master was buried in the sea	Old man was buried in baptism
Rose from the water to new life	Rise from baptism to newness of life
God declares them His priests (Ex. 19:5-6)	God declares us His priests (I Pet. 2:9-10)

Lesson 6

Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

A. What is the significance of the names of the remaining Books of Moses?

1. Leviticus

- a. The word “Leviticus” means “pertaining to Levites.”

The Levites were a tribe of Israel who were set apart for the service of the house of God. God took this tribe to function in the stead of the firstborn sons of Israel who were to be dedicated to the Lord (Num. 3:5-13, 40-51). They were supported by the tithes and received no tribal inheritance of land in the Promised Land. Instead they were given a salary and distributed throughout the land in 48 cities of refuge to provide ministry to all of the tribes.

- b. The Book of Leviticus describes most of the ceremonial law for which the Priest and Levites were primarily responsible (Note: All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests. In order to be a priest you had to be of the family of Aaron).
- c. The Levites were divided into three groups, named after the three sons of Levi, each having their own duties (Num. 3:17):
- The Gershonites camped immediately to the West of the Tabernacle (Num. 3:23) and were responsible for carrying the Tabernacle materials including the tent, the coverings, the curtains and such when Israel was in transit (Num. 3:25-26; 4:25-26).
 - The Kohathites camped on the South side of the Tabernacle (Num. 3:29) for responsible for the furniture in the Tabernacle including the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the veil and the vessels (Num. 3:31). They were the ones who were to carry the ark on their shoulders in transit.
 - The Merarites camped on the North side of the Tabernacle (Num. 3:35) and were responsible to carry the bars, pillars, bases and accessories of the Tabernacle (Num. 3:36-37; 4:31-33).

2. Numbers

- a. The word “Numbers” means “numbers”.
- b. The book of Numbers is very significant because the book deals with two numberings of the Children of Israel between which the generation who rejected the land died off.
- The first numbering occurred at Sinai and is associated with their coming out of Egypt (Num. 1).

- The second numbering occurred in Moab some 40 years later as they prepare to go into the Promised Land (Num. 26).
 - By comparing the two numberings one can discover the overall changes in the tribes during the forty years of wandering.
- c. The original Hebrew title for the book was “In the wilderness” which we will see could be a more appropriate title because it reflects Israel in a natural and spiritual wilderness. It is a book of wilderness wanderings.

3. Deuteronomy

- a. The name “Deuteronomy” literally means “second law.”
- b. It could perhaps be called the “Book of Second Chances.”
- c. It reflects the fact that each generation must be schooled in the principles of God first hand.
- d. It is worthy of note that Christ quoted from this book more than any other book (Deut. 6:13, 16; 8:3; 10:20).

B. What is the significant contribution of each of these books to our understanding of redemptive history?

1. Leviticus

Leviticus focuses on ceremonial laws of clean and unclean, the priesthood, the offerings and the three major feasts that God commanded of His people. All of these can only be appreciated as they are studied in relation to their prophetic significance relative to Christ and the Church.

a. The Offerings (Chapters 1-7)

The five offerings all point in some way to Christ and the Eternal Sacrifice that He became for us.

- The Burnt Offering (Chapter 1; 6:8-13)

This was a voluntary offering in which the entire animal was burned, symbolizing Christ’s complete consecration to the will of God (Heb. 10:5-10).

Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.”⁶ In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.⁷ Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.’ ”⁸ Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law),⁹ then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O

God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second. ¹⁰By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

- The Grain or Meal Offering (Chapter 2; 6:14-23)

This was a voluntary, first fruits offering of unleavened flour crushed fine and offered with frankincense symbolizing Christ’s perfect, sinless life that was bruised for us and became a sweet smelling aroma before the Father (John 6:50-51).

This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

- The Peace Offering (Chapter 3; 7:11-21)

This was a voluntary offering in which part of the sacrificial animal was eaten by the priest and the one who brought the sacrifice. This speaks of fellowship between God and man that has been restored through the sacrifice of Christ (Col. 1:19-22).

For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. ²¹And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled ²²in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.

- The Sin Offering (Chapter 4; 6:24-30)

This was a compulsory offering that was to be offered for sins of ignorance that were committed inadvertently. Jesus became sin for us on the altar of the cross (John 1:29).

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

- The Trespass Offering (Chapter 5; 7:1-10)

This was a compulsory offering that we to be offered for sins of infringement on the rights of others. Restitution to the offended party was to be included as part of this offering. Christ made restitution to the Father (the offended party) when we violated our covenant with God (Col. 2:13-15; Heb. 9:11-15).

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the

cross. ¹⁵Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. Colossians 2:13-15

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹²Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? ¹⁵And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Hebrews 9:11-15

b. The Priesthood (Chapters 8-10; 21:1-22:10)

This section highlights the importance of the consecration of the priests and points first of all to Christ our Great High Priest, but also to the New Testament believer who is a priest before the Lord (I Pet. 2:5).

You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

c. The Feasts and Seasons (Chapters 11-27)

- The Passover

Passover is prophetic of Christ our Passover Lamb who was slain for us to deliver us from bondage (I Cor. 5:7).

Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

- Pentecost

Pentecost is prophetic of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on this day in the New Testament when the first fruits of the harvest were brought in (Acts 2:1-2).

*When the Day of Pentecost had fully come [lit. “**was being fulfilled**”, NAS), they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.*

- Tabernacles

The Feast of Tabernacles is prophetic of events surrounding the Second Coming of Christ when the eternal purpose of God nears completion.

2. Numbers

While the book of numbers deals with a few other events such as the ordering of the camp, the celebration of the second Passover and the dedication of the Tabernacle of Moses, most of the book deals with 38 years of wandering through the wilderness waiting for the first generation to die off as a result of the negative report of the ten spies (Num. 13-14).

And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ²⁷ “How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. ²⁸ Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the LORD, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: ²⁹ The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. ³⁰ Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which swore I would make you dwell in. ³¹ But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. ³² But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. ³³ And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. ³⁴ According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. ³⁵ I the LORD have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.’ ” ³⁶ Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, ³⁷ those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the LORD. ³⁸ But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land. Numbers 14:26-38

The significant contribution of this book to our understanding of redemptive history is that in spite of man’s failure, lack of faith and rebellion, God does not forsake His creation (He still led them with the pillar of fire and the cloud. He still fed them and provided for their needs—Deuteronomy 2:7). Even though the plan of God can be prolonged by man’s weakness, because of God’s strength, it will ultimately succeed. God will have a generation of faith that will enter into the land of promise.

Key events include:

- The rebellion of Aaron and Miriam (Num. 12,)
- The evil report of the 10 spies (Num. 13-14)
- Seven murmurings of the people (throughout book).
- Moses’ smiting of the rock (Num. 20:1-13)
- The death of Aaron (Num. 20:22-29)
- The Bronze Serpent (Num. 21:4ff.)

- The Talking Donkey (Num. 22:22ff.)
- Joshua named as Moses' successor (Num. 27:12ff.)
- Guidelines for entering the land (Num. 33-35)

3. Deuteronomy

The Book of Deuteronomy chronicles the second giving of the law for the new generation of those who will go into the Promised Land.

It is a book of transition. Note the following transitions in Deuteronomy:

- Transition to a new generation
- Transition to a new leader—Joshua
- Transition to a new possession
- Transition to a new lifestyle (no longer tent dwellers)
- Transition to a new revelation of the love of God.

Note: Deuteronomy gives us the first actual references to God declaring His love to His people (Deut. 4:37; 7:8, 13; 10:15; 23:5). It is interesting that in the middle of a book when God had every right to reject His people, He reassures His people and confirms His love.

*“For ask now concerning the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether any great thing like this has happened, or anything like it has been heard.³³ Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live?³⁴ Or did God ever try to go and take for Himself a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?³⁵ To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself is God; there is none other besides Him.³⁶ Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, that He might instruct you; on earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire.³⁷ **And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power,³⁸ driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land as an inheritance, as it is this day.³⁹ Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.⁴⁰ You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time.”** Deuteronomy 4:32-40*

*“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.⁷ The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples;⁸ **but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your***

fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.⁹ “Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;¹⁰ and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face.¹¹ Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them. Deuteronomy 7:6-11

C. Who wrote these three books?

While many theories are put forth regarding the origin of much of the material in these books, we choose to accept the words of Jesus in ascribing the actual writing to Moses (Lk. 24:44). The last portion of Deuteronomy covering the death of Moses was most likely written by his successor, Joshua.

D. Why did God give them all of these regulations?

1. Israel was called to be God’s instrument in the earth to mediate His purposes to the rest of the world (Ex. 19:5-6; Acts 7:38).

And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel:⁴ ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.⁶ And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.” Exodus 19:3-6

2. Because God’s people struggled to keep the essence of the law (Deut. 10:12-22) God placed a hedge around them so that they would be able to preserve the godly line unto the coming of Christ—the Seed of the Woman (Gal. 3:19).

Read: Deuteronomy 10:12-22

What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.²⁰ Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.

²¹Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.²² But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.²³ But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

²⁴Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. Galatians 3:21-25

3. God gave them external laws until the institution of the New Covenant when the law of God would be written on their hearts through the atoning work of Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:24; Heb. 8:8-12; 10:16).

¹⁶ *“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them”*

Hebrews 10:16

4. God called Israel to be a people separated for His purposes (Note: This is the same call given to the New Testament church today).

God set them apart from the rest of the world in five main areas:

- In their geographical location
- In their worship
- In their diet
- In their dress
- In their marital laws

E. How do we see the conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent in these books?

The books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy cover a period of approximately 40 years. In that time period we see Satan trying to destroy the people of God from within and without. He inspired enemy kings to seek to destroy them (e.g. Sihon, Og, Balak and Balaam) and he inspired members of the Israelite community to murmur against God’s declared purpose (rebellion, discontent, presumption).

Through it all God miraculously preserved His people and placed the hedge of the law around them so that they would remain unpolluted unto the coming of the Messiah thus preserving the Seed of the Woman as well.

Lesson 7

Joshua—The Book of Conquest

A. Introduction to the Historical Books

Joshua is the first book that is not part of the first five Books of Moses, sometimes referred to as the Torah or the Pentateuch. It is the first of the historical books in the Old Testament of which there are twelve. The following chart will help to visualize the relationship of the historical books to each other.

Book	Dates Covered	World Kingdom	Events Covered
Joshua	1405-1390	Canaanites	The death of Moses to the death of Joshua
Judges	1390-1045	Canaanites	The death of Joshua to the death of Samson and civil war with Benjamin
Ruth	1100-1089	Canaanites	A cameo story of Ruth who finds refuge with Boaz
I Samuel	1105-1011	Assyria	The birth of Samuel to the death of Saul
II Samuel	1011-971	Assyria	David's ascendancy to the throne to the end of David's rule.
I Kings	971-851	Assyria	The beginning of Solomon's reign to King Ahaziah's death
II Kings	853-722	Assyria	King Ahaziah to the fall of Samaria to Assyria
I Chronicles	1011-971	Babylon	The reign of David to the anointing of Solomon
II Chronicles	971-576	Babylon	Solomon's reign to the fall of Judah and Cyrus' decree to rebuild
Ezra	538-457	Medo-Persia	The first return to Jerusalem through the second return.
Nehemiah	444-425	Medo-Persia	Nehemiah commissioned to build the wall to the dedication of wall.
Esther	483-471	Medo-Persia	A cameo picture of how God saved a nation through His providence

B. What do we know about Joshua?

1. He was the son of Nun of the tribe of Ephraim (Num. 13:8).
2. His name was changed from Hosea (salvation) to Joshua (Jehovah is salvation) by Moses (Num. 13:16).
3. He was a warrior who fought on Moses' behalf against Amalek (Ex. 17:8-16).
4. He was not involved in idol worship (Ex. 32:17).
5. He was faithful to Moses and to the Lord (Ex. 33:11).

Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp. ⁸So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, that all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle. ⁹And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses. ¹⁰All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man in his tent door. ¹¹So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

Exodus 33:7-11

6. He was one of the twelve spies that went into the land (Num. 13:8).
7. He was a man of faith (Num. 14:6, 30, 38).
8. He was a man of the Spirit (Num. 27:18-22).
9. He was God's choice to replace Moses (Num. 34:17).
10. He was accepted as God's choice by the people (Deut. 34:9).

Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses. Deuteronomy 34:9

C. How did Joshua compare to Moses?

Note the following comparison between Moses and Joshua:

MOSES	JOSHUA
Divinely Chosen	Divinely Chosen
Led Israel out of Egypt	Led Israel into Canaan
Crossed the Red Sea	Crossed the Jordan
Led People from Bondage	Led People from Wilderness
Prophesied of Inheritance	Led them into Inheritance
Old Generation Dies	New Generation Enters
Begins the Process	Completes the Process
Gives Farewell Address in Moab (Deut. 31:30-33:29)	Gives Farewell Address in Shechem (Josh. 18:23-24:28)

D. How do the Books of the Pentateuch prepare for the Book of Joshua?

1. Genesis gives us the Promise of the Land.
2. Exodus gives us the Leaving for the Land.
3. Leviticus gives us Laws for Living in the Land.

4. Numbers gives us Wanderings Outside of the Land.
5. Deuteronomy gives us Preparation for Receiving the Land.

(The above from *Old Testament Survey* by Conner and Malmin)

Note the previous promises of God concerning the land:

- To Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:18)
- To Isaac (Genesis 22:26)
- To Jacob (Genesis 28:32)
- To All of Israel (Exodus 23:31; Numbers 34:1-15)
- To Joshua and the New Generation (Joshua 1:4)

Read Joshua 1:1-9

E. What is a simple outline of the Book of Joshua?

1. The Entrance into the Promised Land (Joshua 1-4).
2. The Preparation for Conquest of the Land (Joshua 5).
3. The Conquest of the Land (Joshua 6-13:7).
4. The Division of the Land (Joshua 13:7-22).
5. The Joshua's Farewell and Conditions for Continued Possession (Joshua 23- 24).

F. What is the main theme of the Book of Joshua?

The main theme in the Book of Joshua is Conquest. It presents to us the natural process of possessing God's promised inheritance. It should be noted that there is a difference between "inheritance" and "possession."

1. Inheritance is "that which is given by promise to one's heirs" (Josh. 11:23). It is that over which someone has legal right.
2. Possession is "that part which is actually claimed or appropriated. In this case that part which was actually taken by force, if necessary, and occupied (Josh. 21:43-45).

So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass. Joshua 21:43-45

3. God has promised us an inheritance in Christ, but we must possess that inheritance, because there a spiritual enemy who will contest it.

G. How did they position themselves for conquest in the Book of Joshua?

If the Children of Israel were to possess their inheritance three things needed to be in order.

1. They had to possess their inheritance in proper relationship to the Lord. This involved three things:
 - Celebration of Passover (5:10-11)
 - Circumcision of the New Generation (5:1-5)
 - The Ark of the Covenant (Presence of the Lord) Leading the Way (3:11)
2. They had to possess their inheritance in proper relationship to each other. They came out harnessed, by ranks of five, in battle array with everyone in their place (Ex. 13:18 with Joshua 1:14).
3. They had to possess their inheritance in proper relationship to the leadership. God's chain of command was the same as it had been with Moses.
 - God spoke to Joshua (1:1; 5:13-15).
 - Joshua spoke to the officers of the people (1:10).
 - The officers spoke to the people (1:11).

H. What were the main events covered in the Book of Joshua?

1. God commissions Joshua and gives him orders to cross Jordan (1:1-18).
2. Joshua sends spies into Jericho who are preserved by Rahab (2:1-24).
3. Israel crosses over Jordan (3:1-17).
4. Israel sets up twelve memorial stones from the Jordan (4:1-24).
5. The second generation is circumcised (5:1-2).
6. Joshua encounters the Commander of the Lord's army (5:13-15).
7. Jericho is taken (6:1-26).
8. Achan sins and Israel fails at Ai (7:1-26).
9. Israel takes Ai and covenant is reestablished (8:1-35).
10. The land of Canaan is generally subdued (9-13:7)
11. The land is divided and allotted to the various tribes (13:8-19:51).
12. The cities of refuge and the cities of the Levites are set up (20-21).

Note: Six **cities of refuge** were set up, three on either side of the Jordan to provide sanctuary for people who may have killed someone by accident. They needed protection from the "avenger of blood," a near relative who would have considered it

his duty to avenge the death of his kin. A judge would determine if such refuge was appropriate in such a case.

13. Joshua gives his farewell address and reaffirms the covenant (22-24:28).

I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.'

"Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! ¹⁵ And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Joshua 24:13-15

14. Joshua and Eleazar the priest die (24:29-33).

I. Were there any failures on the Book of Joshua?

The book of Joshua is a book with some high and some lows.

1. Some of the highs (reflecting God's faithfulness) include:

- a. The miraculous opening of the Jordan river (Josh. 3:1-17)
- b. Rahab gets out of Canaan and into the godly line (Josh. 18-21; Matt. 1:5)
- c. The miraculous collapse of the walls of Jericho (Josh. 6:1-27)
- d. God fought for Israel with hailstones from heaven (Josh. 10:11)
- e. The miraculous standing still of the sun (Josh. 10:1-15)
- f. Caleb receives his mountain and kills his giants (Josh. 14:6-15; 15:13-19)
- g. The Tabernacle was set up in Shiloh (Josh. 18:1).
- h. God fulfilled His promises to them (Josh. 21:45; 23:14).

2. Some of the lows (reflecting man's weakness) include:

- a. Israel failed on their first attempt to take Ai because they presumed and underestimated the enemy (Josh. 7:2-5). Lesson: Presumption leads to failure. Self-confidence spells defeat.
- b. Achan disobeyed and caused the rest of Israel to suffer (Josh. 7:1, 10-12). Lesson: Disobedience always brings disaster.
- c. Israel only experienced incomplete victory by leaving some strongholds in tact (Josh. 15:63; 16:10; 17:12-13; 23:9-13). Lesson: Incomplete victory eventually brings a snare (See also: Ex. 23:33; 34:12; Deut. 7:16).

For the LORD has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but as for you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day. ¹⁰One man of you shall

chase a thousand, for the LORD your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you. ¹¹Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God. ¹²Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations—these that remain among you—and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, ¹³know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you. Joshua 23:9-13

Lesson 7

Judges—The Book of Failure through Compromise

A. What is the setting for the Book of Judges?

1. The Children of Israel were now living in the Land of Promise.
2. Joshua had died; all of the elders who served with Joshua had died; and all of the generation of those who had entered Canaan had died (Judges 2:7-10).

So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel. ⁸Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died when he was one hundred and ten years old. ⁹And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. ¹⁰When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel. Judges 2:7-10

3. The new generation must now live in the land in right relationship to the Lord. Each generation needs to have its own experience of the Lord. It is the responsibility of the previous generation to pass truth on to the next generation. We need to have the spirit of Abraham (Gen. 18:17-19).

Then the LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? ¹⁸Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. ¹⁹For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”

Genesis 18:17-19 NIV

It should be noted that the Book of Judges is not in perfect chronological order and at times can be confusing as a result. The correct order would be to start with Judges 2:6-9, back to chapter 1, then 2:10-13, then chapter 17-21, then 2:14-16:31.

B. Why is this book called the Book of Failure through Compromise?

Whereas the Book of Joshua was a book of conquest and victory, the Book of Judges is a book of incomplete obedience, compromise and repeated failures.

1. The book begins reminding us where Joshua left off giving us a record of incomplete conquest (Judges 1:19, 21, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33).
2. It further reminds us that Israel made covenants of peace with the enemy against God’s clear commands (Judges 2:1-6).

Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: “I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you. ²And you shall make no covenant with the

inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.’ But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? ³Therefore I also said, ‘I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.’ ” ⁴So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept. Judges 2:1-4

3. Because they left some foreign worshippers in place, it eventually became a snare to them and they worshipped idols (Judges 2:3 with 2:11-13).
4. Because of their failure to honor God and worship Him alone, God allowed them to reap the fruit of their ways by no longer defending them from the enemy nations (Judges 2:14-15).
5. Israel compromised in several ways by:
 - Not totally bringing their enemies under their dominion
 - Entering into covenants or leagues with the enemies (Judges 2:2)
 - Intermarrying with the alien nations (Judges 3:6)
 - Worshipping the false gods/idols of their enemies (Judges 2:13)
6. The Book of Judges closes in a state of anarchy with everyone doing what is right in their own eyes (Judges 17:6; 18:10; 21:25).

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Judges 21:25

C. What is the repeated cycle in the Book of Judges?

A summary of the book is found in Judges 2:13-23 (Read). It reflects the fivefold cycle that occurred at least seven times in the 400 years of the Book of Judges.

1. Israel sinned and departed from the Lord (Judges 2:11; 3:7; 4:1; 6:1, 7-8; 10:6-10; 13:1). The key phrase in all of these verses is “They did evil in the sight of the Lord.”
2. God allowed Israel to be judged by an enemy nation and they enter a period of servitude (Judges 2:14-15; 3:8, 12; 4:1-3; 6:1; 6:7-8; 10:6-10; 13:1).
3. Israel acknowledged their sin and cried out to the Lord for deliverance (Judges 3:9, 15; 4:3; 6:6; 10:10; 13:1).
4. God raised up a deliverer/judge to rescue them from the oppressing nation (Judges 3:9, 15; 4:2; 6:8).
5. Israel experienced a period of peace, prosperity and rest from their enemies (Judges 3:11, 30, 5:31; 8:28; 10:2-3; 12:7, 9, 11, 14; 15:20).

See Chart (Page 41)

D. What does this repeated cycle demonstrate?

This repeated cycle demonstrates the need for leadership among God's people if they are going to stay on course.

1. In order for a community to live together there must be guidelines.
2. Sheep need a shepherd to lead them out and in (Num. 27:17; Ezek. 34:23).

E. Are there any bright spots in the Book of Judges?

In the midst of all of Israel's trouble there are many bright spots in the Book of Judges.

