OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

The Bible has two main sections: The Old Testament and The New Testament. The Old Testament contains 39 books which are grouped into five basic sections: 1) The Pentateuch, 2) The Books of History, 3) The Books of Poetry, 4) The Major Prophets, and 5) The Minor Prophets. In the ninth century A. D., the Old Testament was divided into verses. Our modern system of chapters for all the books of the Bible was introduced in the middle of the thirteenth century.

	Unit:	Lesson:	Assignment:
1.	SYLLABUS	Introduction to the O.T.	
2.	PART 1 – THE PENTATEUCH	Israel's Moral Code	
3.		Genesis	
4.		Exodus	
5.		Leviticus	
6.		Numbers	
7.		Deuteronomy	
8.	PART 2 – THE BOOKS OF HISTORY	History of the Nation of Israel	
9.		Joshua	
10.		Judges	
11.		Ruth	
12.		1 Samuel	
13.		2 Samuel	
14.		1 Kings	
15.		2 Kings	
16.		1 Chronicles	
17.		2 Chronicles	
18.		Ezra	
19.		Nehemiah	
20.		Esther	
21.	PART 3 – THE BOOKS OF POETRY	Israel's Spiritual Life	
22.		Job	
23.		Psalms	
24.		Proverbs	
25.		Ecclesiastes	
26.		Song of Solomon	
27.	PART 4 – THE MAJOR PROPHETS	Israel's Future Life (Messiah)	
28.		Isaiah	
29.		Jeremiah	
30.		Lamentations	
31.		Ezekiel	
32.		Daniel	
33.	PART 5 – THE MINOR PROPHETS	Israel's Future Life (Messianic)	
34.		Hosea / Joel	
35.		Amos / Obadiah	
36.		Jonah / Micah	
37.		Nahum	
38.		Habakkuk	
39.		Zephaniah / Haggai	
40.		Zechariah / Malachi	

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PART 1 – THE PENTATEUCH: The First Five Books of Moses

Israel's Moral Code

I. **The Pentateuch means "Five Books"**
   A. The first five books of the Old Testament are sometimes called the Pentateuch, which means "five books." They are also known as the Books of the Law because they contain the laws and instructions given by the Lord through Moses to the people of Israel.
   B. The word "Pentateuch" does not occur in Scripture, nor is it known for certain when it was thus named. We also do not know when it was divided into five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The most likely explanation is that this name and divisions were made when the text was translated into the Septuagint.
   C. Moses wrote these books, except for the last