1. There are some notable events.
 - a. It contains a song of victory (Judges 5:1-31).
 - b. It contains the oldest known parable in the world (Judges 9:8-15).
 - c. It contains the first record of a woman functioning as the leader of the nation (Deborah). While Miriam had a major role in the leadership of Israel in the wilderness, Deborah had more of a senior role.
2. There are some notable leaders.

While there are about 12 judges referred to in the Book of Judges, some are considered minor (Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon) and some are considered major (Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephtha, and Samson). This distinction is usually made based on the success of their military campaign and on other later biblical references to these figures of history.*

*It should be noted that some commentators include Barak, Abimilech and Samuel on the list of judges. Barak served with Deborah although she was clearly the leader of the two. Abimilech was a usurper judge who was not raised up by the Lord and was the cause of a great deal of internal strife in the nation. Samuel is often considered the last of the judges and the first of the prophets. He will be discussed later when we get to the books of Samuel.

The list of notable leaders includes the following:

- a. Othniel
- b. Ehud
- c. Deborah
- d. Gideon
- e. Jephtha
- f. Samson

F. What was the job description of the judges?

The fact that Israel would have judges was foretold by Moses (Deut. 16:18; 25:1).

1. Their normal function was to:
 - Administrate the affairs of the nation
 - Judge in resolving disputes
 - Serve as a military leader in dealing with enemies of the nation
2. Their spiritual qualifications were to be similar to that of elders (Ex. 18:20-26).
3. Ultimately they point us to Christ who is our Savior and Deliverer and the one who leads us into victory over all of our enemies.

J U D G E S

CYCLE	ISRAEL SINS	SERVITUDE NATIONS YEARS	ISRAEL'S SUPPLICATION	A DELIVERER	YEARS OF REST
1	Inter-marrying Idolatry Judges 3:6-7	Chushanrishathaim, King of Mesopotamia 8 Years Judges 3:8	They cry unto the Lord! Judges 3:9	OTHNIEL Judges 3:9-10	40 Years Judges 3:11
2	The Children of Israel did evil... Judges 3:12	Eglon, King of Moab Children of Ammon The Philistines 18 Years Judges 3:12-14	They cry unto the Lord! Judges 3:15	EHUD Judges 3:15-30 SHAMGAR Judges 3:31	80 Years Judges 3:30
3	The Children of Israel did evil... Judges 4:1	Jabin, King of Canaan 20 Years Judges 4:2-3	They cry unto the Lord! Judges 4:3	DEBORAH Judges 4:4 - 5:31 BARAK Judges 4:6 - 5:31	40 Years Judges 5:31
4	The Children of Israel did evil... Judges 6:1	Midian Judges 6:1-6	They cry unto the Lord! Judges 6:6-7	GIDFON Judges 6:11 - 8:27	40 Years Judges 8:28
5	Idolatry Judges 8:33	NO SERVITUDE Inner strife under Abimelech, a usurper 3 Years (at least) Judges 9:22	NO CRY as such Judges 9:1 - 10:1 TOLA Judges 10:1-2 JAIR Judges 10:3-5	ABIMELECH Judges 9:1 - 10:1 TOLA Judges 10:1-2 JAIR Judges 10:3-5	23 Years Judges 10:2 22 Years Judges 10:3 Total: 45 Years
6	The Children of Israel did evil... Idolatry Judges 10:6	Philistines Children of Ammon 18 Years Judges 10:7	The cry unto the Lord! Judges 10:10, 15	JEPHTHA IBZAN ELON ABDON Judges 11:1 - 12:15	6 Years 7 Years 10 Years 8 Years Total: 31 Years Judges 12:7, 9, 11, 14
7	The Children of Israel did evil... Judges 13:1	Philistines 40 Years Judges 13:1	NO CRY UNTO THE LORD! Judges 13:24 - 16:31	SAMSON Judges 13:24 - 16:31	20 Years (at least) Judges 15:20

Lesson 9

Ruth—The Book of Grace or Redemption

A. What makes the book of Ruth unique?

1. It is one of two books in the Old Testament bearing the name of a woman (Esther being the other one). It is the only one that concerns itself entirely with the life of a woman.
2. It is a book about how a Gentile woman of faith became part of the godly seed line to Christ (Matt. 1:5). She was the great grandmother of King David.

Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king.

3. It demonstrates God's special care for those who cannot fully care for themselves—the widows, the fatherless and the strangers (Deut. 10:17-19).

For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

B. How does the Book of Ruth fit into the historical books of the Old Testament?

1. The Book of Ruth according to Jewish tradition was written by Samuel and occurred sometime during the period of the Judges. Most commentators put it near the middle of the period of the judges around 1150 B.C. It covers a span of approximately eleven years.
2. Many believe that it occurred during one of the times of backsliding in Israel which could have accounted for the severe famine.
3. The Book of Ruth is history, but it is more than that.
 - a. It is a story of love. It is a story of God's love for the entire world that is also found in the hearts of His special people (Lev. 19:33-34).

And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

- b. It is a story of grace. It is a story of a Moabite woman who, because of her hunger for the true God and her willingness to forsake false gods found the favor of God and was grafted into the tree of faith.

- c. It is a story of persistent faith. In spite of adverse circumstances we have a woman who would not let go of the hope that she knew would be rewarded by a God who rewards those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6).
- d. It is a story of redemption and restoration. It is the story of the kinsman redeemer (Boaz) who was willing and able to bring restoration of that which had been lost or stolen.
- e. It is the story of Christ and the Church. Boaz the kinsman redeemer represents Christ and all that He has done for us to make us His bride.

C. Who are the main players in the Book of Ruth?

1. The four men

a. Elimelech (God is King)

Elimelech was the husband of Naomi and the father of Mahlon and Chilion. He was a Jew who moved to Moab from Bethlehem during a time of famine to find bread for his family. He ended up dying in Moab.

b. Mahlon (Sickly)

Mahlon was the son of Elimelech and Naomi who was the first husband of Ruth who was from the land of Moab. He also died in the land of Moab.

c. Chilion (Wasting Away)

Chilion was the son of Elimelech and Naomi who was the husband of Orpah who was from the land of Moab. He also died in the land of Moab.

d. Boaz (In Him is Strength)

Boaz was a wealthy, pious and gracious Jewish man who was a kinsman of Elimelech. Even though by law he was obligated to redeem Naomi, he would eventually marry Ruth by extension and raise up seed to Elimelech's line.

2. The three women

a. Naomi (Pleasantness)

Naomi was a Jewish woman and the wife of Elimelech. It was her faith in God that inspired her daughter-in-law to have an insatiable hunger for the true God.

b. Orpah (Neck)

Orpah was the other daughter-in-law of Naomi and the wife of Chilion who decided to stay in Moab after her husband died.

c. Ruth (Comeliness, Beauty)

Ruth is the heroine of this book. She was born into the idolatry of the Moabites (Moab was one of the children of Lot's incestuous relationship with one of his daughters), married a Jewish man named Mahlon. When her husband died, since she had been profoundly affected by the faith of Naomi her mother-in-law, she insisted on going to Israel when Naomi decided to return home and throw herself on the mercy of God.

D. What is the story of the Book of Ruth in outline form?

1. Famine in Israel and hardship in Moab (1:1-5)
2. Naomi and Ruth return to the land of promise (1:6-22)
3. Ruth meets Boaz and gleans in his field (2:1-23)
4. Ruth presents herself to Boaz, the Near Kinsman (3:1-18)
5. Boaz redeems Ruth (4:1-21)
6. Boaz and Ruth marry and have children (4:13-22)

E. What is the background concept of the kinsmen redeemer?

In the Old Testament Era, since genealogy was so critical to the possession of inheritance in the land, God gave Israel the law of the kinsman redeemer to help ensure that nothing could be lost forever without the possibility of recovery.

1. The Law of the Kinsman Redeemer

Laws regarding the kinsman redeemer involved both the property of, justice for and the perpetuation of progeny of the kinsman.

a. Property

In order to maintain the property inheritance, the near kinsman would be required to buy back the property that had been sold due to foreclosure or poverty to keep it in the family (Lev. 25:25-34).

b. Justice

If the relative was murdered, the near kinsman would be responsible to become the "avenger of blood" and see to it that justice was served on behalf his slain relative (Num. 35:9-34).

c. Progeny

When a man died childless, the nearest male relative would be responsible to take his widow as a wife and raise up offspring for him through the widow of the deceased (Deut. 25:5-10).

2. The Qualifications of the Kinsman Redeemer

There were several qualifications that had to apply in order for a kinsman to redeem the land and the wife.

- a. The person had to have the right to redeem—blood related (Deut. 25:5, 7-10; Ruth 2:20).
- b. The person had to have the power to redeem—financially capable (Ruth 2:1).
- c. The person had to have the will to redeem—voluntary/grace (Ruth 3:11).

F. What does this book teach us about redemption in Christ?

Jesus is Our Kinsman Redeemer! He is our Boaz!

1. Jesus became incarnate so that he could be a partaker of flesh and blood (John 1:1; Rom. 1:3; Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 2:14-15).
2. Jesus was able to pay the price because he was the only one without sin (I Pet. 1:18-19).
3. Jesus was willing to redeem us from the curse of the law (Mt. 20:28; John 10:15, 18; Heb. 10:7).

G. What does this book teach us about our part in redemption?

In order to take advantage of the redemption which has been provided for us in Christ we must have similar tenacity to that of Ruth.

1. She made a covenantal decision to run after the true God (Ruth 1:16-17).

“Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.¹⁷ Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me.”

- a. This involved absolute surrender to God’s leading.
 - b. This involved leaving the past life behind.
 - c. This involved embracing the people of God in relationship.
 - d. This involved adopting a totally new lifestyle.
 - e. This involved an unconditional commitment to the death.
2. She chose to glean exclusively in the field of her redeemer (Ruth 2:3; 7).
 3. She threw herself on the mercy of the kinsman redeemer and came under his wings or covering (Ruth 2:12; 3:9).

Lesson 10

I & II Samuel—The Books of the Monarchy

A. What do the books of Samuel cover?

The books of Samuel were originally one book in the earliest Hebrew texts.

1. The books of Samuel cover the transition from the period of the judges to the period of the kings.
2. The books of Samuel cover the life of Samuel the last of the judges and the first of the prophets.
3. The books of Samuel cover the reign of the first two kings of Israel, Saul and David.
4. The books of Samuel begin with the birth of Samuel and end with the failure and judgment of David.

B. What were the circumstances surrounding the birth of Samuel?

1. National Decline.

The nation of Israel was in one of its cycles of decline. There was a spiritual dearth in the land (I Sam. 3:1).

2. Weak Leadership.

The high priest Eli was a weak leader who had very little connection with the Spirit of God (I Sam. 1:12-14; 2:22-3:1-3; 4:18).

3. Despised Tabernacle Worship.

Because the sons of Eli were so vile, the people of God despised the sacrifices that were prescribed by God and they no longer practiced them (I Sam. 2:12-17, 22-24).

Now the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the LORD. ¹³ And the priests' custom with the people was that when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fleshhook in his hand while the meat was boiling. ¹⁴ Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the fleshhook brought up. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. ¹⁵ Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, "Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but raw." ¹⁶ And if the man said to him, "They should really burn the fat first; then you may take as much as your heart desires," he would then answer him, "No, but you must give it now; and if not, I will take it by force." ¹⁷ Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for men abhorred the offering of the LORD. I Samuel 2:12-17

Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ²³So he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. ²⁴No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the LORD’s people transgress. I Samuel 2:22-24

4. Ark Lost.

Because of the presumption of Eli’s sons and a disregard for the laws of God, the Ark of the Covenant fell into enemy hands for the first time in its history (I Sam. 4:1-11). The birth of Icabod (inglorious) would be a sign child reminding them that “the glory has departed from Israel” (I Sam. 4:21-22).

5. God Hears.

In this situation God responds to the cry of His people and brings a miracle baby into the world by the name of Samuel (“Heard by God”). Because he came as an answer to prayer, his mother Hannah gave him back to the Lord (I Sam. 1:20, 28).

C. What is the significance of Samuel in the overall plan of God?

1. Samuel was the last of the judges (I Sam. 7:6, 15-17).
2. Samuel was the first of a new order of prophets (I Sam. 3:19-4:1a; Acts 3:24; 13:20). Moses had been recognized as a prophet. The only other individuals between Moses and Samuel who were represented as speaking for God were Deborah and two other unnamed prophets (Judges 4:4; 6:8; I Sam. 2:27-36).

So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. ²⁰And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the LORD. ²¹Then the LORD appeared again in Shiloh. For the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. I Samuel 3:19-4:1a

3. Samuel is believed to have begun the schools of the prophets (I Sam. 10:5; 19:20, Compare: I Kgs. 20:35; II Kgs. 2:3ff; 4:1, 38).

And when they saw the group of prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as leader over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. I Samuel 19:20

4. Samuel anointed the first of the kings (I Sam. 10:1, 25; 16:13).
5. Samuel laid the foundation for the prophets’ ministry to the kings (I Sam. 13:8-15; 15:22). The prophets would serve as the conscience to the kings and the nation for many years to come. The kings that listened to the prophets were blessed of the Lord and prospered.

6. Samuel was considered by the Jews as second only to Moses among their historical leaders (Ps. 99:6-7; Jer. 15:1). Together they are the embodiment of the Law and the Prophets.

Moses and Aaron were among His priests, and Samuel was among those who called upon His name; they called upon the LORD, and He answered them. He spoke to them in the cloudy pillar; they kept His testimonies and the ordinance He gave them.

Psalm 99:6-7

Then the LORD said to me, “Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people. Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth.” Jeremiah 15:1

D. Why were the books of Samuel named as such?

The books of Samuel most likely received their name for the following reasons:

1. Because Samuel serves as an important transition figure in the life of the nation.
2. Because Samuel was a key figure and principle player in these books.
3. Because Samuel was the “anointer of kings” in these books.
4. Because Samuel was the foundation on which all prophetic ministry in the Old Testament would be built.
5. Because Samuel is believed to have written a significant portion of these books (Nathan and Gad are believed to have completed the books of Samuel. See: I Sam. 10:25; I Chr. 29:29-30).

Then Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty, and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. I Samuel 10:25

Now the acts of King David, first and last, indeed they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, with all his reign and his might, and the events that happened to him, to Israel, and to all the kingdoms of the lands. I Chronicles 29:29-30

E. What are the key events covered in the books of Samuel?

The books of Samuel cover approximately 150 years from where the book of Judges left off up to deep into the reign of David.

1. I Samuel

- a. The birth of Samuel (ch. 1:1-2:11)
- b. The wickedness of Eli’s son’s and impending judgment (ch. 2:12-36)
- c. Samuel’s childhood (ch. 3)
- d. The ark in captivity (ch. 4-5)

- e. The ark returned (ch. 6)
- f. Israel demands a king (ch. 8)
- g. Saul anointed and proclaimed as king (ch. 9-12)
- h. Saul's failure and rejection (ch. 13-15)
- i. David's first anointing (ch. 16)
- j. David slays Goliath (ch. 17)
- k. Saul persecutes David (ch. 18-24, 26-30)
- l. Samuel dies (ch. 25)
- m. Saul dies (ch. 31)

2. II Samuel

- a. The mourning of Saul (ch. 1)
- b. David's second anointing as king over Judah (ch. 2:1-7)
- c. Civil war in Israel (ch. 2:8-3:12)
- d. David's third anointing over all Israel (ch. 5:1-5)
- e. David takes Jerusalem (the City of David) and establishes the Ark (ch. 5:6-6:23)
- f. God established a covenant with David (ch. 7)
- g. David leads the nation in conquest (ch. 8-10; 12:26-31)
- h. David sins against God and experience initial judgment (ch. 11-12:23)
- i. Solomon is born (ch. 12:24-25)
- j. Strife in David's house—Amnon, Absalom (ch. 13-19:18)
- k. David has mercy on the house of Saul (ch. 19)
- l. Goliath's sons are killed by David and his men (ch. 21)
- m. David's song of praise (ch. 22)
- n. David's mighty men (ch. 23)
- o. David numbers the people and judgment (ch. 24)

F. What precipitated Israel's cry for a king?

1. The failure of Samuel at home (I Sam. 8:1-5). This was a common problem among Old Testament leaders.

Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. ²The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. ³But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice. ⁴Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, ⁵and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." I Samuel 8:1-5

2. The rejection of God as king (I Sam. 8:7, 19-20).

Notice God's warning to Israel about what kings will cost (I Sam. 8:9-18).

G. What was God’s original intention for the governance of the children of Israel?

1. Theocracy. Theocracy literally means “rule by God.”

God’s original intention was to serve as the king over His people.

2. Monarchy. Monarchy literally means “rule by one.”

God wanted His people to eventually be united under the leadership of one anointed leader/king (Gen. 17:6; 35:11; Deut. 17:14).

3. Theocratic Monarchy.

God made provision for an earthly king to be set over the nation as His representative to the people. God’s desire was to work together with His anointed representative thus combining the two concepts of a united kingdom under God. God would rule Israel by being in a ruling relationship with the earthly ruler of the nation.

H. What were the “laws of the kings” that were meant to insure that the monarchy was at the same time a theocracy?

Read: Deuteronomy 17:14-20

1. The kings were not to multiply horses (vs. 16).
2. The kings were not to multiply wives (vs. 17).
3. The kings were not to multiply silver and gold (vs. 17).
4. The kings were to write for themselves a personal copy of the law (vs. 18).
5. The kings were to read out of the law of God daily (vs. 19).

Apart from Josiah, there was perhaps no king that followed these God-given guidelines (II Kings 22-23, esp. 23:25).

I. How did the first two kings of Israel measure up as kings?

1. Saul

Saul’s Start	Saul’s Finish
Humble (I Sam. 9:21)	Full of Pride (I Sam. 18:8)
Good Looking (I Sam. 9:1-3)	Rash Decisions (I Sam. 14:24ff.)
Strong in Natural (I Sam. 9:1-3)	Full of Rebellion (I Sam. 20:31)
Spirit Energized (I Sam. 11:6)	Evil Spirit Energized (I Sam. 16:14)
Strong Leadership (I Sam. 11:7)	Consults a Witch (I Sam. 28:3ff.)
Brave in Battle (I Sam. 13:1-3)	Commits Suicide (I Sam. 31:3)

Saul's tragic end is summarized in the following epitaph from I Chronicles 10:13-14:

So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. But he did not inquire of the LORD; therefore He killed him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

2. David

David was a man after God's heart (I Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22, 36). David was a man after God's heart, not because he never sinned, but because when he did sin or fall short, he was humble before the Lord and quick to repent when confronted with his sin. The Book of Psalms is a reflection of the heart of David which serves as an inspiration to all who would cultivate such a heart. We will look at David more when we study the books of Chronicles.

J. What are some key lessons from the books of Samuel?

1. Obedience and dedication will bring God's authority (Samuel).
2. Disobedience brings a loss of authority and anointing (Saul).
3. Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart (I Sam. 9:1-3 with 16:7).
4. Sin can be forgiven by God but the consequences or fruit of sin can remain forever (David).
5. When you make mistakes as a leader, the people you serve will also pay the consequences (II Sam. 24:10-17).

Lesson 11-12
I & II Kings, I & II Chronicles
The Books of Glory to Captivity

A. What are some of the background details in relation to each of these books?

It is important to note that in the original texts, both Kings was one book and Chronicles was one book. Perhaps the best way to see the background of these books is to use the following chart:

	KINGS	CHRONICLES
Authorship	Most likely Jeremiah	Most likely Ezra
Date of Writing	Around 560 B.C. After the captivity (586 B.C.) but before the return.	Approximately 450-425 B.C.
Years Covered	Approximately 420 Years	Approximately 440 years
Events Spanned	From the death of David through the captivities of both Israel and Judah.	From the death of Saul to the decree of Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem.
Distinctive Features	The glory of Solomon The division of the kingdom The corrupt kings of Israel Ministry of Elijah and Elisha The captivity of Israel The good and bad in Judah The captivity of Judah	The reign of David The Tabernacle of David The reign of Solomon The Temple The division of the kingdom The kings of Judah both back-slidings and revivals
Contrasts	Focus on political history, wars, wickedness of kings, prophetic judgments, a record of both houses.	Focus on priestly functions, temple, continuity of Davidic line (note genealogies), a record of Judah (mostly).

B. Why do we refer to the books of Kings and Chronicles as the Books of Glory to Captivity?

1. When taken as a whole, the books begin with the kingdom is at a very high point.

a. David is king of Israel.

- He extended the borders of the kingdom farther than ever (I Chr. 14:17; II Chr. 9:26).

Then the fame of David went out into all lands, and the LORD brought the fear of him upon all nations. I Chronicles 14:17

- He rooted out many of the long standing enemies, including the Jebusites (I Chr. 11:4-9).
- He established Jerusalem as the center of national life.

- He restored the Ark of the Covenant to a place of honor in Zion (I Chr. 15:28).
- He set up the Tabernacle of David (I Chr. 15:1; 16:1).
- He established a new order of worship that focused on spiritual sacrifices as reflected in the Psalms (I Chr. 16:37; 25:1-8).
- He was given the Davidic Covenant from the Lord (I Chr. 17).
- He received from God the plans for the temple (I Chr. 28:19).
- He raised the finances so that the temple could be built (I Chr. 29:1-9).
- He passed the torch on to his son, Solomon (I Chr. 28-29).

So David went on and became great, and the LORD of hosts was with him.
I Chronicles 11:9

b. Solomon followed David.

- He began his rule by asking for wisdom (I Kgs. 3; II Chr. 1).
- He built the temple that became a showcase to the world (I Kgs. 5-6; I Kgs. 10:1-13; II Chr. 2-3; 9:1-12).
- He was a source of God's wisdom to the world (I Kgs. 3:28; 4:29-34; II Chr. 9:22-23).
- He dedicated the temple as a testimony to the name of the Lord (I Kgs. 8:22-66; II Chr. 6-7).
- He ruled over a kingdom of peace and prosperity second to none (I Kgs 4:20-25).

2. When the books end, both houses of Israel are in captivity.

- a. The 10 tribes of Israel are in captivity to Assyria only to be eventually dispersed among the nations, never to return again.
- b. The tribes of Judah are in captivity to Babylon where they will remain captive as a nation for about 70 years.

C. What happened in the life of David and Solomon that precipitated the weakening of the glory of the kingdom?

1. David had his failures.

1. David took another man's wife Bathsheba (II Sam. 11).
2. David plotted to kill Uriah (II Sam. 11).
3. David numbered the people (I Chr. 21).

2. Solomon had his failures.

1. Solomon violated the laws of the kings.

- He multiplied silver and gold (I Kgs. 10:14-25).

His extravagance went to his head. It is said that every drinking vessel in his palace was made of gold and that silver was as prevalent as the rocks in the streets. It took him seven years to build the temple of the Lord. He followed this by spending 13 years building his own house of the finest of materials including cedars from Lebanon.

- He multiplied horses (I Kgs. 4:26; 10:26-29).

Just for his own personal collection he had 40,000 horses of Arabian stock. They say that the feeding troughs for these horses were lined with marble. The money for these things would come from the taxes of the people.

- He multiplied wives (I Kgs. 11:1-8).

Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. Many of these wives were politically arranged and related to covenants of peace that he made with surrounding nations. A large percentage of these women came from pagan cultures who wanted to retain their pagan forms of worship. Solomon gave in to them and provided what they needed to maintain their worship even to the extent of building temples to Molech. At times, he even would accompany them to their temples.

2. Solomon turned his heart toward other gods (I Kgs. 11:6-11).

But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites—² from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love.³ And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart.⁴ For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.⁵ For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.⁶ Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David.⁷ Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon.⁸ And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.⁹ So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice,¹⁰ and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD had commanded. I Kings 11:1-10

3. Solomon did not follow the instructions of David his father (I Chr. 28:9-10).

“As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong, and do it.”

I Chronicles 28:9-10

4. Solomon failed in wisdom (his strength) and ended his life in folly.

Solomon’s best days are represented for us in Proverbs and Song of Solomon. His worst days are represented in the Book of Ecclesiastes.

3. God indicated that because Solomon did not follow the ways of the Lord after his death the kingdom would be torn apart (I Kgs. 11:11-13, 34-36).

Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, “Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant [Jereboam].¹² Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son.¹³ However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen. I Kings 11:11-13

D. What actually caused the kingdom to be divided?

1. The Root Cause.

The root cause was the disobedience of Solomon and his backsliding away from the Lord. The only reason why God’s judgment did not happen under his leadership is because of God’s respect for David his father.

2. The Local Cause.

- a. Jereboam, the servant of Solomon, took the opportunity after the death of Solomon to lead a rebellion against Rehoboam contesting his leadership (I Kgs. 11:26-12:5). Jereboam would eventually take the 10 northern tribes and separate from Judah. In order to establish his kingdom, Jereboam would set up calf worship at Dan and Bethel to keep those under his rule from having to go to Jerusalem to worship (I Kgs 12:25-33).
- b. Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, provided the catalyst for the division by not heeding the advice of the elders and listening to the poor advice of his peers to increase taxation and rule with a rod of iron (I Kgs. 12:6-24). Rehoboam would end up with Judah, Simeon and half of the tribe of Benjamin that would become the southern kingdom.

Read: I Kings 12:6-24 (as time permits)

From this point on, Israel (Northern Kingdom) and Judah (Southern Kingdom) begin their separate histories.

E. Who are the two measuring rods for all future kings of Israel and Judah?

The two measuring rods or standard men by which all future kings would be judged are David and Jereboam, the servant of Solomon.

1. David represents the positive side or those kings that sought after the Lord. These kings did what was right in the sight of the Lord (II Kgs. 12:2). The key phrase associated with these kings is “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord as did his father David.”

Note the following: I Kings 15:11; II Kgs. 14:3; 18:3; 22:2, Etc.

2. Jereboam represents the negative side or those kings that did not seek the Lord. The key phrase associated with these kings is “did evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the way of Jereboam, and in his sin by which he made Israel to sin.” Virtually all of the kings of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord (See chart below).

Note the following: I Kings 15:34; 16:2, 19, 26, 31; 22:52; II Kings 10:29, 31; 13:2, 6, 11; 14:24; 15:18, 24, 28.

F. What were the common characteristics of the good and bad kings?

The good kings and the bad kings had certain common traits that seem to be repeated over and over again.

1. Amon is a model of the bad kings (II Kgs. 21:19-22). Common characteristics include: murder, violence, idolatry, covetousness, pride, presumption, disregard for the word of the Lord, and evil alliances.

Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Meshullemeth the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. ²⁰And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. ²¹So he walked in all the ways that his father had walked; and he served the idols that his father had served, and worshiped them. ²²He forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD. II Kings 21:19-22

2. Hezekiah is a model of the good kings (II Kgs. 18:1-10). Common characteristics include: Seeking the Lord, purging idolatry, return to the word of the Lord, trusting God in battle, return of just judgment to the people.

Read: II Kings 18:1-10 (as time permits)

Notice the qualities of Hezekiah:

- He trusted and gave to the Lord.

- He kept the commandments of the Lord.
- He was an intercessor.
- He made the people diligent.
- He sought the Lord with his whole heart.
- He removed the high places and pagan images.
- He threw off the yoke of the enemy.
- He listened to the prophets that were sent to him.
- He restored the house of the Lord.

G. What is the order of kings for the house of Israel and the house of Judah?

ISRAEL, The Northern Kingdom (10 Tribes)			
KING	REFERENCES	REIGN	COMMENTS
Jereboam	I Kgs 11-13; II Chr 11	22 Years	Evil, Set up golden calves with priesthood
Nadab	I Kgs 14-15	2 Years	Evil, Killed Jereboam's family, Assassinated
Baasha	I Kgs 15-16	4 Years	Did Evil
Elah	I Kgs 16	2 Years	Evil, , Assassinated
Zimri	I Kgs 16	7 Days	Evil, Killed Elah, & Baasha's family, suicide
Omri	I Kgs 15-16	12 Years	Did Evil, Set up Samaria
Ahab	I Kgs 16-22	22 Years	Did Evil, married Jezebel, worshipped Baal
Ahaziah	I Kgs 22; II Kgs 1	2 Years	Did Evil, Son of Ahab
Joram	II Kgs 1,3,8	12 Years	Did Evil, Assassinated by Jehu
Jehu	II Kgs 9-10	28 Years	Did Evil, Destroyed some idols
Jehoahaz	II Kgs 13	17 Years	Did Evil
Joash	II Kgs 13-14	16 Years	Did Evil
Jereboam II	II Kgs 13-14	41 Years	Did Evil, Very powerful
Zechariah	II Kgs 15	6 Months	Did Evil, Assassinated by Shallum
Shallum	II Kgs 15	1 Month	Did Evil, Assassinated by Menahem
Menahem	II Kgs 15	10 Years	Did Evil, Gave tribute to Assyria
Pekahiah	II Kgs 15	3 Years	Did Evil, Assassinated
Pekah	II Kgs 15	20 Years	Did Evil, Assassinated, First captives taken
Hoshea	II Kgs 15-17	9 Years	Did Evil, A vassal under Assyrian tribute
ASSYRIAN EXILE (722 B.C.)			

JUDAH, The Southern Kingdom (2 Tribes)			
Rehoboam	I Kgs 11-14; II Chr 9-12	17 Years	Responsible for divide, Started good ended bad
Abijah	I Kgs 15; II Chr 13	3 Years	Wicked but at times called on the Lord.
Asa	I Kgs 15; II Chr 14	41 Years	Led revival, destroyed idols, built altars
Jehoshaphat	I Kgs 15, 22; II Chr 17-21	25 Years	Destroyed idols, established education

Jehoram	I Kgs 22; II Kgs 8 II Chr. 21	8 Years	Wicked, married Ahab's daughter, killed sibs
Ahaziah	II Kgs 8-9; II Chr 22	1 Year	Did Evil, followed bad advice of mother
Athaliah	II Kgs 11; II Chr 22	6 Years	Mother of Ahaziah, Killed grandchildren, evil
Joash	II Kgs 11-12; II Chr 23-24	40 Years	Spared from death, led revival, godly king
Amaziah	II Kgs 14; II Chr 25	29 Years	Mostly good, did not purge all idolatry
Uzziah	II Kgs 14-15; II Chr 26	52 Years	Good, powerful reign, sin of presumption
Jotham	II Kgs 15; II Chr 27	16 Years	Mostly good, did not purge all idolatry
Ahaz	II Kgs 16; II Chr 28	16 Years	Evil, Sacrificed sons to Baal, Shut temple
Hezekiah	II Kgs 18-20; II Chr 29-32	29 Years	Led revival of worship, dedicated to the Lord
Manasseh	II Kgs 21; II Chr 33	52 Years	Rebuilt all pagan altars, repented in the end
Amon	II Kgs 21; II Chr 33	2 Years	Did evil, assassinated by his own servants
Josiah	II Kgs 22-23; II Chr 34-35	31 Years	Greatest and most loved king, led revival
Jehoahaz	II Kgs 23; II Chr 36	3 Months	Jailed and taken to Egypt where he died
Jehoiakim	II Kgs 23-24; II Chr 36	11 Years	Burned manuscripts, an Egyptian puppet
Jehoiakin	II Kgs 24; II Chr 36	3 Months	Beginning of Babylonian exile
Zedekiah	II Kgs 24; II Chr 36	11 Years	Saw temple burned and city destroyed, died in captivity
BABYLONIAN EXILE (586 B.C.)			

H. What were some of the high points during the period of the kings?

Unfortunately one has to look beneath the surface to see some of the high points during these years.

1. The Prophets

- a. The ministry of the prophets was the purest ministry in the Old Testament.
 - Judges would fail.
 - Kings would fall short.
 - Priests would become corrupted.
 - The Prophets (as a rule) would remain true.
- b. The ministry of the prophets was to serve as a conscience to the nation and especially to the kings (See Chart, page 62).
- c. There were prophets of scripture (We will be taking a closer look at these as we look at their writings).
 - Obadiah – Ministered under Jehoram of Judah
 - Joel – Ministered under Joash of Judah
 - Jonah – Ministered under Jereboam II of Israel
 - Amos – Ministered under Jereboam II of Israel
 - Hosea – Ministered under the last seven kings of Israel

- Micah – Ministered under Jothan, Ahaz and Hezekiah of Judah
- Isaiah – Ministered under Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah and Manasseh of Judah
- Nahum – Ministered under Manasseh of Judah
- Zephaniah – Ministered under Josiah of Judah
- Jeremiah – Ministered under the last five kings of Judah
- Habakkuk – Ministered under the last five kings of Judah

d. There were other prophets as well.

- Ahijah – Ministered under Jereboam I of Israel
- Elijah – Ministered under Ahab of Israel
- Micaiah – Ministered under Ahab of Israel and Jehoshaphat of Judah
- Jehu – Ministered under Jehoshaphat of Judah
- Elisha – Ministered under Joram, Jehu, Jehoahaz and Jehoash of Israel

2. The Good Kings of Judah

There were several good kings of Judah who led the nation in revival at key points in their history.

a. Asa (I Kgs. 15; II Chr. 14)

Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God,³ for he removed the altars of the foreign gods and the high places, and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the wooden images.⁴ He commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandment.⁵ He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah, and the kingdom was quiet under him.⁶ And he built fortified cities in Judah, for the land had rest; he had no war in those years, because the LORD had given him rest. II Chronicles 14:2-6

b. Jehoshaphat (I Kgs. 15, 22; II Chr. 17-21)

Now the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David; he did not seek the Baals,⁴ but sought the God of his father, and walked in His commandments and not according to the acts of Israel.⁵ Therefore the LORD established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah gave presents to Jehoshaphat, and he had riches and honor in abundance.⁶ And his heart took delight in the ways of the LORD; moreover he removed the high places and wooden images from Judah. II Chronicles 17:3-6

He sent out itinerant preachers throughout the land to preach the Word of the Lord to the people of the land (II Chr. 17:7-9).

c. Joash (II Kgs. 11-12; II Chr. 23-24)

His chief work was to repair the house of the Lord under the leadership of Jehoiada the high priest.

Jehoash did what was right in the sight of the LORD all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him. But the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. II Kings 12:2

Unfortunately, he backslid toward the end of his reign after Jehoiada died.

Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, “Thus says God: ‘Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.’ ” II Chronicles 24:20

d. Uzziah (II Kgs. 14-15; II Chr. 26)

Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem.⁴ And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done.⁵ He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper...¹⁶ But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense...²¹ King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an isolated house, because he was a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. II Chronicles 26:3-6, 16, 21

e. Hezekiah (II Kgs. 18-20; II Chr. 29-32)

Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and true before the LORD his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart. So he prospered. II Chronicles 31:20-21

He had his life extended by 15 years when the Lord healed him (II Kgs. 20).

f. Josiah (II Kgs. 22-23; II Chr. 34-35)

He discovered the book of the Law in some rubble in the temple. When it was read, he repented for the nation and led the nation back to the right ways of God.

Now the king sent them to gather all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to him.² The king went up to the house of the LORD with all the men of Judah, and with him all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD.³ Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all his

heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people took a stand for the covenant. II Kings 23:1-3

Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him. II Kings 23:25

I. What are the key lessons that we can learn from these books (Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:11)?

Four Key Lessons from Kings and Chronicles

- A. When we are loyal to God we will flourish, when we depart from the Lord and do not maintain His standards we will decline.
- B. Every generation is responsible to pass on the faith to their sons and daughters. Hezekiah, one of the greatest kings is followed by his son one of the worst of the kings, Manasseh (II Kgs. 21).
- C. When all seems lost, God has a way of bringing forth His purpose.
 - 1. Note that the Davidic line was nearly eliminated, but God preserved an heir (II Kgs. 11:1-3).
 - 2. Note that the book of the law was nearly lost, but God allowed a copy to be found (II Kgs. 22:8-20).
- D. When we seek the Lord, He will be found of us and He will lead us to victory (II Chr. 7:14; 11:16; 14:4, 7; 15:2, 4, 12-15; 17:4-5; 19:3; 20:3-4; 26:5; 30:18-19; 31:20-21; 34:3), when we do not, we will fail (II Chr. 12:14; 16:12).

Then the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. ¹³When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, ¹⁴if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

II Chronicles 7:12-14

Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. ²And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. ³For a long time Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law; ⁴but when in their trouble they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them... ¹⁰So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. ¹¹And they offered to the LORD at that time seven hundred bulls and seven thousand sheep from the spoil they had brought. ¹²Then they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; ¹³

and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel was to be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. ¹⁴Then they took an oath before the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting and trumpets and rams' horns. ¹⁵And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with all their soul; and He was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around.

II Chronicles 15:1-4, 10-15

Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. ⁴And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. ⁵He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper.

II Chronicles 26:2-5

UNITED KINGDOM OF ISRAEL				
PROPHETS	KING	BC		
Samuel	Saul	1095	<p style="text-align: center;">KINGS AND PROPHETS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM PERIOD AND THE DEVIDED KINGDOM PERIOD</p>	
		1085		
		1075		
Nathan - Gad	David	1065		
		1055		
		1045		
		1035		
		1025		
Ahijah - Iddo	Solomon	1015		
JUDAH		DIVIDED KINGDOM	ISRAEL	
PROPHETS	KING		KING	PROPHETS
Shemaiah	Rehoboam	985	Jeroboam I	Ahijah
	Abijah	975		
Azariah - Hanani	Asa	965	Nadab Baasha	Jehu
		955		
		945		
		935		
		925	Elah Zimri (7 days)	
Jahaziel	Jehoshaphat	915	Omri Ahab	Elijah - Micahiah
		905		
	Jahoram Ahaziah Athaliah Joash	895	Ahaziah Joram Jehu	Elijah Elijah - Elisha Elisha - Obadiah*
		885		
		875		
		865		
		855	Jehoahaz	Elisha
		845		
	Amaziah	835	Joash	Elisha - Joel* Zechariah*
		825	Jeroboam II	Hosea* - Amos* - Jonah*
Isaiah*	Uzziah	815		
		805		
		795		
		785	Zechariah (6 mos) Shallum (1 mon) Menahem	
Isaiah* - Micah*	Jotham	775		
		765	Pekahiah Peka	
		755		
Isaiah* - Micah* - Obed	Ahaz	745	Hoshea	
		735		
Isaiah* - Micah* - Nahum*	Hezekiah	725		
		715		
		705		
Isaiah*	Manasseh	695		
		685		
		675		
		665		
		655		
		645		
Jeremiah* - Habakkuk* Zephaniah*	Amon Josiah	635		
		625		
		615		
Jeremiah* Jeremiah* Jeremiah* Jeremiah*	Jehoshaz (3 mos) Jehoikim Jehoikin (3 mos) Zedekiah	605		
		595		
BABYLONIAN EXILE 588 BC		585		

NOTE: The dates given are approximate and often differ in the calculations of different chronologists. An effort has been made to accommodate my own findings with those of others as generally as possible. The dates of the beginning of the reigns of Saul, David and Solomon, the deviding kingdom, and the Babylonian Exile correspond with those of the chronologist Ussher. The prophets with the asterisks are those who wrote their prophecies which are included in Scripture.

Lesson 13-14
Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
Books of Restoration and Providence

I. What are some comparisons and distinctions between these books?

Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther are all post-exilic, historical books, that is, the events that they cover pertain to Judah after the end of the 70 year captivity. For this reason all three go together. They are in fact the last of the historical books contained in the Old Testament. The remaining books are the poetic and the prophetic books.

Ezra and Nehemiah deal with the remnant of Judah that returned to Jerusalem and Judea, while Esther has to do with those who stayed in the land of their captivity. The three prophets that are seen in connection with these books are Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah were seen as one book until the 3rd Century B.C. For this reason it is believed that Ezra and Nehemiah may have written their books in conjunction with one another.

	Ezra	Nehemiah	Esther
Author	Ezra	Nehemiah	Unsure, possibly Mordecai
Date Written	Between 450-400 B.C.	Between 440-400 B.C.	Between 450-420 B.C.
Years Covered	80 Years	16 Years	10 Years
Events Spanned	From the decree of Cyrus to rebuild to shortly after Ezra's arrival to Jerusalem.	From about 12 years after the close of the book of Ezra to 16 years later.	From the third to the twelfth year of the reign of Ahasuerus, Between chapter 6-7 of Ezra.
Distinctive Features	The captivity is over, Cyrus has decreed return, the first group of 50,000 return under Zerubbabel, the beginning of temple restoration, Ezra brings a second group of 2000 63 years later.	Nehemiah receives a commission to return to rebuild the city walls, the walls and gates are restored, the people are registered the law affirmed, the walls dedicated and the people restored.	Persian Queen Vashti is deposed, Esther becomes queen, Haman is exposed, Mordecai is honored, the Jews are avenged, and the feast of Purim is instituted.
Contrasts	Presents restoration from an ecclesiastical viewpoint (temple, altar, feasts, and priesthood)	Presents restoration from a civil or political view-point (city, walls, law, people)	Presents God's providential care of his people who did not return to Judea

II. What was the occasion of the return of the remnant to Jerusalem?

A. God had foretold of their return in advance by the mouth of the prophets (Ezra 1:1).

1. Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-4

Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," and to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid."' Isaiah 44:28

Isaiah indicated that a king by the name of Cyrus would be used by God to guarantee the safe return of a remnant to Jerusalem and that the city and the temple would be rebuilt. This was prophesied about 150 years before it happened, well before Cyrus was even born.

2. Jeremiah 25:11-12

And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation.

Jeremiah indicated that Babylon would be punished by God for enslaving God's people and destroying Jerusalem. Approximately 65 years later Cyrus the Great, the king of Persia conquered Babylon. Babylon would never again rise from the ashes.

3. Jeremiah 29:10-11

For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. ¹¹For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹²Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

Jeremiah foretold that the people of God would be in captivity for 70 years in Babylon, but that God would bring them back to the land.

4. Daniel 5:17-30

"But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. ²³And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone,

which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified. ²⁴Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written. ²⁵ “And this is the inscription that was written:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

²⁶ This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; ²⁷ TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; ²⁸ PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.” ²⁹ Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.
Daniel 5:22-27

Daniel indicated that God’s judgment was upon the Babylonians and that the Medes and the Persians would form a new world power to be God’s instrument of judgment.

- B. Cyrus, the king of Persia decreed their return as the prophets had indicated (Ezra 1:1-4).

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, ² Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. ³ Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem. ⁴ And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem. Ezra 1:1-4

III. What was Ezra’s place in history in the hearts and minds of the people of Israel?

- A. Ezra was a priest and a scribe who was considered one of the four greatest leaders in the history of the nation.
1. Abraham was seen as the father of the nation.
 2. Moses was the seen as the giver of the law.
 3. David was the great and beloved king.
 4. Ezra was a restorer of the nation.
- B. Ezra was accredited with some very important accomplishments besides those mentioned in the Book of Ezra. Although some of these cannot be proven, Ezra has been credited with—

1. Starting the synagogue system.

Because the temple had been destroyed under Nebuchadnezzar the people needed some place to go to hear the word of God. The synagogue was set up to be a school where people could be trained in the word of God. Synagogues were started in many communities. If they had ten or more men a synagogue could be started. The synagogues eventually became an important foundation for the establishment of New Testament local churches.

2. Canonizing the Old Testament.

Extra biblical literature (II Esdras 14) credits Ezra with having rewritten and published the twenty four books of the Hebrew canon which had been burned during the captivity. In the tradition, he dictated the books rapidly under special divine enablement. As a result of this process he is believed to have solidified the canon of the Old Testament.

3. Translating the Hebrew Old Testament into Aramaic.

Since many of the children of Israel who were born in captivity did not speak Hebrew, Ezra is credited with translating the Hebrew Bible into Aramaic, the mother tongue those born in captivity.

4. Writing books of the Old Testament including Chronicles and Ezra (Compare II Chronicles 36:22-23 and Ezra 1:1-3). In addition, some have credited him with the writing of Psalm 119. As such he was called the skilled scribe (Ezra 7:6, 10).

IV. What is the basic outline of the Book of Ezra?

The Book of Ezra is divided into two main sections depicting two groups of people returning to the land.

- A. The first return under Zerubabel (the great grandson of Jeconiah, See: I Chronicles 3:17-19) and the restoration of the temple (Ezra 1-6). This return involved about 50,000 people (Ezra 2:64-65).

1. The decree of Cyrus (1:1-4)
2. The departure under Zerubabel (1:5-11)
3. The registration of the remnant (2:3-65)
4. The sacred vessels returned (1:6-11; 2:68-70)
5. The rebuilding and the resistance (ch. 3-6)
6. The dedication of the temple (6:13-18)

- B. The second return under Ezra and the restoration of worship (Ezra 7-10). This return occurred about 80 years later and involved at least 2000 (Ezra 8:1-20).

1. The decree of Artaxerxes (7:1, 11-26)

2. The leadership of Ezra (7:1-10)
 3. The registration of the remnant (8:1-20)
 4. The sacred vessel and gifts (7:15-22; 8:24-35)
 5. The journey to Jerusalem (8:31)
 6. The intercessory ministry of Ezra (9:1-15)
 7. The people rededicated and separated to the Lord (10:1-44)
- C. The book of Ezra closes with the temple rebuilt (such as it was), and a revival of worship, but the walls of the city are still broken down.

V. What is the background to the Book of Nehemiah?

- A. The remnant is in the land, the temple has been rebuilt and the worship restored but the walls of the city are broken down and all of the gates to the city are in a state of total destruction. This leaves the city and the people very vulnerable to enemies.
- B. A Jewish man in captivity Nehemiah, the cupbearer (food tester) for the king of Persia, becomes aware of the condition of the city and grieves over it.
- C. The king of Persia sees the sorrow of Nehemiah and releases him to lead the people of God in the rebuilding of the walls and gates of Jerusalem.

VI. What are the events covered in the Book of Nehemiah?

The book of Nehemiah can be divided into two primary sections.

- A. The building of the wall and gates of the city (ch. 1-6).
 1. Nehemiah's distress and intercession (1:1-11)
 2. Nehemiah's expedition to Jerusalem (2:1-16)
 3. Nehemiah's exhortation to the people (2:17-20)
 4. The rebuilding started (3:1-32)
 5. The rebuilding opposed (4:1-6:14)
 6. The rebuilding completed (6:15-19)
- B. The re-instructing of the people (ch. 7-13).
 1. The re-registration of the remnant (7:4-73).
 2. The re-reading of the law (8:1-18)
 3. The re-consecration of the people (ch. 9-10)
 4. The re-population of the city (ch. 11)
 5. The re-dedication of the walls (ch. 12)
 6. The reforms of Nehemiah (ch. 13)

VII. What makes Nehemiah an important figure for us?

Nehemiah is a wonderful study in principles of godly leadership.

- A. Nehemiah was a man of prayer (1:4-11; 2:4; 4:4-5; 4:9; 5:19; 6:9; 13:14, 22,29, 31). The book of Nehemiah records nine of his prayers.
- B. Nehemiah was a man of vision. Even though he had a comfortable life, he could not rest while the city of God was in ruins. Not only did he have vision, but he was also able to inspire vision in others.
- C. Nehemiah was a success before he was called to rebuild. Notice how the king was not as concerned about the cost of rebuilding the walls but on when Nehemiah would return to service (2:6).
- D. Nehemiah was willing to work and to encourage others to work along side of him (2:18; 4:6).
- E. Nehemiah was willing to press through opposition from within and from without (ch. 4-6). He was attacked seven times during the building of the wall.
- F. Nehemiah understood that the key to success was the unity of the people (4:15-23). He knew how to get people to work as one.
- G. Nehemiah gave God the credit for the work accomplished (6:16).

VIII. How is the providence of God seen in the Book of Esther?

Even though the name of God is not mentioned in the Book of Esther, this book is all about the providence of God and His watchful eye over His people.

“The silence about God is quite deliberate, not to make the point that he is inactive in human situations, but on the contrary, that he is hidden behind all events. This is the implication of the numerous coincidental occurrences in the book. The story can become, therefore, a powerful statement about the reality of God in a world from which he appears to be absent.”

¹McConville, J. G. 2001, c1985. *Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*. The Daily study Bible series. Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville

God’s providence is seen in the following ways:

- A. God places key people in key places at just the right time for the sake of His purpose (Mordecai, Esther).
- B. God arranges circumstances for His purposes. The chain of events recorded is just too coincidental. The king cannot sleep, he decides to read some records (Remember, he has a huge harem), happens to read in the exact place that is

needful, finds that Mordecai has done something great without reward, decides to bless him, Haman comes to ask for the life of Mordecai, instead the king asks Haman to be the instrument of the king's blessing for Mordecai, Mordecai is honored and Haman is hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. God's people are saved rather than annihilated.

- C. God preserves His people from annihilation. Remember the order that Haman was attempting to enact would have meant worldwide extermination. The Seed of the Woman is under attack. God will intervene (Read Esther 7:3-4).
- D. God thwarts the evil plans of those who set themselves against Him. The intended victims become the victors.

IX. What lessons are to be learned from each of these books?

- A. The nations are as a drop in the bucket to God who turns the hearts of kings to do His bidding (Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes, Etc.).
- B. Preparation prior to the doors of opportunity is absolutely critical. Ezra was a man who prepared his heart before he had an open door. Ezra prepared his heart to seek, to do and to teach (Ezra 7:10).
For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel. Ezra 7:10
- C. God places people in strategic positions to accomplish His will (Nehemiah, Esther, Joseph, Daniel).
- D. In spite of Satan's entire attempt to slow and even stop the progress of God's plan, God has an answer for every attack.
- E. When God's people have a mind to work, they can accomplish a great deal (Neh. 4:6).
- F. The wicked plans of those who would seek to thwart God's purposes will backfire on them and they will be destroyed by their own devices. No weapon formed against God's people will prosper.
- G. When we fail to do our part, the subsequent generations will reap from our mistakes. Haman was an Agagite (a descendent of king Agag) of the Amalekites. Saul had been instructed by God through Samuel to kill all of these people, but he failed to do it.
- H. Pride goes before a fall. Haman was so filled with pride that he could not ignore or tolerate someone who would not bow down to him.
- I. Fulfilling the destiny that God has for His people will involve a certain amount of risk taking and may mean being willing to lose your life for the sake of the call.

Read Esther 4:10-14

Lesson 15-16
The Wisdom Literature
Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes

I. Why are these books referred to as Wisdom Literature?

The title of “Wisdom Literature” has been applied to these five books of the Old Testament. Sometimes they are referred to as “poetry”. These books contain practical wisdom that can be appropriated by anyone with a heart to grow in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man (Luke 2:52).

In many cases (e.g. Psalms and Proverbs) these bits of wisdom or, could we say, “skills for living” were collected over time and reflect the work of several different writers. These books can become a great source of guidance in the practical affairs of daily life and can serve as a moral and ethical compass to those who desire the favor and blessing of God upon their life.

II. What background information pertains to these books?

BOOK	AUTHOR(S)	DATE WRITTEN	TITLE(S)
Job	Job (Moses or Elihu*)	ca. 2000-1800 B.C. ?	The Book of Blessing through Suffering The Book of Blessing through Faith
Psalms	David, Asaph, Sons of Korah	From Moses to Ezra, ca. 1500-450 B.C.	The Book of Prayer and Praise The Book of Worship
Proverbs	Solomon, Agur (30), Lemuel (31)	From Solomon to Hezekiah, 970-700 B.C.	The Book of Wisdom The Book of Instruction
Ecclesiastes	Solomon	Solomon’s late years ca. 930 B.C.	The Book of Vanity The Book of Human Wisdom
Song of Solomon	Solomon	Solomon’s early years ca. 970 B.C.	The Book of Love The Book of Christ and the Church

* Many believe that Moses wrote the introduction and the conclusion to the Book of Job with Job writing the rest of the story.

III. How do each of these books provide wisdom for us?

A. The Book of Job demonstrates for us the fact of human suffering and how we can practically live a life of faith in the midst of it.

B. Although all of the Psalms are not specifically considered “Wisdom Literature” (the exceptions being Psalm 1, 4, 10, 14, 18, 19, 37, 49, 73, 90 and 112), the Book of Psalms encourages us that as we live a life that is pleasing to the Lord and put Him first in all things, God will defeat our enemies and He will prosper us in the end.

- C. The Book of Proverbs provides us with a collection of wise sayings and observations that undoubtedly sprang from God's perfect wisdom upon Solomon in his early years as king. These proverbs provide practical principles for living in all areas of life including parenting, marriage, finances, business and relationships.
- D. The Book of Ecclesiastes is a sad book in many ways because it demonstrates how futile life can become when God's wisdom is rejected. It demonstrates the huge gap between God's wisdom (wisdom from above) and man's or earthly wisdom (Jam. 2:13-18). It demonstrates the emptiness of life without God in the center.
- E. Although the Song of Solomon is quite descriptive of the natural love relationship between a man and his beloved, it is a source of wisdom for married couples to keep their love relationship alive. But more than that, as a parable of Christ's relationship to His Church, it is a book of wisdom giving us keys to keeping our relationship to God alive and vibrant.

IV. How do we know that Job most likely lived in the patriarchal period and is perhaps the oldest book in the Bible?

- A. Job seems to be pre-Mosaic law since no references are made to the law.
- B. Job seems to have an unusually keen knowledge of the heavens and stars.
- C. Job had an unusually long life of 140 years (Job 42:16).
- D. Job's role as a priest for his family was characteristic of the patriarchal period (Job 1:5).
- E. The fact that Job's wealth was measured in livestock would fit well in the patriarchal period of history (Job. 1:3).

V. Why do we call the book of Job "Blessing through Faith" rather than "Blessing through Suffering"?

Even though Job is often cited for his example suffering, the Bible focuses on the perseverance of Job through his suffering (Jam. 5:11). It is Job's response to that suffering that make's him an example of faith. Every child of God will experience trials and tribulations, but it is the faith and patience that we maintain in the process of suffering that will produce the character of Christ in us (Jam. 1:3-4; Heb. 6:12). Perhaps another title would be the "Book of Patient Endurance."

VI. What kind of a man was Job?

Even though many people in the story thought that Job was going through these trials because he had some hidden sin in his life, the Bible actually teaches the opposite. If Job had not been such a righteous man, God might not have drawn so much attention to him.

What does the Bible say about Job (Job 1:1-5; Ezek. 14:14, 20)?

There was a man named Job who lived in the land of Uz. He was blameless, a man of complete integrity. He feared God and stayed away from evil. ²He had seven sons and three daughters. ³He owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred teams of oxen, and five hundred female donkeys, and he employed many servants. He was, in fact, the richest person in that entire area. ⁴Every year when Job's sons had birthdays, they invited their brothers and sisters to join them for a celebration. On these occasions they would get together to eat and drink. ⁵When these celebrations ended—and sometimes they lasted several days—Job would purify his children. He would get up early in the morning and offer a burnt offering for each of them. For Job said to himself, "Perhaps my children have sinned and have cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular practice. Job 1:1-5 NLT

- A. Job was mature or complete in his personal character. Humanly speaking there was nothing uneven or lacking in him. He was a well-balanced man.
- B. Job was a man of integrity. In all of his dealings with others he had proven himself to be an upright or righteous man.
- C. Job was a man who feared God. Because of this we have to believe that he was a wise man.
- D. Job was a man who shunned evil. He consistently turned away from evil. He had lived his life in such a way that evil was no longer an attraction to him. His outward walk corresponded to the state of his heart.
- E. Job was a faithful priest in his home. He loved his children and he prayed for them regularly.

God Himself was the one who bore witness to this condition. Yet even though this was his condition relative to other people on this earth, there was still more to learn. He had not yet arrived. We do not compare ourselves to others when it comes to our life, we must use the standard of Jesus Christ.

VII. What do we understand about God from the Book of Job?

The Book of Job gives us a glimpse into the heavenly or spiritual realm. This experience of Job tells us something about God, about Satan and about people in general.

What do we understand about God (Job 1:6-12)?

One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan the Accuser came with them. ⁷"Where have you come from?" the LORD asked Satan. And Satan answered the LORD, "I have been going back and forth across the earth, watching everything that's going on." ⁸Then the LORD asked Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth—a man of complete

integrity. He fears God and will have nothing to do with evil.”⁹ Satan replied to the LORD, “Yes, Job fears God, but not without good reason!¹⁰ You have always protected him and his home and his property from harm. You have made him prosperous in everything he does. Look how rich he is!¹¹ But take away everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face!”¹² “All right, you may test him,” the LORD said to Satan. “Do whatever you want with everything he possesses, but don’t harm him physically.” So Satan left the LORD’s presence. Job 1:6-12 NLT

- A. God wants us to go on (there is always room for improvement).
- B. God works for our good. Even though Job would not understand it right away, he was going to be a better man when the trial was over (Rom. 8:28).
- C. God desires progressively greater fruitfulness for our lives (John 15:2).

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

- D. God desires to enter into a deeper and deeper relationship with His children.
- E. God has every circumstance under His control. Things are never “out of control.”

VIII. What do we learn about Satan from the Book of Job?

Just as we learn some important things about God from the Book of Job, we learn some important things about Satan, our principle enemy.

- A. Satan is a limited and finite being.
- B. Satan will be used by God as an instrument to help perfect the saints.
- C. Satan believes that he can thwart God’s purposes.
- D. Satan is deceived.

IX. What happened to Job that challenged his faith?

He faced contradiction (Job 1:13-19; 2:7-8).

One day when Job’s sons and daughters were dining at the oldest brother’s house,¹⁴ a messenger arrived at Job’s home with this news: “Your oxen were plowing, with the donkeys feeding beside them,¹⁵ when the Sabeans raided us. They stole all the animals and killed all the farmhands. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.”¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another messenger arrived with this news: “The fire of God has fallen from heaven and burned up your sheep and all the shepherds. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.”¹⁷ While he was still speaking, a third messenger arrived with this news: “Three bands of Chaldean raiders have stolen your camels and killed your servants. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.”¹⁸ While he was

still speaking, another messenger arrived with this news: “Your sons and daughters were feasting in their oldest brother’s home. ¹⁹ Suddenly, a powerful wind swept in from the desert and hit the house on all sides. The house collapsed, and all your children are dead. I am the only one who escaped to tell you.” Job 1:13-19 NLT

So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes. Job 2:7-8

Job was a righteous man, the greatest man on the face of the earth and prosperous in every way. Now this man faces calamity and absolute ruin. What about the promises of God? This was not fair because there was no cause for this (Job 2:3 with Pro. 26:2).

X. What input did Job get him during his trials?

Unfortunately, the people around us and our own mind do not always give us the best counsel as we go through our trials.

- A. Job’s wife told him to “curse God and die” (Job 2:9).
- B. Job’s friends missed the whole thing and comforted him with faithless words.
 - 1. They accused him of having hidden sin in his life.
 - 2. They told him that God never judges someone unless they deserve it.
 - 3. They reminded him, “When did the innocent ever go through what you are going through?”
 - 4. They said that his wickedness must be great and his iniquities infinite.

With friends like this who needs enemies.

- C. Job’s own mind (which represented the whisperings of Satan) condemned him as well. Job’s mind told him:

- 1. You are worthless.
- 2. You will never amount to anything again.
- 3. There is no hope for you.
- 4. Why me, Lord? The wicked seem to get away with so much.

Job wanted to reason with God as to why he didn’t deserve what he was going through (Job 23:4).

I would present my case before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments. Job 23:4

XI. What was Job’s response of faith?

Even though those around Job had their interpretation of his dilemma and even though his mind was in confusion during this season, Job maintained a positive confession of faith, he maintained his high standards of behavior and he maintained his principled life.

Note Job's expressions of faith.

A. Job 1:20-22

Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

B. Job 2:9-10

Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!" But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

C. Job 13:15

Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.

D. Job 19:25-27

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

E. Job 27:2-6

"As God lives, who has taken away my justice, and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter, ³ as long as my breath is in me, and the breath of God in my nostrils, ⁴ my lips will not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. ⁵ Far be it from me that I should say you are right; till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. ⁶ My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live.

Job had to believe that even though he didn't understand all that was happening to him, He had a confidence that God was allowing it for his good—to put strength in him (Job 23:6, KJV) and to bring forth gold out of his life (Job 23:10). He believed that as long as he was doing everything right, God would have to take full responsibility for what was taking place. Job believed that God knows what He is doing.

XII. What did God reveal to Job?

- A. God revealed something about his friends—that his friends were counseling him without knowledge.
- B. God revealed something about Himself—His great power and majesty.

Job was a man who had lived a principled, God-honoring life that was pleasing to the Lord, but he lacked a full understanding of God’s person and nature. God used Job’s material possessions to bring him to an understanding of God’s power and majesty. God can do as He wills. God will often sacrifice the external to deal with the internal.

None of Job’s friends could understand this. They offered every human reason for what was happening to Job. But God’s desire was simply to bring Job into a closer personal relationship with Him. But this could only happen if Job had a greater revelation of God’s true greatness and power. When God spoke to Job in the final chapters, Job got this revelation.

XIII. What was the end result of the trial of Job’s faith?

When Job saw God’s greatness, he saw his own smallness (Job 40:4). But the net result was three-fold:

- A. Job had a deeper relationship to God (Job 42:5).

I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You.

- B. Job had greater power with God (Job 42:10).

And the LORD restored Job’s losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

- C. Job experienced restoration and great blessing (Job 42:12).

When we respond properly to the dealings of God, they will always bring us into a deeper relationship to God and great spiritual blessing.

Note Job’s life before the test and after the test:

Before the Test	S	After the Test
Age 70	U	Age 140
7 Sons	F	7 Additional Sons
3 Daughters	F	3 Additional Daughters
7,000 Sheep	E	14,000 Sheep
3,000 Camels	R	6,000 Camels
500 Yoke of Oxen	I	1000 Yoke of Oxen
500 Donkeys	N	1000 Donkeys
Blessed	G	Doubly Blessed

XIV. What does the Book of Job teach us about suffering?

Job gives a balanced picture of suffering.

A. There are many wrong concepts of suffering.

1. All trouble, pressure and affliction is from the devil.
2. All trouble, pressure and affliction can be dispelled if we have enough faith (See: II Timothy 3:12; Acts 14:22; I Thessalonians 3:3).

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

II Timothy 3:12

We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God... Acts 14:22

B. There are more biblical concepts taught in the Book of Job.

1. There is a suffering in the world that is not the result of the sin of the sufferer or the sufferer's parents.
2. The sufferings that you go through will not always be understood by you or anyone else around you.
3. The sufferings that God sends are to lead to our growth and development (Rom. 8:28).

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

4. The sufferings that God sends are to prepare you to be more useful vessels through which He can channel more and greater blessings.

XV. What are some unique features of the Book of Psalms or Songs?

The Book of Psalms is sometimes called the “heart” of the Bible, not only because of its central place, but because it reflects on a true heart after God.

The Book of Psalms has more chapters than any other book of the Bible and also contains the longest single chapter in the Bible with Psalm 119 having 176 verses. It also has the shortest chapter in the Bible with Psalm 117 only having two verses.

A. The book of Psalms is perhaps the most read and utilized book in the Bible.

1. Psalms were utilized in the New Testament Church.
 - a. For worship in gatherings (I Cor. 14:26).
 - b. For personal worship and praise (Jam. 5:13).
 - c. For teaching, admonition and instruction (Col. 3:16).
 - d. For singing and making melody (Eph. 5:19).

2. Psalms are utilized by most contemporary believers.
 - a. For personal devotional meditation.
 - b. For encouragement through trials.
 - c. For quoting in conjunction with special events.

B. The Book of Psalms is a collection of many authors.

The Book of Psalms is unique in its authorship. No other book of the Bible has so many authors. There are at least 10 authors who wrote psalms.

1. David wrote at least 73 psalms possibly 75 (See Acts 4:25 and Hebrews 4:7 regarding Psalm 2 and 95 respectively).
2. Asaph, a priest and the chief musician in the Tabernacle of David, wrote 12 psalms—Psalm 50 and 73-83.
3. Korah, a singer in the Tabernacle of David, and his guild of singers (sons) wrote 12 psalms—Psalm 42-49, 84, 85, 87 (See: I Chronicles 6:37).
4. Moses wrote one psalm—Psalm 90.
5. Solomon wrote two psalms—Psalm 72 and 127.
6. Heman, the Ezrahite and worship leader in the Tabernacle of David, wrote one psalm—Psalm 88 (See: I Chronicles 6:33; 25:5).
7. Ethan, the Ezrahite, wrote one psalm—Psalm 89 (I Chronicles 6:44; 15:19).
8. In addition there are 48 anonymous psalms.

According to the Septuagint some of these 48 were written by the following:

- Isaiah – 3
- Jeremiah – 2
- Haggai and Zechariah – 3
- Ezra is also believed to have composed some of them.

C. The Book of Psalms is divided into five books.

The Book of Psalms is not arranged in chronological order, the oldest Psalm being Psalm 90 and the most recent being Psalm 137. The Psalms are arranged into five books corresponding in some measure to the five books of Moses.

The Psalms are sometimes called the Poetical Pentateuch. Each section ends with a doxology or benediction and either “Amen” or “Hallelujah” (Psalm 41:13; 72:19-20; 89:52; 106:48; 150:1-6).

1. Book One—Psalm 1-41

This is the Genesis section that focuses on creation and man. Man is seen in his blessed condition, in his fall and in his recovery.

2. Book Two—Psalm 42-72

This is the Exodus section that focuses on deliverance and redemption. It focuses on the nation of Israel.

3. Book Three—Psalm 73-89

This is the Leviticus section that focuses on holiness and the sanctuary. Leviticus focused on the holiness of God as seen in the sanctuary and tabernacle worship.

4. Book Four—Psalm 90-106

This is the Numbers section that focuses on the faithfulness of God in relation to the earth and the nations of the earth.

5. Book Five—Psalm 107-150

This is the Deuteronomy section that focuses on the Word of God and worship.

D. The Book of Psalms is a collection of many different types of Psalms.

1. Messianic Psalms—These Psalms speak directly regarding the coming Messiah and include such Psalms as 2, 8, 16, 22-24, 31, 40, 41, 45, 46, 68, 69, 72, 89, 102, 110 and 118.

2. Penitential Psalms—These Psalms focus on confession and repentance especially in the life of David and include such Psalms as 6, 32 and 51.

3. Historical Psalms—These Psalms focus on God’s involvement in the history of His people. They are reminders of God’s faithfulness and include such Psalms as 78, 105 and 106.

4. Hallelujah Psalms—These Psalms each begin and end with “Hallelujah” or “Praise the Lord” and include such Psalms as 106, 111-113, 135, and 146-150.

5. Imprecatory or Cursory Psalms—These Psalms focus on the invoking of a curse on the enemies of God and His people and include such Psalms as 35, 58, 59, 69, 83, 109, 137 and 140.

6. **Alphabetic or Acrostic Psalms**—These Psalms are written in the form of an acrostic in the Hebrew language where the first letter of each word is one of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet in order. These include such Psalms as 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, and 145.
7. **Didactic Psalms**—These Psalms focus on the instruction of God’s people on various themes and include such Psalms as 1, 5, 7, 15, 17, 50, 73, 94 and 101.
8. **Thanksgiving or Praise Psalms**—While many of the Psalms are filled with praise and thanksgiving to God these Psalms are particularly strong in this area and include such Psalms as 16, 18, 19, 29, 30, 32-34, 36, 40, 41, 66, 103-106, 116, 117, 124, 129 and 136-139. Note: The Hallelujah Psalms also could be included in this category.

Note: These groupings are offered as an example of how the Psalms can be divided. There are other groupings that are also suggested by others but these are the ones that are most commonly cited.

E. The Book of Psalms tells the story of Christ in prophetic form.

While there are over 100 messianic prophecies in the Book of Psalm, the following will serve as typical examples.

1. The Messiah will be the Son of God (Ps. 2:7; Heb. 1:5-6).
2. His close friend will betray Him (Ps. 41:9; Luke 22:48).
3. He will be accused by false witnesses (Ps. 35:11; Mark 14:57).
4. He will be crucified (Ps. 22:1-21; Matt. 26-27).
5. He will be mocked by His enemies (Ps. 22:7-8; Luke 23:35).
6. He will thirst on the cross (Ps. 22:15; John 19:28).
7. He will be offered vinegar and gall on the cross (Ps. 69:21; Matt. 27:48).
8. They will throw dice for His clothing (Ps. 22:18; Matt. 27:35).
9. He will be forsaken by God (Ps. 22:1; Matt. 27:46).
10. He will pray for His enemies (Ps. 109:4; Luke 23:34).
11. His bones will not be broken (Ps. 34:20; John 19:36-37).
12. He will rise from the dead (Ps. 16:8-10; Luke 24:5-7).
13. He will ascend into heaven (Ps. 68:18; Acts 1:9-11).
14. His betrayer will be replaced (Ps. 109:8; Acts 1:20).

F. The Psalms encourage us to make our own psalms or songs to the Lord (Ps. 95:2; 98:5; 105:2).

Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; talk of all His wondrous works! Psalm 105:2

XVI. What is the most significant contribution of the rest of the wisdom literature?

A. Proverbs—The Book of Practical Wisdom and Instruction

The Book of Proverbs is a collection of moral and spiritual maxims gathered from human experiences by a wise mind, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Solomon was the principle author and this book only contains a portion of the 3000 proverbs that he is said to have written (I Kgs. 4:32). In addition to the ones he wrote, he is said to have collected and classified many others (Eccl. 12:9)

1. The purpose of Proverbs is outlined in the first chapter (Pro. 1:1-7).

These are the proverbs of Solomon, David's son, king of Israel. ²The purpose of these proverbs is to teach people wisdom and discipline, and to help them understand wise sayings. ³Through these proverbs, people will receive instruction in discipline, good conduct, and doing what is right, just, and fair. ⁴These proverbs will make the simpleminded clever. They will give knowledge and purpose to young people. ⁵Let those who are wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser. And let those who understand receive guidance ⁶by exploring the depth of meaning in these proverbs, parables, wise sayings, and riddles.

- a. To give people understanding concerning God's higher wisdom.
 - b. To teach people wisdom and instruction.
 - c. To receive instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment and equity.
 - d. To help the simpleminded become clever.
 - e. To give to the young knowledge and discretion beyond their years.
 - f. To assist the wise to become wiser still.
 - g. To give guidance to all who are willing to study them in depth.
2. This book is comprised of proverbs and maxims.
 - a. A proverb is a statement which contains a specific truth in concise words expressed in a way as to gain attention and to stay in the memory.
 - b. A maxim is a saying or parable that is a statement of principle.
 - c. The Hebrew word literally means "a rule." Proverbs are rules from heaven for real living on earth.

More than a collection of human wisdom, the Book of Proverbs contains divine wisdom intended to rule our daily lives and teach us practical godliness.

2. These proverbs and wise sayings concern themselves with three fundamental issues.
 - a. Knowledge. Knowledge has to do with the possession of facts.

- b. Understanding. Understanding has to do with the proper interpretation of the facts.
 - c. Wisdom. Wisdom has to do with the proper application of the facts to a particular situation.
3. These proverbs cover a wide assortment of issues. One of the best ways to study the Book of Proverbs is to separate the major themes and study the verses together. Some of the principle topics covered are:
- Prosperity/Success
 - Work Ethics
 - Friendship
 - Parenting
 - Finances
 - Justice
 - Pride/Humility
 - Diligence/Sloth
 - Leadership
 - Wise/Foolish
 - Honesty/Dishonesty
4. The key theme in the Book of Proverbs is the fear of the Lord.

a. Key References to the Fear of the Lord

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| • Proverbs 1:7 | • Proverbs 14:26-27 |
| • Proverbs 1:29 | • Proverbs 15:16 |
| • Proverbs 2:5 | • Proverbs 15:33 |
| • Proverbs 3:7 | • Proverbs 16:6 |
| • Proverbs 8:13 | • Proverbs 19:23 |
| • Proverbs 9:10 | • Proverbs 22:4 |
| • Proverbs 10:27 | • Proverbs 23:17 |

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Proverbs 9:10

b. The Fear of the Lord Defined

The fear of the Lord is the affectionate reverence by which the child of God submits himself humbly and carefully to the heavenly Father's will. The wrath of God is so bitter that the child of God's only dread is that of offending his Father; and the love of God is so sweet that his only desire is to please his Father.

5. These proverbs are made up of three principle types.
- a. Contrastive. The key word in these proverbs is "but" (See: Proverbs 10:3; 14:11, 18). The second statement contrasts directly with the first statement.

The house of the wicked will be overthrown, but the tent of the upright will flourish. Proverbs 14:11

- b. Completeive. The key word in these proverbs is “and” (See: Proverbs 14:10, 17; 17:6). The second statement completes the first statement.

Children’s children are the crown of old men, and the glory of children is their father. Proverbs 17:6

- c. Comparative. The key word in these proverbs is “as...so” “better...than” or “like” (See: Proverbs 15:16-17; 25:25). The second statement demonstrates similarities with the first statement.

As cold water to a weary soul, so is good news from a far country.
Proverbs 25:25

B. Ecclesiastes—The Book of Vanity and Human Wisdom

This is a strange book in many ways. It seems to be written from a worldly rather than a spiritual point of view. It seems to have little place for God. The key phrase is “under the sun” (29 times). This book has, therefore, been called the Book of Human Wisdom. It describes life on earth from a very human point of view; such life is vanity (“Vanity of vanities” occurs 34 times).

- 1. The theme of this book answers the question, “Is life worth living?”

The answer from a backslidden king is given in the first chapter, verses 2-4.

*“Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher; “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.”*³
What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun?

⁴ One generation passes away, and another generation comes; but the earth abides forever.

- 2. The purpose of the book is to demonstrate the uselessness of living a life of mere human enjoyment; the fulfilled life is one which gives God His proper place.
- 3. The Book of Ecclesiastes refers to eight “vanities.”
 - a. Human wisdom and knowledge (1:17)
 - b. Human labor and works (1:14)
 - c. Human pleasure bought by wealth (2:4-11; 5:10; 6:1-2)
 - d. Human enjoyment that comes from work well-done (2:17-19)
 - e. Human rivalry in work (4:4)
 - f. Human fame or popularity (4:13-16)
 - g. Large family and long life (6:3-6)
 - h. Human frivolity (7:6). It only camouflages the inevitable sad end.

4. The Book of Ecclesiastes can be summarized as follows:

The king found that great wisdom, as good as it is, could not bring true happiness (1:12-18), nor could the pleasure of the wealth (2:4-11; 5:8-6:12), nor enjoyment that comes from work well done (2:17-3:13), nor human rivalry (4:4), nor popularity which is fleeting (4:13-16), nor a large family, nor long life (6:1-6).

The king was further frustrated as he recognized that wickedness and oppression were prevalent on the earth (3:16-4:6), that there seemed to be no advantage in being righteousness (7:13-21), that life is full of uncertainties about which nothing absolute can be known and even death is a puzzle (8:1-9:18).

Finally, recognizing the futility of life apart from God, the king comes down to the grand conclusion: Reverence God, keep His precepts and live in the light of eternity (12:9-14), because only God can satisfy.

All in all, a rather depressing book!

C. Song of Solomon—The Book of Love

Solomon is said to have composed 1005 songs (I Kgs. 4:32). If he is indeed the author, these songs would be a part of that body of work.

1. The Purpose of the Book

The purpose is to express the ideal love relationship in two arenas:

- a. The greatest human love relationship provided by God is a man for a woman inside of the pursuit and context of marriage.
- b. The greatest divine or spiritual love relationship is that expressed by Christ for His bride—the Church.

2. The Methods of Interpretation

There are several ways to look at the Song of Solomon.

a. Literal or Historical Interpretation

This interpretation says that this song is simply a description of marital love which celebrates the marriage of Solomon to a young Shulamite woman. It has no meaning beyond that.

b. Symbolic, Spiritual or Devotional Interpretation

This interpretation says that this song has nothing to do with a literal woman with whom Solomon had a relationship, the story is strictly symbolic of a spiritual relationship that we have with the lover of our soul.

c. Typical Interpretation

This interpretation recognizes a literal, historical setting relating a real relationship of Solomon to the Shulamite woman, but it is also presented to us as a type of the love that Christ has for His bride—the Church (See: Ephesians 5:21-33).

3. The Analysis of the Book

While it is difficult to analyze this book, the following will give some idea of its contents:

- a. The lovers sing of their mutual affection (1:1-2:7).
- b. The Shulamite speaks of her lover and recounts her first dream of him (2:8-3:5).
- c. As the drama heightens, Shelomah (most likely Solomon) comes in all his glory from Jerusalem to take his bride back to the palace and once more praises her beauty (3:6-5:1).
- d. Next the bride has a dream of being separated from her bridegroom which only heightens her realization of her love for him (5:2-6:3).
- e. The book closes with the bride and bridegroom expressing their ardent love for each other (6:4-8:14).

4. Sexual Relationship in Song of Solomon

Many have criticized this book because of its rather explicit references to the sexual relationship between a man and a woman. There is no question that it is a challenging book in this area and perhaps not the best book to be read by young children. However, on the positive side, we can learn something of God's attitude toward sex in the marriage relationship.

Song of Solomon gives us four characteristics about sexuality as it was established by God.

- a. It is good.

When God created Adam and Eve, He created them as sexual beings. He saw all that He created as good.

- b. It is to be mutual.

The Song of Solomon emphasizes, "I am my beloved's and he is mine" (6:3). In the marriage relationship the man belongs to the woman and the woman to the man (I Cor. 7:3-5).

- c. It is meant to be pleasurable.

God created the human body in such a way as to enjoy this part of the marriage relationship. The sexual relationship is not just for procreation (Heb. 13:4).

- d. It was intended to be beautiful.

Just as Adam and Eve prior to sin were fully exposed to each other and were not ashamed, in a godly relationship the sexual aspect of the relationship is not something about which to be ashamed. It is sin that has perverted what God intended to be pure.

Lesson 17
Introduction to the Prophets
Isaiah—The Book of Salvation

I. Why is it so important to study the prophets?

- A. The Old Testament prophets were God’s vehicle through which to speak to His people (Heb. 1:1-2a; II Kgs. 17:13).

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son... Hebrews 1:1 -2a

*In many separate revelations—each of which set forth a portion of the Truth—and in different ways God spoke of old to [our] forefathers in and by the prophets...
–Amp*

Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.” II Kings 17:13

- B. The Old Testament prophets prophesied concerning Christ and the Church.

1. Jesus declared that the entire Old Testament was about Him (Luke 24:25-27, 44-49; Matt. 5:17-18).
2. The Early Church recognized that the main message of the prophets was Jesus (Acts 7:51-53).
3. Paul was aware of the fact that the prophets spoke of Christ and the Church (Rom. 1:1-3; Rom.16:25-27).

25Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began 26 but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith— 27 to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen. Romans 16:25-27

- C. The New Testament writers made extensive use of the Old Testament prophets.

II. What are some of the names and titles of prophets in the Old Testament?

There are various names ascribed to the prophets in the Old Testament. The various names often signify something about the way in which they ministered or received their revelation.

- A. Man of God (I Sam. 9:6; I Kgs. 12:22; 13:1; II Kgs. 5:8). Even though there were female prophets as well, this title emphasized the separation of these individuals unto God and their upright lifestyles.
- B. Seers (I Sam. 9:9; II Sam. 24:11; II Kgs. 17:13; I Chr. 26:28; 29:29; II Chr. 16:7, 10; 33:18; Is. 29:10; 30:10; Amos 7:12). This title indicates that these individuals saw into the ways of God, had foresight into the workings of God and had vision in regard to the plan of God.

8And the servant answered Saul again and said, "Look, I have here at hand one-fourth of a shekel of silver. I will give that to the man of God, to tell us our way." 9(Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he spoke thus: "Come, let us go to the seer," for he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer.) I Samuel 9:8-9

- C. Messengers of the Lord (II Chr. 36:15-16; Is. 42:19; Mal. 3:1). This title highlights the fact that these individuals were ambassadors and official representatives of God entrusted with a message from God to be delivered to His people.

And the LORD God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. 16 they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy. II Chronicles 36:15-16

- D. Servants (II Kgs. 9:7; 17:13, 23; 21:10; Ezra 9:11; Jer. 7:25; 25:4; 29:29; 44:4; Ezek. 38:17; Dan. 9:6, 10). This title reflects the nature of all of God's ministers who are love-slaves to the Lord and servants to the people of God.

Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them. Yet they did not obey Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers. Jeremiah 7:25-26

- E. Prophets (Ex. 4:15-16; 7:1-2; Jer. 15:19; II Pet. 1:21). The prophet was to be a mouthpiece for the Lord. God would give His word to them and they would speak it to the people.

Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God. Exodus 4:15-16

So the LORD said to Moses: "See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land. Exodus 7:1-2

III. What is the background and development of the ministry of the prophet in the Old Testament?

A. The concept of the prophetic ministry has its roots in the patriarchs.

1. In early times a spirit of prophecy came upon godly men such as Enoch and Noah (Jude 14-15; Gen. 9:25-27).

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." Jude 14-15

2. Abraham was the first man in the Old Testament to be called a prophet (Gen. 20:7; Ps. 105:9-15). He functioned as a prophet when he interceded for sinners.
3. Isaac and Jacob were also used by God relative to prophecy (Gen. 27, 48-49; Heb. 11:20-21).
4. Joseph was also anointed to prophesy in relation to his sons (Gen. 50:24; Heb. 11:22).

In this period of the patriarchs, many godly men who lived by faith functioned in the realm of prophecy as the Spirit of the Lord came upon them. However, it was not a mature expression of the ministry of the prophet that would come later and only occurred sporadically.

B. The prophetic office finds its foundation in two main figures in the Old Testament—Moses and Samuel.

1. Moses laid the foundation for this ministry in the Old Testament.
 - a. He provided the definition and tests for this ministry (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:19-22).
 - b. He provided a mature example of the prophetic ministry (Num. 12:6; Deut. 18:15-18; 34:10-12).

But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

Deuteronomy 34:10-12

2. Samuel developed this ministry to a place of prominence in Israel.
 - a. He functioned on a high level of prophetic ministry (I Sam. 3:19-21).

So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the LORD. Then the LORD appeared again in Shiloh. For the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

- b. He became the first of a new order of prophets (Acts 3:24; 13:20). This order continued until John the Baptist (Matt. 11:13).

Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. Acts 3:24

- c. He established schools of the prophets where the prophetic gifts would be cultivated and developed (I Sam. 10:5, 10; 19:20).
 - d. He laid the foundation for the prophet's ministry to kings and governmental leaders (I Sam. 10:1; 16:13).
- C. The prophetic office remained strong through Malachi. Even though their words were often disregarded, they served as a conscience to the nation.
- D. The period of the Old Testament ends with no strong prophetic voice and what is referred to as the 400 "silent years."

IV. What are the differences in expression of the various prophets in the Old Testament?

A. Prophets of Guidance

Many of the prophets could be classified as prophets of guidance. Moses, Samuel, Elijah and Elisha would fall into this category. These prophets operated primarily in realms of guidance, word of wisdom, word of knowledge, miracles and declaring God's word and His will to His people. These were people who were in close relationship to God and were, as a result, consulted in areas of guidance and direction. Some of these were prophets of Scripture, but most of them were only oral prophets.

B. Prophets of Vision

Some of the prophets in the Old Testament could be classified as prophets of vision. Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah are the main examples of this type. These prophets are characterized as those who "saw" the Word of the Lord. God gave them visions and they recorded what they saw. In most cases what they saw had to do with the future of people and nations. The Revelation of John reflects this same type of prophetic ministry.

C. Prophets of Testimony

A few prophets were prophetic in an unusual way. The lives of these prophets became a testimony and the principle message that they carried. Jonah's principle prophecy was his three days and three nights' experience in the belly of the whale (Matt. 12:39-41; 16:4; Luke 11:29-32). Although Hosea would also fall into other categories because of his prophetic words, he also lived a life of prophetic actions that were to speak to the nation (Hosea 1).

D. Prophets of Scripture

The prophets of Scripture are the ones with which we are the most familiar because of their writings that have come down to us. These prophets did no miracles; they simply spoke the Word of the Lord. These prophets include two categories, the Major Prophets and the Minor Prophets. The classification of these prophets has nothing to do with the importance of their message. The classification is only given based on the volume of the prophecies that we have from them.

1. The Major Prophets

The Major Prophets (or former prophets, as they are sometimes called) include Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel.

2. The Minor Prophets

The Minor Prophets (or latter prophets, as they are sometimes called) include all of the rest of the prophetic books from Hosea to Malachi.

V. What do we know about Isaiah?

A. Isaiah is sometimes called the "prince of prophets" or "the statesman prophet."

B. Isaiah was of royal blood. His father was Amoz the younger son of Joash (Is. 1:1; II Kgs. 19:12) the cousin of King Uzziah.

C. Isaiah ministered to the Southern Kingdom.

D. Isaiah's entire family was used of God in the realm of the prophetic.

1. His wife was a prophetess (Is. 8:3).

2. His children had prophetic names (Is. 7:3; 8:3-4, 18).

a. Shear-Jashub or "the remnant shall return"

b. Mahere-Shalal-Hash-Baz or "speeding to the spoil he hastens to the prey."

E. He is believed to have been killed by Manasseh. Tradition says that Manasseh put him in a hollow log and sawed him in half. Some people believe that the reference in the Book of Hebrews may be referring to Isaiah (Heb. 11:37).

VI. Under which kings did Isaiah minister?

Isaiah was a contemporary of Hosea (Hos. 1:1) and Micah (Mic. 1:1) and ministered during the reign of five kings for about sixty years.

- A. Uzziah (chapters 1-5)
- B. Jotham (chapter 6)
- C. Ahaz (chapters 7-14)
- D. Hezekiah (chapters 15-66)
- E. Manasseh

VII. How would you outline the prophecies of Isaiah?

The book divides itself into two main divisions:

- A. The Assyrian Period—The Book of Judgment, Chapters 1-39
 - 1. Judgments (ch. 1-12) followed by a songs (12:2, 4-6).
 - 2. Burdens (ch. 13-27) followed by a song (27:2-5).
 - 3. Woes (ch. 28-35) followed by songs (35:2, 6, 10).
 - 4. Historical Section (ch. 36-39) with a song (38:20). This section includes the Assyrian invasion and Hezekiah's healing.
- B. The Babylonian Period—The Book of Comfort, Chapters 40-66
 - 1. Comfort to the exiles in the promise of restoration (ch. 40-48).
 - 2. Comfort to the exiles in the promises of Messiah (ch. 49-57).
 - 3. Comfort in prophecy of future glory (ch. 58-66).

VIII. Why is Isaiah sometimes referred to as the Fifth Gospel?

A. The key word in the book of Isaiah is “salvation.” Note the following:

- Wells of Salvation (12:3)
- Joy of Salvation (25:9)
- Walls and Bulwarks of Salvation (26:1)
- Everlasting Salvation (45:17)
- Day of Salvation (49:8)
- Proclamation of Salvation (52:7)
- Spread of Salvation (52:10)
- Arm of Salvation (59:16)
- Helmet of Salvation (59:17)
- Garments of Salvation (61:10)
- Lamp of Salvation (62:1)

- B. Isaiah's name means "Jehovah saves" or "Jehovah is helper."
- C. It contains at least eleven songs of redemption.
- D. Isaiah tells the complete story of Christ in prophecy. The following represent only a few of the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah:
 1. Christ to be born of a virgin (Is. 7:14; Luke 1:26-31).
 2. Christ to be heir to David's throne (Is. 9:7; Luke 1:32-33).
 3. Christ to minister in Galilee (Is. 9:1-2; Matt. 4:13-16).
 4. Christ to be widely rejected (Is. 53:1, 3; John 12:37-38).
 5. Christ to minister in the power of the Spirit (Is. 61:1-2; Luke 4:18-19; Acts 10:38).
 6. Christ to make atonement for us (Is. 53:5; I Pet. 1:2).
 7. Christ to be spat on and struck (Is. 50:6; Matt. 26:67).
 8. Christ to be disfigured by suffering (Is. 52:14; 53:2; Mark 15:15-19).
 9. Christ to die with transgressors (Is. 53:12; Mark 15:27-28; Luke 22:37)
 10. Christ to be buried in a rich man's tomb (Is. 53:9; Matt. 27:57-60).

IX. Are there any other unique features in relation to the Book of Isaiah?

Isaiah is sometimes called "the little Bible" for the following reasons:

- A. There are 66 chapters in Isaiah and 66 books in the Bible.
- B. Chapters 1-39 deal with the law and judgment and correspond to the 39 books of the Old Testament.
- C. Chapters 40-66 deal with Messianic prophecies and the coming age of grace corresponding to the 27 books of the New Testament.
- D. The New Testament section begins with "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" or the ministry of John the Baptist (Is. 40:3).
- E. The last chapter in the book ends with the new heavens and the new earth and the worm that does not die (Is. 66:22-24).

Lesson 18

Jeremiah and Lamentations

I. What was the world situation in which Jeremiah lived?

Jeremiah's world was one of turmoil. He ministered about 70 years after Isaiah in a time when the Assyrians were losing their grip on world domination and while the Egyptians and the Babylonians were grasping for power.

Judah was in the path of Babylon's goal for conquest. At the same time Judah was deteriorating economically, politically and spiritually. Jeremiah saw the danger and warned the people of God to return to the Lord and find safety under the wings of the Almighty. His call was one of repentance and turning back to the Lord.

Jeremiah ministered under the last five kings of Judah which were the darkest times for the nation (See II Kings 22-25). The temple had been desecrated by Manasseh, the priests were corrupt and most of the prophets were prophesying lies (Jer. 5:31). Unfortunately his message was generally disregarded. As a result Jeremiah witnessed the overthrow of Judah and the initial stages of the Babylonian captivity of Judah.

II. What do we know about Jeremiah?

- A. Like John the Baptist, Jeremiah was the son of a priest (Hilkiah) and as such was to be a priest himself (Jer. 1:1).
- B. Jeremiah was timid by nature (Jer. 1:8).
- C. Jeremiah was very young (17-21 years old) when God called him to be a prophet (Jer. 1:7-10).
- D. Jeremiah was not allowed by God to marry so that he could be living testimony to Judah of impending disaster (Jer. 16:2-4).
- E. Jeremiah was an unpopular and lonely prophet because of his call to repentance and was mocked, threatened, cursed, starved, plotted against, beaten and even imprisoned (Jer. 11:18-23; 12:6; 18:18; 26:1-15; 32:1-3; 38:6-13, 28). It should be noted that his imprisonment may have saved his life (Jer. 38:28).

Jeremiah only had one friend that stuck with him through thick and thin—Baruch, his personal secretary (Jer. 36:4-8).

Now Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken. And he was there when Jerusalem was taken. Jeremiah 38:28

- F. Jeremiah was contemporary with Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Daniel and Ezekiel.
- G. Jeremiah had a six-fold commission (Jer. 1:5, 10, See also: Jer. 18:7-9; 24:6-7; 32:42; 33:7; 42:10).

See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.”

Jeremiah 1:10

1. Phase One

- To root out
- To pull down
- To destroy
- To throw down

2. Phase Two

- To build
- To plant

Sometimes in life's projects phase one must precede stage two. Sometimes the old must be torn down before a new foundation can be laid for proper building and planting. Jeremiah only was able to accomplish the first phase of his commission because the people did not respond to his message.

This is why some people thought that Jesus might be Jeremiah who had come back to earth (Matt. 16:13-14). The Jews fully expected Jeremiah to come back and finish his ministry of building and planting.

In a sense Jesus is the new Jeremiah. He came with a message of repentance and a rooting up ministry (Matt. 15:12-13). Yet at the same time He came to build and plant the church (Matt. 16:18).

H. Jeremiah's ministry had three stages in his 50 year ministry.

1. He warned the people of God when Assyria and Egypt threatened.
 2. He proclaimed God's impending judgment when Judah was threatened and besieged by Babylon.
 3. He further ministered in Jerusalem and Egypt after Judah's downfall.
- I. Jeremiah lived through the Babylonian invasion but was later taken to Egypt where he is believed to have died or been killed (Jer. 43:1-7).

III. Why is Jeremiah known as the “weeping prophet?”

Jeremiah is known as “the weeping prophet” or “the prophet of the broken heart.” He is given this title because of some of the following reasons:

- A. He was grieved over the sins of the nation and their refusal to repent.

- B. He was grieved because he saw the imminent destruction of the beautiful city of Jerusalem.
- C. He was grieved because he knew that God’s people, His instrument in the earth, His special treasure would be going into captivity.
- D. He was grieved because he knew the answer to their need, but they would not listen to him. Instead they listened to the prophets who told them what they wanted to hear (Jer. 23:9-24).

My heart is broken because of the false prophets, and I tremble uncontrollably. I stagger like a drunkard, like someone overcome by wine, because of the holy words the LORD has spoken against them. For the land is full of adultery, and it lies under a curse. The land itself is in mourning—its pastures are dried up. For the prophets do evil and abuse their power.

“The priests are like the prophets, all ungodly, wicked men. I have seen their despicable acts right here in my own Temple,” says the LORD. “Therefore their paths will be dark and slippery. They will be chased down dark and treacherous trails, where they will fall. For I will bring disaster upon them when their time of punishment comes. I, the LORD, have spoken!

”I saw that the prophets of Samaria were terribly evil, for they prophesied by Baal and led my people of Israel into sin. But now I see that the prophets of Jerusalem are even worse! They commit adultery, and they love dishonesty. They encourage those who are doing evil instead of turning them away from their sins. These prophets are as wicked as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah once were.”

Therefore, this is what the LORD Almighty says concerning the prophets: “I will feed them with bitterness and give them poison to drink. For it is because of Jerusalem’s prophets that wickedness fills this land. This is my warning to my people,” says the LORD Almighty. “Do not listen to these prophets when they prophesy to you, filling you with futile hopes. They are making up everything they say. They do not speak for the LORD! They keep saying to these rebels who despise my word, ‘Don’t worry! The LORD says you will have peace!’ And to those who stubbornly follow their own evil desires, they say, ‘No harm will come your way!’

“But can you name even one of these prophets who knows the LORD well enough to hear what he is saying? Has even one of them cared enough to listen? Look! The LORD’s anger bursts out like a storm, a whirlwind that swirls down on the heads of the wicked. The anger of the LORD will not diminish until it has finished all his plans. In the days to come, you will understand all this very clearly.

“I have not sent these prophets, yet they claim to speak for me. I have given them no message, yet they prophesy. If they had listened to me, they would have spoken my words and turned my people from their evil ways. 231 a God who is only in one place?” asks the LORD. “Do they think I cannot see what they are doing? Can anyone hide from me? Am I not everywhere in all the heavens and earth?” asks the LORD.

“I have heard these prophets say, ‘Listen to the dream I had from God last night.’ And then they proceed to tell lies in my name. How long will this go on? If they are prophets, they are prophets of deceit, inventing everything they say. By telling these false dreams, they are trying to get my people to forget me, just as their ancestors did by worshiping the idols of Baal. Let these false prophets tell their dreams, but let my true messengers faithfully proclaim my every word. There is a difference between chaff and wheat! 29 not my word burn like fire?” asks the LORD. “Is it not like a mighty hammer that smashes rock to pieces?

“Therefore” says the LORD, “I stand against these prophets who get their messages from each other— these smooth-tongued prophets who say, ‘This prophecy is from the LORD!’ Their imaginary dreams are flagrant lies that lead my people into sin. I did not send or appoint them, and they have no message at all for my people,” says the LORD. —NLT

- E. He was grieved as he carried the heart of God reflected in the Book of Grieving or Mourning—Lamentations.

IV. What was the heart of Jeremiah’s message?

- A. Jeremiah’s main message was one of calling the nation to repentance.
- B. When they would not respond his message changed to that of the impending judgment of God.
- C. In the midst of it all he offered promises of restoration upon obedience (Jer. 3:14-17; 12:15-17; 23:3-8).

“But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking,” says the LORD. “Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Jeremiah 23:3-6

V. What unique features are characteristic of the Book of Lamentations.

Lamentations is the lowest point in the prophetic calendar of the Old Testament. Much of the preceding prophetic utterances had been pointing toward the potential of the events described by Jeremiah in this book. Now they have arrived and Jeremiah mourns.

- A. The two most common titles of this book in the Hebrew tell it all.

1. Ekhah, which is the opening words of chapter 1, 2 and 4 and is properly translated “Ah, how” or “Alas.”
 2. Qinoth, which is translated “lamentations” or “elegies” and refers to the funeral dirge format in which it is written.
- B. The book consists of five poems of lament reflected in the five chapters of the book.

1. Poem One

This poem focuses on the desolation of the city of Jerusalem. The city itself is personified and is crying out declaring her woe, professing her repentance, acknowledging her guilt and praying for vindication.

2. Poem Two

This poem acknowledges that God and His judgment is the real source of the desolation not the Babylonians and, therefore, the only remedy is to turn back to God.

3. Poem Three

In this poem Jeremiah identifies with the judged people and cries out to God in repentance and submission to God (No attitude of “I told you so” here). He recalls the Lord’s faithfulness in the past and pleads for judgment on the enemies of God’s people.

4. Poem Four

This poem goes into detail regarding the horrors of the siege and the actual fall of the city of Jerusalem. It is graphic and thoroughly disgusting.

5. Poem Five

This poem is a prayer of intercession and a cry for mercy on behalf of the faithful remnant of God’s people (Compare: Ps.79:5-8; 80:1-7).

- C. The book focuses on the lamentation of the prophet concerning four things:

- The **People** of Judah
- The **Temple** of Solomon
- The **City** of Jerusalem
- The **Land** of Palestine

- D. The book was written to the Babylonian exiles (Lam. 5:19-22).

Tradition holds that the book was read annually to the nation as a reminder to them not to forget the consequences of idolatry and disobedience.

E. The heart of the book holds forth the mercy of the Lord (Lam. 3:22-26).

²² Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. ²³ They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. ²⁴ "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him! ²⁵ The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. ²⁶ It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

The unfailing love of the LORD never ends! By his mercies we have been kept from complete destruction. ²³ Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each day. ²⁴ I say to myself "The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!" ²⁵ The LORD is wonderfully good to those who wait for him and seek him. ²⁶ So it is good to wait quietly for salvation from the LORD. —NLT

Lesson 19

Ezekiel—The Book of Visions

I. What was the historical setting of the Book of Ezekiel?

- A. The house of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) had been taken into Assyrian captivity about 120 years before Ezekiel prophesied.
- B. The house of Judah was now in the process of being taken captive by Babylon. This process took several years. It began under some of the last kings of Judah who were under a state of tribute to Babylon.
- C. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, took about 10,000 captives from the House of Judah in his second invasion of Judah about 597 B.C.
- D. The captives that he took were primarily of royal seed and from the upper classes of people and included a man by the name of Ezekiel.
- E. Ezekiel went into captivity under the reign of and at the same time as the king Jehoiachin (Ezek. 1:1-3; II Kgs. 24:11-16; II Chr. 36:5-6).

Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the River Chebar, that the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. On the fifth day of the month, which was in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the River Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was upon him there. Ezekiel 1:1-3

II. What do we know about Ezekiel the man?

- A. Ezekiel was the son of a priest by the name of Buzi.
- B. His name means “God Will Strengthen” or “The Strength of God.” Ezekiel became a tower of strength. He would have to be strong and fearless in the face of opposition (Ezekiel 3:8-9).

Behold, I have made your face strong against their faces, and your forehead strong against their foreheads. Like adamant stone, harder than flint, I have made your forehead; do not be afraid of them, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house.

- C. He was born under the reign of Josiah, was raised in Jerusalem and was twenty five years old when he was taken into captivity.
- D. At age 30, he was called by God through a vision to be His prophet (Ezek. 1:1-3:11). As it turns out, his main prophetic work would be in the realm of visions.

- E. While in Babylon he lived in the city of Tel-Abib and was given a fair measure of freedom, living in his own house (Ezek. 3:24; 8:1). He evidently used his house as a meeting place for many of the faithful in captivity.

And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell upon me there. Ezekiel 8:1

- F. His wife died the day the siege of Jerusalem began and was for a prophetic sign that Jerusalem would not survive the siege (Ezek. 24:15-18). Even though he loved her very much, he was forbidden by God to mourn her death indicating God's lack of mourning over Judah, God's loved but unfaithful wife.

Also the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Son of man, behold, I take away from you the desire of your eyes with one stroke; yet you shall neither mourn nor weep, nor shall your tears run down. Sigh in silence, make no mourning for the dead; bind your turban on your head, and put your sandals on your feet; do not cover your lips, and do not eat man's bread of sorrow." So I spoke to the people in the morning, and at evening my wife died; and the next morning I did as I was commanded.

- G. He functioned in the prophetic office for at least 22 years from the time of his captivity.

- H. It is not certain how or when Ezekiel died.

1. What was the nature of God's call in the life of Ezekiel?

The call of Ezekiel was different to that of Isaiah and Jeremiah.

*Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the River Chebar, that the **heavens were opened** and I saw visions **of God**. On the fifth day of the month, which was in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin captivity, the word **of the LORD** came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the River Chebar; and the **hand of the LORD** was upon him there. Ezekiel 1:1-3*

- A. His call included five elements.

1. Open Heavens (Ezek. 1:1, See also: Matt. 3:16; John 1:51; Acts 7:56; Rev. 19:11).
2. Visions of God (Ezek. 1:1, See also: Num. 12:6-8; Is. 1:1; 6:1-2).
3. The Word of the Lord (Ezek. 1:3, See also: Jer. 1:4-10).
4. The Hand of the Lord (Ezek. 1:3; 3:14, 22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1).
5. The Spirit of the Lord (Ezek. 2:1-2; 3:12, 14, 24; 11:1; 36:25-29; 37:1).

B. His call included a rather lengthy and mysterious vision (Ezek. 1:1-3:11). His vision involved two parts.

1. The first part of the vision involved understanding the awesomeness of God through mysterious imagery (Ezek. 1:4-28). This vision begins with descriptions of God that focus on God's omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence.
2. The second part he receives his actual commissioning. In his commission, God made it clear that—

And He said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you." Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him who spoke to me. He said to me: "Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day. For they are impudent and stubborn children. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.' As for them, whether they hear or whether they refuse—for they are a rebellious house—yet they will know that a prophet has been among them.

"And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you dwell among scorpions; do not be afraid of their words or dismayed by their looks, though they are a rebellious house. You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious. But you son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you."

Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe.

3 *Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. Ezekiel 2:1-3:2*

- He was being sent to a rebellious and stubborn people (2:3-4).
- He will most likely be rejected by them (2:5).
- He would need to dispel fear and not look at their faces or listen to their words (2:6-8).
- He would need to eat the scroll so that he could speak God's word (2:9-3:6).
- The people will not listen to him because they do not listen to God (3:7).

2. What was the general outline of the Book of Ezekiel?

The Book of Ezekiel can be divided into four main sections.

A. The call and commissioning of Ezekiel (Chapters 1-3).

B. Prophecies concerning Jerusalem its impending destruction (Chapters 4-24).

In this section Ezekiel prophesies about the destruction of Jerusalem and lets Israel know that their fall as a nation has nothing to do with the faithfulness of God and everything to do with their own sin and violation of the covenant.

C. Prophecies concerning judgment on the surrounding nations (Chapters 25-32).

In this section Ezekiel lets the other nations know that God will punish those who have been jubilant over Israel's fall.

D. Prophecies of comfort concerning future restoration and return (Chapters 33-43).

In this section Ezekiel comforts those in exile as he tells of a time when God will restore the kingdom to a place of spiritual blessing.

3. What are some of the unique features of the Book of Ezekiel?

A. The focus on the "Glory of the Lord."

Ezekiel describes four steps in the journey of the "glory of the Lord" departing the old temple due to their idolatry and false worship (Ezek. 8).

1. Step One (Ezek. 9:3) – From the Ark to the Threshold
2. Step Two (Ezek. 10:1-4, 18-19) – From the Threshold to the Cherubim
3. Step Three (Ezek. 11:22-23) – From the Cherubim to the Mountain
4. Step Four (Ezek. 43:1-5) – From the Mountain to the New Temple

B. The many prophetic acts of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel was instructed by the Lord to do many prophetic acts that were to speak certain things to the people of God. The following are only a few.

1. He shut himself inside his house (3:24-27) to demonstrate the lack of ability to freely move about in captivity.
2. He drew a model of the city on a clay tablet (4:1ff.) to demonstrate the siege and fall of Jerusalem.
3. He laid on his left side for 390 days and on his right side for 40 days (4:4-6) to demonstrate the discomforts that they would have in captivity.

4. He made and ate defiled bread to be eaten by him (4:9-17) to demonstrate the deprivations that they would experience in captivity.
5. He shaved his head and beard (5:1-4) to demonstrate their removal to another land.

C. The emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes Ezekiel is referred to as the prophet of the Holy Spirit. There are about 25 references to the Holy Spirit in Ezekiel. There is an emphasis on the prophet's personal relationship to the Spirit of God, but perhaps the most memorable passage is Ezekiel 37 and the vision of the valley of dry bones. This passage speaks of a restoration that will come following the judgment of God.

D. The revelation of Ezekiel's restored temple (Ezekiel 40).

Because of the unrealistic dimensions of this temple it is most likely symbolic in nature and references the coming of the church age when the glory of the Lord would return to the people of God in His spiritual temple (Eph. 2:20-22).

E. The judgment on bad shepherds/leaders (Ezekiel 34).

Ezekiel condemned the unfaithful priest and leaders who had served only themselves and led the people of God astray. Yet he prophesied of a whole new order of leaders who would arise and truly shepherd the people of God with a right spirit.

F. The key phrase, "And they will know that I am the Lord."

This phrase occurs about 70 times in the Book of Ezekiel. God wants them to know that in all of the judgment that they will be experiencing it is with a certain purpose. They will come away with a new found appreciation for the fact that God is high above us, that He is God, that He will not be mocked and that He rules in the affairs of men (Ezek. 6:7, 10).

Lesson 20

Daniel—The Book of the Kingdoms

I. What was the historical setting for the Book of Daniel?

- A. Daniel was most likely born under kingship of Josiah and witnessed in the closing years of the House of Judah prior to its captivity to Babylon.
- B. Daniel was one of the first captives taken to Babylon about 606 A.D. (Dan. 1:1-6). This had been remarkably prophesied by Isaiah many years earlier (Is. 39:7; II Kgs. 20:18).

“Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,” says the LORD. “And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.” Isaiah 39:7

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.

Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king’s descendants and some of the nobles, young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king’s palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king’s delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king. Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

Daniel 1:1-6

- C. Daniel would live in Babylon the rest of his life and see four powers vie for world dominance.
 - 1. The Babylonians
 - 2. The Egyptians
 - 3. The Medes
 - 4. The Persians
- D. Daniel would witness the fall of Babylon to Medo-Persia in 539 B.C.
- E. Daniel would even live to see some of the first Jewish exiles return to begin construction on the temple in Jerusalem after the edict of Cyrus.

II. What do we know about Daniel the man?

- A. Daniel was born of nobility possibly around the later years of Josiah's kingship. As such he was a contemporary with Ezekiel. He is actually referred to by Ezekiel (Ezek. 14:14, 20; 28:3).

12 The word of the LORD came again to me, saying. 13 "Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it, I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. 14 Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness," says the Lord GOD. Ezekiel 14:12-14

- B. Daniel's name means "God is my Judge or Prince."
- C. Daniel was taken into captivity when he was about 16-17 years old approximately eight years before Ezekiel was taken in the third year of Jehoiakim.
- D. Daniel was a handsome and well-educated man who distinguished himself among the captives along with three other young men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego.
- E. Through his wisdom and prophetic gifts (particularly the interpretation of dreams) Daniel gained favor with the governmental leaders in Babylon. His first assignment was to be over the house of magicians (astrologers, wizards, soothsayers and wise men). It is interesting that later magi from the East came to pay homage to the Christ-child.
- F. Daniel became a chief advisor to Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon for most of his career (See: Ezekiel 28:3).
1. Daniel served under Nebuchadnezzar (ch. 1-4).
 2. Daniel served under Belshazzar (ch. 5, 7-8).
 3. Daniel served under Darius (ch. 6, 9).
 4. Daniel served under Cyrus (ch. 10-12).

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God." Daniel 6:1-5

- G. Daniel is one of the few people in the Bible about whom nothing negative is written.

He is depicted as a man of unwavering faith, persistent prayer and devotion to God, bold courage, wisdom and tact, deep humility and a lack of compromise even though he served gentile kings. Even the heavenly messengers refer to him as a man of “high esteem” (Dan. 9:23; 10:11, 19). When you consider that he did this in the middle of an ungodly nation with every possible sin around him, he stands out as a beacon of light.

Then again, the one having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. And he said, “O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong!” Daniel 10:18-19

H. Daniel lived to be around 90 years old.

III. What makes Daniel such a unique man among the prophets?

- A. Daniel was a ranking official in a gentile nation. At times he may have even been placed in charge. In this sense he can be compared to Joseph who served in Egypt in Pharaoh’s court (Note: Both Joseph and Daniel were captives, they both interpreted dreams relating to gentile affairs)..
- B. He did not specifically receive the call of a prophet as did so many of the others. He would more than likely be best referred to as a seer..
- C. Most of his prophetic function had to do with gentile nations or kingdoms. We could refer to him as a prophet to the gentiles.
- D. Much of his book was written in the Aramaic language (ch. 1-7).
- E. Much of his prophetic literature is apocalyptic in nature.
- F. His book is a key to help unlock the Book of Revelation and the end time events.

IV. How is the Book of Daniel divided?

The Book of Daniel can be divided into three principle sections:

- A. Daniel’s personal history (1:1-21).

In this section we learn of Daniel’s captivity, his great moral decision not to defile himself and the favor and respect that he gained in the process.

- B. Prophetic revelations regarding world powers of the gentile world (2:1-7:28).

In this section Daniel begins his ministry of dream interpretation. He interprets several dreams that all have to do with the history of nations.

- C. Prophetic revelations regarding the future history of God’s people (8:1-12:13).

In this section Daniel addresses those things that would be of particular interest to the exiles in captivity. He deals with Israel's future and the coming of the Messiah. In this section, an angel from the Lord interprets Daniel's dreams.

V. What makes the Book of Daniel such an important book?

- A. The Book of Daniel contains three of the most famous stories in the Bible.
1. The story of the three men in the fiery furnace (3:8-25).
 2. The story of Belshazzar and the handwriting on the wall (5:24-29).
 3. The story of Daniel in the lion's den (6:10-23).
- B. The Book of Daniel contains important prophecies about world kingdoms in the dream of the image of the man (Daniel 2), the great tree (Daniel 4) and the four beasts (Daniel 7). The dream that Daniel interpreted in chapter 2 is a remarkable summarization of the future kingdoms of this world.
1. The world kingdoms are represented in an image of a deified man.
 2. The image is made up of a composite of gradually deteriorating substances (deteriorating in value and weight).
 - a. The Gold Head = Babylon (606-539 B.C.)
 - b. The Silver Breast = Medo-Persia (539-331 B.C.)
 - c. The Brass Belly and Thighs = Greece (331-146 B.C.)
 - d. The Iron Legs = Rome (146-476 B.C.)
 - e. The Iron and Clay Toes = United Anti-Christ Kingdom
 - f. The Stone = The Kingdom of Messiah
 3. The image is destroyed by the stone of the kingdom of God.
- C. The Book of Daniel affirms the fact that God rules over the nations and that they are but a drop in the bucket to Him (Is. 40:15).
1. The key verse is found in Daniel 2:20-23.

Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness and light dwells with Him. "I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of You, for You have made known to us the king's demand."

2. The key phrase is found in Daniel 4:17, 25, 32.

“...till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.”

VI. What is the significance of Daniel’s seventy weeks prophecy?

Daniel’s seventy weeks’ prophecy is one of the most amazing prophecies in the Bible. It is found in Daniel 9:24-27.

24 “Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. 25 “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. 26 “And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off but not for Himself and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.”

- a. This prophecy deals with the coming of Messiah and includes three sections.
 - a. Seven weeks of weeks or 49 years. These 49 years would include the period from Ezra to Malachi, from the command of Cyrus to rebuild to the completion of the temple and the walls. The temple took 46 years to build and the walls another three, totaling 49 years.
 - b. Sixty two weeks of weeks or 434 years. These 434 years would include the period from Malachi, through the 400 silent years of Jewish history, to Jesus in the Jordan River at His inauguration as Messiah, the Anointed One (Luke 3:21, 23).
 - c. One week of weeks or seven years. In these seven years Messiah will confirm the covenant, but he will be cut off (crucified in the midst of the week [See Is. 53:8]).
- b. This prophecy is what the faithful used to understand God’s timetable for the coming of Christ (Luke 2:25-38).

Lesson 21-22

The Minor Prophets

Hosea-Micah

In order to cover the twelve Minor Prophets in the time allotted we will look at each book in the five following ways:

- The Title of the Book
- The Occasion of the Book
- The Author of the Book
- The Main Message of the Book
- The Unique Features of the Book

I. Hosea

A. The Title of the Book—The Book of Law and Love

This book demonstrates the unshakable love of God for His covenant people. Even though He will be forced to judge them because their backsliding and the demands of the Law, His love will continue to pursue them until they return.

B. The Occasion of the Book

Hosea is the last prophet to Israel or the Northern Kingdom before the Assyrian Captivity. Some of his contemporaries include Jonah, Amos, Micah and Isaiah.

This prophecy was given during a dark period of Israel's history which is described in II Kings 14:21-18:1. Hosea began his ministry under Jereboam II and ministered under an additional six kings of Israel:

- Zechariah (6 months)
- Shallum (1 month)
- Menahem (10 years)
- Pekakiah (2 years)
- Pekah (20 years)
- Hoshea (9 years)

Even though through most of this time Israel was materially prosperous as a nation, all of these kings were wicked and walked in the sins of their father Jereboam. They were characterized by idolatry, murder, heavy taxation, oppression of the poor and corruption.

Read II Kings 15:8-31 and 17:1-5

C. The Author of the Book

The author of the book is Hosea, a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel sometimes call “the prophet of the broken heart.” Little is actually known of him apart from what is written in the book itself. We do know that:

- He was a citizen of Israel.
- He was the son of Beerli (1:1.)
- He married a woman named Gomer (1:3).
- He had three sign children, two boys and a girl (1:4, 6, 9).
- He had a personal heart of love and compassion to see his people return to the Lord.
- He lived to see Samaria destroyed by the Assyrians.

D. The Main Message of the Book

In spite of all of the wickedness of the leaders and the people of Israel, Hosea is a prophecy of God’s unchanging love for Israel. Despite their contamination and their adulterous relationship with the Canaanite gods, the prophet used every means possible to warn the people to repent in the face of God’s perpetual love for them. His call is for the backsliders to return to the Lord and find mercy. The book is actually written in poetry. It is a book of the heart’s cry for the people of God to respond to God’s offer of mercy.

We can see four main thrusts in Hosea’s prophecy:

1. God rebukes Israel for their backsliding (Hos. 4:16; 11:7; 14:4).

For Israel is stubborn like a stubborn calf.. Hosea 4:16a

My people are bent on backsliding from Me. Though they call to the Most High, none at all exalt Him. Hosea 11:7

2. God continually calls them to return (Hos. 3:1; 5:15; 6:1; 7:10; 8:13; 14:1, 7).

Come, and let us return to the LORD, for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. Hosea 6:1

O Israel, return to the LORD your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity; take words with you, and return to the LORD. Say to Him, “Take away all iniquity; receive us graciously, for we will offer the sacrifices of our lips. Hosea 14:1-2

3. God desires to have them respond so He can have mercy on them (Hos. 1:6-7; 2:23; 14:3-4).

“At that time I will plant a crop of Israelites and raise them for myself I will show love to those I called ‘Not loved.’ And to those I called ‘Not my people,’ I will say, ‘Now you are my people.’ Then they will reply, ‘You are our God!’

4. However, God cannot have mercy at the expense of truth (Hos. 2:4; 4:1).

The main message of the book is that God loves and longs to restore and heal the backslider, and through the chastisement and punishment of the law, He causes them to return to Him (*Old Testament Survey*, Conner and Malmin).

E. The Unique Features of the Book

1. Hosea's symbolic marriage and family

- a. Hosea was instructed by God to marry an unfaithful woman (actually a harlot) named Gomer (1:2).

When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea. "Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry and children of harlotry, for the land has committed great harlotry by departing from the LORD."

This marriage was played out as follows:

- Hosea knowingly marries a harlot (1:2).
- He has children by her (1:3-9).
- She leaves him and her children and plays the harlot again (ch. 2).
- She ends up on the slave block (3:2).
- Hosea goes after her and expresses his covenant love to her (3:1).
- Hosea buys her back with silver (3:2).

This marriage was meant to be symbolic of what God had done in relation to Israel. He had married her as an immoral woman, loved her and restored her only to have her leave him again. However, because of God's covenant love he pursued her and reclaimed her with the redemption price of 30 pieces of silver.

- b. Hosea's children were named prophetically and were living testaments to the message Hosea preached.

- Jezreel = God will scatter (referring to the nation of Israel in judgment).

"Call his name Jezreel, for in a little while I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu, and bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. It shall come to pass in that day that I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel." Hosea 1:4-5

- Lo-Ruhamah = Not shown mercy (referring to the fact that their cup of iniquity is full and will experience judgment).

And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then God said to him: "Call her name Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, but I will utterly take them away." Hosea 1:6

- Lo-Ammi = Not my people (referring to the fact that God has disowned them because of their refusal to return).

Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. Then God said: "Call his name Lo-Ammi, for you are not My people, and I will not be your God." Hosea 1:8-9

2. Hosea's promises of revival fulfilled in the New Covenant (Hos. 6:1-3, Compare Hos. 2:23 and I Pet. 2:9-10).

Come, and let us return to the LORD; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight. Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain to the earth. Hosea 6:1-3

Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth, and I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy; then I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' And they shall say, 'You are my God!' Hosea 2:23

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

I Peter 2:9-10

3. God's call to obedience rather than sacrifices (Hos. 6:6, See also: I Sam. 15:22-23; Ps. 51:16-19; Jer. 7:21-23; Amos 5:21-24; Mic. 6:6-8; Matt. 9:13).

For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. Hosea 6:6

II. Joel

A. The Title of the Book—The Book of the Day of the Lord

This book is called the Book of the Day of the Lord because this term occurs in the short Book of Joel five times (Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14). This term always refers to a time of special visitation of the Lord either in revival or in judgment.

This expression is applied prophetically in three ways in the Book of Joel.

- a. Locally. The people of Judah were going to experience a natural visitation of judgment for their sins (Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11).
- b. Prophetically. There would be a season of outpouring and visitation upon all flesh in conjunction with the coming of Messiah (Joel 2:31).
- c. Ultimately. There would be a season of visitation at the ultimate Day of the Lord and the Second Coming of Christ (Joel 3:14).

B. The Occasion of the Book

Joel is one of the first writing prophets. He most likely lived in Judah under the kingship of Joash. Joash was the boy who came to the throne and did not have the capability of reigning. He was under the tutelage of Jehoiada the priest who helped him make right decisions. When Jehoiada died, Joash immediately turned toward idolatry and led the nation away from God. As a result God sent prophets to turn him back. One such prophet was Zechariah, Jehoiada's son who Joash killed. Joel was another.

C. The Author of the Book

While there are about twelve Joels mentioned in the Bible, we perhaps know the least about the Joel who wrote the book that bears his name. While we know that he was a prophet sent to Judah, the Southern Kingdom, little else is known for certain.

- He was the son of Pethuel (1:1).
- His name means, "Yahweh is God."
- He most likely lived near Jerusalem. He makes repeated reference to Zion and the House of the Lord.
- He seems to have a close priestly connection. He demonstrates an intimate knowledge of priestly ministry (1:13-14; 2:17).

D. The Main Message of the Book

The book of Joel is divided into three sections.

1. Ruin (Joel 1:1-2:11)

This section could also be called "desolation, devastation and judgment."

Judah is living in the land of promise that was to be a land of fruitfulness. God had promised that the land would prosper as long as they were obedient to the word of the Lord (Deut. 28:1-6, 11, 15-21, 38-46). But because the people were disobedient, the land was experiencing the judgments of God (Joel 1:4, 8-12).

God had just visited Judah with a plague of locust, comprised of four successive stages of the insect that stripped the land of all vegetation. God

used this plague to demonstrate the coming judgment on the land unless Judah repented.

2. Repentance (Joel 2:12-17)

This section is the prophet's call to repentance. Joel knows that if God's people will humble themselves, pray, seek God's face and turn from their wicked ways, God will heal and restore their land (See: II Chronicles 6:24-31; 7:14). Notice Joel's call to repentance (Joel 1:5, 8, 11, 13-14; 2:12-17).

3. Revival (Joel 2:18-3:21)

In this section we have the promise of deliverance, visitation and restoration upon a repentant people. God's restoration would include:

- The corn, the wine and the oil (2:19).
- Victory over enemies (2:20)
- Fruitfulness (2:21-22)
- Former rain and latter rain (2:23)
- Restoration of all the lost years (2:24-27)
- An outpouring of the Spirit (2:28)
- A great harvest (3:13-14)

The main message of the book is one of grace and mercy. When God's people respond with repentance, God is eager to respond with restoration, healing and an outpouring of His Spirit.

E. The Unique Features of the Book

1. Joel's Pentecost prophecy—former rain (Joel 2:28-29, Compare Acts 2:17-21).

This prophecy was applied by the apostles to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

2. Joel's end-time prophecy—latter rain (Joel 2:28-32).

This prophecy applies more specifically to the events surrounding the Second Coming of Christ. It indicates that the restored church can expect a great outpouring before the great harvest at the end of the age.

3. The cycle of loss and recovery as seen in the four stages of the insect (Compare Joel 1:4 with 2:25-27).

This can be seen as a prophetic type of what God wants to do to restore that which has been lost to the church.

III. Amos

A. The Title of the Book—The Book of Judgment

Amos is a prophet who was called to announce the judgments of God not merely in relation to Israel, but also to the surrounding nations. He actually pronounces God's judgments to eight different nations.

B. The Occasion of the Book

Amos was living in Judah under the reign of Uzziah, but was sent to Israel under the reign of Jeroboam II. Jeroboam's was a reign that was characterized by material prosperity but spiritual poverty. The nation was characterized by the excessive pursuit of luxury, self-indulgence and oppression of the poor.

C. The Author of the Book

Amos was not a priest, a prince, of royal seed or of high education. In this case God called a very common man to bear his message.

- Amos was a citizen of Tekoa and lived in the wilderness of Negev.
- His name means "bearing a load."
- He was a sheep herder who had a sideline of cultivating sycamore fruit (1:1; 7:14).
- He was not a professional prophet and was most likely quite poor.
- He was a contemporary with Isaiah and Hosea.

D. The Main Message of the Book

The main message to Israel is that God's patience and mercy has limits. The key phrase "for three transgressions...and for four" is an idiomatic expression for the fact that you have crossed over the line of God's grace (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6).

Each nation that is addressed is characterized by a specific sin. These sins are like sign posts that you are reaching God's limit of tolerance.

- a. Damascus, Cruelty
- b. Gaza, Slave Trade
- c. Tyre, Breaking Brotherly Covenants
- d. Edom, Revenge and Unforgiveness
- e. Ammon, Greed
- f. Moab, Violent Hatred
- g. Judah, Despising the Word of the Lord, Disobedience
- h. Israel, Corruption and Oppression of the Poor

Amos delivers the eight burdens from the Lord (chapters 1-2), followed by five sermons which focus on the condition of the heart that brought about their sin (chapters 3-6) and ends up with five visions that deal with the judgments that result for the sins committed (chapters 7-9).

E. The Unique Features of the Book

One of the unique features of Amos is his five visions that all told of Israel's relationship to the Lord and impending judgment.

1. A Swarm of Locust (7:1-3)

This vision signified that judgment was on the way but only restrained because of Amos' ministry of intercession on their behalf.

2. Fire (7:4-6)

This vision signified that God was preparing to judge the land, but again Amos intervened through intercession.

3. The Plumb Line (7:7-9)

This vision signified that when God's people were measured against God's standard, they were not straight but crooked.

4. The Basket of Summer Fruit (ch. 8)

This vision signified that Israel as a nation was like a basket of overripe fruit that once was beautiful but are now rotten and can not be eaten.

5. The Lord Standing by the Altar (9:1-10)

This vision signified that the judgment of God has been executed. They will be punished for their sins.

IV. Obadiah

A. The Title of the Book—The Book of Retribution

The title fits the book because this book will emphasize the fact that as we sow we shall also reap. Even though God's judgment may tarry, a nation will eventually pay the penalty for what they have done.

The key verse highlights the theme of retribution, "*As you have done, it shall be done to you; your reprisal shall return upon your own head*" (vs. 15).

B. The Occasion of the Book

The book of Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament and deals with God's judgments in regard to one nation—Edom. Edom was descended from Esau and was known throughout the history of God's people as an antagonistic people. The rivalry went way back to Jacob and Esau over the issue of the blessing and the birthright.

Now Edom has assisted the enemies of Judah in the conquest and looting of Jerusalem. This book is a denouncement of Edom for their complicity in the capture and destruction of Jerusalem.

C. The Author of the Book

While there are thirteen people by the name of Obadiah referred to in the Bible, very little is known of the Obadiah who authored this book. There are a few things that can be assumed.

- He was an inhabitant of Judah, the Southern Kingdom.
- He most likely did not come from a kingly or priestly line because no mention is made of his parentage.

D. The Main Message of the Book

The main message of the book is that God will judge Edom for their history of antagonism toward God's people. The main lesson is that you cannot despise God's people forever without incurring His wrath and retribution.

The message reminds us of the long standing tension between the heirs of Jacob and Esau.

- a. It started out with Jacob and Esau in Genesis. The struggle began in the womb (Gen. 25:22), continued over the birthright (Gen. 25:29-34) and blessing (Gen. 25:34-36) and developed into a hatred (Gen. 27:41).
- b. It continued when Edom refused to let Israel pass through their land in route to the Promised Land (Num. 20:14-22; 21:4; Judg. 11:17-18).
- c. It was further aggravated when Doeg, and Edomite, slew 85 priests of the Lord (I Sam. 22:17-19).
- d. It intensified as Edom continually sided with the enemies of Israel (I Kgs. 11:14-17; II Chr. 20:1-2).

E. The Unique Features of the Book

Obadiah predicted that the Edomites would be "cut off forever," and that they would "be as though they had not been" (10, 16, 18). He also prophesied that a remnant of Judah would be saved and that the Kingdom of Judah would prevail (17, 19, 21).

Within four years after Jerusalem was burned, Edom was raided and desolated by the same Babylonians that they had aided against Jerusalem. The Babylonians took over Edom. The few Edomites that were left were confined to a region in South Judea, where for four centuries they continued to exist as active enemies of the Jew. In 126 B.C. they were subdued by the Maccabeans and were absorbed into the Jewish state.

When Palestine was conquered by the Romans in 63 B.C. the Herods, an Edomite family were placed in control of Judah. With the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 the Edomites disappeared as a people from history.

V. Jonah

A. The Title of the Book—The Book of Mercy on the Gentiles

This book describes one of the clearest and most beautiful pictures of undeserved mercy. God would take one of the vilest of all the nations on the face of the earth, send them a preacher, and, when they repented, forgive them.

This book again reminds us that God's eyes have never been just on the nation of Israel, but that His love has always been for the whole world.

B. The Occasion of the Book

Jonah ministered during the reign of Jereboam II of Israel. He is sandwiched between the ministry of Elisha and the later ministry of Amos and Hosea. Israel, though totally backslidden, was materially prosperous at this time.

Assyria was a world power known for their cruelty to any nation that they had dominated. They were certainly despised by any Israelite and would eventually take the nation of Israel into captivity.

It is not difficult to see why Jonah was reluctant to go to Nineveh, the emerging capital city of Assyria. When he did get there it is not difficult to understand why he did not really want them to respond in repentance to his preaching. He would rather have had God destroy them.

Unfortunately the nationalistic pride of the people of God kept them from having a genuine burden for the other nations of the world. God's heart is completely different (John 3:16).

C. The Author of the Book

Jonah, the man in the story, is most often considered the author of this book. Some of the things that we know about Jonah include the following:

- He was the son of Ammittai (truth-telling)
- He was given the name Jonah which means "dove."

- He was from Gath Hopher in Galilee a few miles from Nazareth (II Kgs. 14:25) which put him in the territory of Zebulun.
- He was a man of the word.
- He was a prophet/missionary being sent by God to a Gentile nation.

D. The Main Message of the Book

The main message of the book is capsulated in Acts 10:34-35.

“In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

E. The Unique Features of the Book

There are several unique features of the book including:

1. Jonah’s unusual transport

This is one of the greatest Sunday school stories of all time. Many have questioned whether or not it could happen. However, in recent history we have a couple of example of people who have been swallowed by a large fish and lived.

In one case a man was in the fish up to 24 hours. A man swallowed by a sperm whale was retrieved after 24 hours. He was bleached as white as a dove from the effect of stomach acids on his body.

We must remember this may have been the only fish of its kind. The book of Jonah indicates that God Himself prepared this fish (1:17). The meaning of the word “prepared” here, however, is “appointed.”

2. God’s special preparations for Jonah

- God prepared a fish (1:17).
- God prepared a plant (4:6).
- God prepared a worm (4:7)
- God prepared a vehement east wind (4:8).

3. Jonah’s “three days and three nights” living prophecy (Matt. 12:39-40).

4. Nineveh’s model of repentance

Notice the various elements of their repentance which can serve as a sign of a true awakening.

- They believe God (3:5).
- They proclaimed a fast (3:5).

- They grieved for their sin in sackcloth (3:5).
- They cried out to the Lord for mercy (3:8).
- They turned from their evil ways (3:8)
- They hoped that their repentance would avert judgment (3:9).
- They actually changed their lifestyle (3:10).

Unfortunately their repentance was short-lived.

VI. Micah

A. The Title of the Book—The Book of Conviction

The Book of Micah is a book of conviction because Micah’s chief ministry as a prophet of the Lord seems to have been to bring a sense of conviction of sin to both the House of Israel and the House of Judah. He declares this purpose in chapter 3 verse 8.

But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD, and of justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.

B. The Occasion of the Book

Micah served under the kings of Judah including Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. He most likely witnessed Ahaz set up pagan idols in the temple and eventually actually nail the doors of the temple shut. In addition, he was grieved by some of the national sins that he saw and addressed them in the name of the Lord. Because of his focus on such things as idolatry and immorality, it is likely that he did most of his work before the sweeping reforms brought in by the revival under Hezekiah. Hezekiah may have listened to Micah as he led the nation into reform.

Micah also addressed issues in the Northern Kingdom and predicted their fall to Assyria. He also predicted the captivity of Judah to Babylon which during his time was a long way off (4:10).

C. The Author of the Book

Micah the prophet is one of eight Micah’s in the Bible.

- He was named Micah meaning “Who is like the Lord?”
- He lived in Morasheph Gath (1:14).
- He was most likely a man of the country much like Amos. He uses many rural or pastoral expressions (e.g. plowed field, forest, pruning hooks, threshing, etc.).
- His contemporaries were Hosea and Isaiah.

D. The Main Message of the Book

Micah has a three part message which is reflected in the three sections of the book.

1. God hates sin. In this section Micah denounces the sins of the people and warns of impending judgment (chapters 1-3).
2. God has a plan to deal with sin—the Messiah. In this section he gives several Messianic prophecies meant to offer hope (chapters 4-5).
3. God is anxious to restore repentant sinners. In this section Micah details some of God's promises of restoration (chapters 6-7).

E. The Unique Features of the Book

There are several unique features of this book including:

1. A rather complete list of denounced sins. As a prophet whose task is to bring conviction of sin, Micah leaves little out of his list.
 - Idolatry (1:7; 5:13; 6:16)
 - Covetousness (2:2)
 - Violence and oppression (3:10; 6:12; 7:2)
 - Dishonesty (6:10-12)
 - Bribery (3:9, 11; 7:3)
 - Treachery and betrayal (7:5-6)
 - Witchcraft (2:6, 11; 3:5-7; 5:12)
 - Corruption of princes, priest and prophets (3:1-3, 5-7, 11)
2. Some rather spectacular prophecies of Christ and the Church.

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.” Micah 5:2

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Micah 4:1-2

Lesson 23-24
The Minor Prophets
Nahum-Malachi

VII. Nahum

F. The Title of the Book—The Book of Vengeance

Nahum is called the book of vengeance because God aims His judgment at Nineveh for their oppression of God's people. God sent two prophets to the nation of Assyria, Jonah and Nahum. They are separated by some 150 years.

In Jonah's case God sent a message of mercy to a nation that responded to God in repentance. In this case Nineveh learned that God is slow to anger.

In Nahum's case it was a message of judgment to a nation that did not continue in repentance but returned to their ungodly ways. In this case Nineveh learned that God is great in power and will not acquit the wicked.

G. The Occasion of the Book

Assyria had severely oppressed Israel and Judah for nearly two centuries. Their kings were crueler and the Assyrians were more feared than any other nation in all of history. Even though they had a genuine revival under the ministry of Jonah, now four generations later they have returned to their old ways with greater intensity than before.

In a sense, it could be said that Nineveh had presumed upon the goodness of God and did not maintain a spirit of humility before the Lord. As a result, they have forced the hand of God and they will find the judgment that has been reserved for them (Na. 1:2, See Romans 11:22).

God is jealous, and the LORD avenges; the LORD avenges and is furious. The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies; the LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked. Nahum 1:2-3

Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Romans 11:22

The Book of Nahum is a warning to all nations. Let those who presume upon the patience, longsuffering and silence of God, beware! Though God will forgive sin for which we have repented, He will not condone sin in which we persist. God's nature (specifically His holiness, justice and power) demands judgment.

Nahum was a contemporary of Zephaniah and most likely prophesied during the reign of Manasseh of Judah. Manasseh was one of the worst kings of Judah. Under his reign Assyria had put Judah to tribute and Judah became a vassal state. This message of Assyria's impending doom would be a great comfort to Judah.

H. The Author of the Book

Nothing is known of Nahum except what is given to us in the book that bears his name.

- Nahum's name (a shortened form of Nehemiah) means "comfort" or "consolation."
- He was called the "Elkoshite." Most scholars believe that this city was located in southern Judah between Jerusalem and Gaza.

I. The Main Message of the Book

The main message can be seen in the chapter divisions of the book.

1. Nineveh's Doom Declared (chapter 1). This chapter asserts the certainty of Nineveh's overthrow.
2. Nineveh's Doom Described (chapter 2). This chapter depicts the siege and the capture of the city.
3. Nineveh's Doom Deserved (chapter 3). This chapter tells of the wickedness that provoked the vengeance and retribution of God.

J. The Unique Features of the Book

1. The fulfillment of the prophecy.

Many nations, including Babylonians, Scythians and Medes, came against Assyria under the leadership of Nabopolassar (king of Babylon) to besiege the city of Nineveh. The siege lasted for over 2 years with not much success. Nineveh was a heavily fortified city with extensive walls.

Then because of an unusually heavy flood of the Tigris River a portion of the wall was destroyed (Nah. 1:8-11). The besiegers entered through the destroyed city wall and completely leveled the city. The city was so thoroughly destroyed that in the 2nd Century A.D. Lucian wrote, "Nineveh is so completely destroyed that it is no longer possible to say where it stood. Not a single trace of it remains."

The downfall of such an amazing world power and complete obliteration has been characterized as one of the greatest mysteries of history. It wasn't until 1845 that the foundation of the city was discovered.

2. The lack of mention of Judah's sins as a nation. Judah was not in a good place at this time. Even though they would be comforted by the overthrow of Assyria they would do well to take the warning for themselves. God is not mocked.

VIII. Habakkuk

A. The Title of the Book—The Book of Faith

Habakkuk is called a book of faith because the most famous verse on faith that is quoted in the New Testament is “The just shall live by faith” (Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38).

B. The Occasion of the Book

Habakkuk prophesied in the last years of the nation of Judah prior to their captivity to Babylon. Judah had continually rejected the message of the prophets and persisted in their idolatry. God was left with no choice but to chasten His people and He lets it be known through Habakkuk that the Babylonians will be the rod of chastening in His hands.

To the prophet this did not make sense. Why would God use an ungodly nation to judge His people? The book of Habakkuk puts into words a struggle that took place in the soul of the prophet. Ultimately Habakkuk realizes that God’s higher wisdom must be accepted by a faith that acknowledges that God is always righteous and beyond question in His actions.

C. The Author of the Book

Very little is known of the man Habakkuk.

1. His name means embrace” or “embracer.” This word implies that something is held by force.
2. He may have been a Levite associated with the temple choir and musicians because of his reference in the last chapter (Hab. 3:1, 17-19). The structure of the book itself models the Psalms and may have been sung.

Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls—Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer’s feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills. To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.

3. He is called a prophet which may suggest that he was of an official order of prophets (1:1; 3:1).
4. He was a contemporary of Nahum, Zephaniah and Jeremiah.

D. The Main Message of the Book

Habakkuk prophesied the coming judgments that would come to Judah. In the same breath he prophesied the downfall of Babylon, the nation that God would use to judge Judah.

This can be seen from the following outline:

a. The Burden (ch. 1)

The prophet has two burdens. First of all, how can God let His people continue to sin and remain silent without judging the sin? His second burden is how can God use a heathen nation to judge His people?

b. The Answer (ch. 2)

God's answer is not logical unless you have a spiritual heart of faith that tn in Him. The prophet is not to worry, God will take care of the Babylonians in due time.

c. The Prayer (ch. 3)

The prophet appeals to God to grant a gracious revival in the midst of the years before His ultimate purpose for history is worked out. He accepts this by faith and revels in God's mighty doings in the past and closes by expressing His faith in God above all fears and doubts.

E. The Unique Features of the Book

1. Habakkuk's revelation of faith.

Faith is not a central theme of the Old Testament. For Habakkuk, the only way that you can understand life is to have a strong confidence in Who God is and in his nature and character. As we rely on Him and put our trust and confidence in Him by faith, we will be able to walk in certainty.

Habakkuk was a favorite of Paul and was much later an inspiration to Martin Luther. It was while reading Habakkuk's prophecy in Paul's letter to the Romans that Luther's own faith came alive. In one sense, Habakkuk could be called the "grandfather" of the reformation.

Incidentally, it was while John Wesley was reading Luther's commentary on Romans that he experienced a rebirth in the Spirit many years after Luther's death.

2. Habakkuk's relationship to the Lord.

About two-thirds of the book is conversation between the prophet and the Lord as the prophet seeks to understand what is happening. In some regards it could be compared to Job. Both Job and Habakkuk were troubled with the "Why" questions.

3. The book begins with a sob or lament and ends with a song.

IX. Zephaniah

A. The Title of the Book—The Book of the Day of Wrath

The term “Day of the Lord” occurs seven times in this short book. Zephaniah’s message revolves around the familiar theme of many of the later prophets of Judah referring to the day when God will judge His people (See also: Amos 5:18; Joel 1:15; 2:1; Obadiah 15). A day of wrath is coming for Judah.

The term “Day of the Lord” has significance for more than the historical and local setting in which Zephaniah prophesied. It also has a more long range application looking toward the Second Coming of Christ.

B. The Occasion of the Book

The nation of Judah had been a nation built on godly principles. It had been a nation that was dedicated to serving the Lord. It had been a nation separated by God from all of the other nations. Unfortunately they had repeatedly fallen away from the Lord.

God continually sent the prophets to warn them, stop them, rebuke them, call them to repentance and turn them back to God. But the prophets were continually rejected.

Zephaniah comes on the scene under some of the wicked kings of Judah including Manasseh and Amon. Zephaniah warns that a day of wrath is coming. It will be a day of trouble, distress, desolation, darkness and gloominess (1:14-18).

The great day of the LORD is near; it is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out. 15 That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 a day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers. 17 “I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like refuse.” 18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD’s wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy, for He will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land.

He most likely prophesied on into the subsequent reign of the good king Josiah and his prophecies may have had something to do with Josiah’s reforms.

C. The Author of the Book

We know very little about Zephaniah. Some things that we do know include the following:

- Zephaniah's name means "hidden of God" or "God will hide." This is significant because this book will focus on God's hiding place in the day of wrath.
- Zephaniah was of royal descent being the great, great grandson of Hezekiah (1:1).
- Zephaniah was most likely quite young when God called him.
- Zephaniah most likely lived in Jerusalem because of the way he makes reference to the city as "this place" (1:4).

D. The Main Message of the Book

There are three main components to Zephaniah's message.

1. There is a day of wrath coming for Judah and for the surrounding nations (Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Ethiopia and Assyria). Man can only continue in his rebellion against God for so long. God is going to expose the wicked (Zeph. 1:12)

"And it shall come to pass at that time that I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and punish the men who are settled in complacency, who say in their heart, 'The LORD will not do good, nor will He do evil.'"

Men will seek to hide their sin but God is going to turn a floodlight on the whole thing and expose their heart.

- a. Position makes no difference in the day of wrath (Zeph. 3:3-4; Ps. 110:5-7).
- b. Possessions make no difference in the day of wrath (Zeph. 1:18; Pro. 11:4).

Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.

2. There is a hiding place for the faithful remnant in the day of God's wrath (II Pet. 2:9).

Zephaniah's name means "God hides." Only that which Jehovah hides will be protected in the day of wrath. God has always made provision for His faithful ones in the day of his anger (II Pet. 2:9).

The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment...

- a. Noah and his family were spared in the day of God’s wrath (Gen. 6-9).
- b. Israel was spared in the day of wrath when all of Egypt was judged (Ex. 12).
- c. God provided a secret place for David to hide from Saul (Ps. 17:8-9; 27:5; 32:7; 119:114; 143:9).

For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock. Psalm 27:5

You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Psalm 32:7

- d. God calls the faithful servants of the Lord His “hidden ones” or “sheltered ones” (Ps. 83:3; 91:1-16; Is. 26:20-21).

They have taken crafty counsel against Your people. and consulted together against Your sheltered ones. Psalm 83:3

Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past. For behold, the LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain. Isaiah 26:20-21

- e. God promises that the faithful will be hidden in the day of His wrath (Zeph. 2:3).

Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the LORD’s anger.

- 3. God will bring a day of salvation and restoration to His people (3:8-20).
 - a. He will deal with their enemies (3:15).
 - b. He will restore the captives (3:20).

E. The Unique Features of the Book

One of the unique features that is highlighted by Zephaniah is God’s jealousy for His people (1:18; 3:8).

The jealousy of God is a pure jealousy for His people. His love is so great for His people that He cannot tolerate seeing them with other lovers (See: II Corinthians 11:2-3).

For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

X. Haggai

The Book of Haggai introduces us to the three post-exilic prophets that include Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

A. The Title of the Book—The Book of the Rebuilding the Temple

Haggai is the second shortest book in the Old Testament. It is called the Book of the Rebuilding of the Temple because Haggai prophesied as the work of rebuilding was taking place. It was through the work of Haggai and Zechariah that the laborers were encouraged in the work of restoration that they did.

B. The Occasion of the Book

King Cyrus had given permission for the Jewish people to go back to Palestine for the primary purpose of rebuilding the temple of God. Haggai evidently returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and began his prophetic ministry several years after the initial rebuilding of the temple began. In fact, the remnant that had returned had faced some opposition in the building project and after finishing the foundation had turned aside from the task at hand (Ezra 3:12; 5:16). They had made a good start at the restoration of the temple, but they left off building and focused instead on their own private homes.

The building sat incomplete for 15-16 years. During this time the people were consumed with their own lives, their own houses and their own crops. However, things were not going well on several fronts. They were intimidated by Gentile opposition, they experienced drought, their crops were not doing well and there was a general spirit of apathy and despair. They even got angry at God for their failed crops.

God used Haggai and the younger prophet Zechariah to stir up the people and encourage them to put God's house first, resume building and shake off the effects of opposition. Ezra describes the ministry that Haggai and Zechariah had in relation to the project (Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14).

Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them. 2 So Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, helping them. Ezra 5:1-2

So the elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the

command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. Ezra 6:14

C. The Author of the Book

Again, not much is known about the author other than what is contained in the book itself.

- Haggai's name means 'joyful' or "festive." He may have been named as such in anticipation of a day of restoration that was anticipated by the Jews in captivity.
- Haggai was most likely born in captivity. As such he would not be numbered among those who had seen the temple in its original state.
- Haggai's ministry as recorded in the Book of Haggai only covered a period of three months and twenty four days.
- He was likely fairly young, but older than Zechariah, when he prophesied because he seems to have been around during the days of Nehemiah.
- Haggai was a man of conviction who had the luxury that many other prophets did not have in that people actually listened to him.

D. The Main Message of the Book

The main message of the book has to do with priorities. Unless we put God in His rightful place we will not prosper or receive the blessing of God in our own personal world (Hag. 1:7-11).

Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! 8 Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the LORD. "You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says the LORD of hosts. "Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands."

There are three principle parts to this message:

1. When we do not put God first, all other aspects of our life suffer.
2. Our success as the people of God is linked to our separation from the world and unto God.
3. Our future hope is found in Christ and His Kingdom.

E. The Unique Features of the Book

One of the unique features of the book is Haggai's prophecy about the "glory of the latter house" (2:9).

"For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. 8 'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts. 'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts."
Haggai 2:7-9

This prophecy can only be understood in relation to Christ and the Church—

1. Because the rebuilt temple was never as glorious as the temple of Solomon. Those who were old enough to remember the temple of Solomon wept when they saw the new foundation laid (Ezra 3:12-13).
2. Because Christ's physical body was a more glorious temple (Matt. 12:6; John 2:19-21). Jesus was the "greater than Solomon" and the "greater than the temple" Who came to build a new house for His glory to inhabit (Luke 11:31; Matt. 12:16; 16:18).
3. Because Christ's spiritual body the Church is a more glorious temple than the temple of Solomon (Eph. 2:19-22).

XI. Zechariah

A. The Title of the Book—The Book of Messianic Visions

There is no doubt that Zechariah is a prophet of vision. In this book he had eight visions. All of these visions are filled with symbolism and speak of the coming Messiah.

B. The Occasion of the Book

The background of this book is exactly the same as the background for the book of Haggai. The project of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem had been stalled for over 15 years. Haggai and Zechariah were both sent by God to stir up the people and encourage them in the work of the Lord.

C. The Author of the Book

Zechariah was a very popular name in biblical times. There are 29 individuals with this name in the Bible. We know very little about this Zechariah.

- Zechariah means "God remembers." Zechariah will be used of God to remind the people that Jehovah remembers them and has a plan for their restoration.

- He was the son of Berechiah and the grandson of Iddo (1:1; Neh. 12:4). This meant that he was of the priestly tribe of Levi.
- His father may have died early on and he was raised by his grandfather (Neh. 12:16). The very emphasis on his grandfather and his father's absence on the list in Nehemiah suggest this.
- He was born in captivity in Babylon.
- He returned to Palestine with his grandfather under the leadership of Zerubbabel.
- He functioned in tandem with Haggai.
- He ministered for about 40 years to the restored house of Judah.

D. The Main Message of the Book

The main message of the book is similar to that of Haggai encouraging the people to build. However, Zechariah puts a much stronger emphasis on the coming Messiah as being the ultimate hope for the people of God.

Some strong Messianic prophecies are found in the book of Zechariah.

1. Jesus, the Branch (3:8; 6:12)
2. Jesus' Triumphal Entry (9:9)
3. Jesus' Betrayal for Silver (11:12-13)
4. Jesus' Crucifixion (12:10)
5. Jesus, the Smitten Shepherd (13:7; Mark 14:27)
6. Jesus, the Fountain of Cleansing (13:1)

E. The Unique Features of the Book

One of the most outstanding features of the book is that of Zechariah's eight visions. The following is a summary of his visions (from *Tyndale's Handbook of Bible Charts and Maps*, Neil Wilson).

1. Zechariah sees messengers reporting to God that the surrounding nations that have oppressed Judah are living in careless and sinful ease (1:7-17).
2. Zechariah sees four horns, representing four world powers that oppressed and scattered the people of Judah and Israel. Then he sees four blacksmiths who will throw down the horns (1:18-21).
3. Zechariah sees a man measuring the city of Jerusalem. The city will one day be full of people, and God Himself will be a wall of fire around the city (2:1-13).

4. Zechariah sees Jeshua the high priest standing before God. Jeshua's filthy clothes are exchanged for fine new clothes; Satan's accusations against him are rejected by God (3:1-10).
5. Zechariah sees a lampstand that is continually kept burning by an unlimited reservoir of oil. This picture reminds the people that it is only through God's Spirit that they will succeed, not by their own might and resources (4:1-14).
6. Zechariah sees a flying scroll, which represents God's curse. God's curse is a symbol of destruction; all sin will be judged and removed (5:1-4).
7. Zechariah sees a vision of a woman in a basket. She represents the wickedness of the nations. The angel packed the woman back in the basket and sent her back to Babylon (5:5-11).
8. Zechariah sees a vision of four horses and chariots. The horses represent God's judgment on the world—one is sent north; the direction from which most of Judah's enemies came. The other horses are patrolling the world, ready to execute judgment at God's command (6:1-8).

XII. Malachi

A. The Title of the Book—The Book of the Lord's Messenger

Malachi is the last of the writing prophets leading into about 400 silent years. The silence will be broken by the Lord's messenger John the Baptist, the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

B. The Occasion of the Book

Malachi ministered about 70 years after Haggai and Zechariah during the governorship of Nehemiah over the restored House of Judah. The city and the temple have been rebuilt for some time and now the people have become complacent in their worship of God and adherence to His moral standards.

C. The Author of the Book

Nothing is known of Malachi apart from what is given to us in this book.

Malachi means "My Messenger." Some have felt that this could be more of a title for the book than the name of the author because it fits so well with the content of the book. However, most feel it is the actual name of the author.

There are four different messengers referred to in the Book of Malachi.

1. The Priests of the Lord (2:7). The priests were to be the messengers of the Lord, but they had become corrupt.

2. John the Baptist (3:1; Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:2). John the Baptist would come as the messenger to prepare the way for the Lord—the Messiah.
3. The Lord Jesus Christ (3:1). The Messiah and the messenger of the covenant would suddenly come to the temple bearing God’s message.
4. The People of the Lord (3:16). Those who fear the Lord are to bear witness of Him and speak of Him and for Him.

D. The Main Message of the Book

Malachi’s message was aimed at a people who had neglected the temple and priests who were filled with corrupt and wicked practices. The people were being lulled into a false sense of security and even though the captivity was part of fairly recent history they were already slipping back into hypocrisy, mixed marriages, adultery, divorce, neglecting the tithe and other sinful behavior. In addition their worship was formalistic and without heart.

The priests had a casual attitude about the worship of God and adherence to the standards of the word of God. They knew what God’s word required and yet they offered God other than their very best (Mal. 1:7-8).

“You offer defiled food on My altar, but say, ‘In what way have we defiled You?’ By saying, ‘The table of the LORD is contemptible. And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?”

Malachi’s message is a call for the people to return to the right ways of God, for the priests to cease from profaning their office and for the faithful to remain true as they are encouraged by the promises of the coming Messiah.

E. The Unique Features of the Book

1. Malachi’s question and answer method.

As you read through the Book of Malachi God responds to many of their questions with questions of His own. The questions that God responds to are poor responses from the people concerning His accusations that reflect the nature of their sins. God charged the people with seven sins and their reply is both critical and arrogant— “In what way?”

- a. In what way have You loved us (1:2)? Sin: Ingratitude
- b. In what way have we despised Your name (1:6)? Sin: Irreverence
- c. In what way have we defiled You (1:7)? Sin: Contamination
- d. In what way have we wearied You (2:17)? Sin: Complaining
- e. In what way shall we return (3:7)? Sin: Unfaithfulness
- f. In what way have we robbed You (3:8)? Sin: Greed
- g. In what way have we spoken against You (3:13)? Sin: Unbelief

2. Malachi's revelation on the tithe (Mal. 3:8-12). He was made to understand that when you do not tithe and honor God with your offerings

- You are actually robbing God.
- You are cursed with a curse.
- You experienced closed heavens.
- You experience the full effect of the devourer.

3. Malachi's revelation of the restoration of the family (Mal. 4:5-6).

Malachi saw Elijah returning to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers and the hearts of the fathers to their children before the return of the Lord. The restoration of the church and the restoration of the family will go hand in hand.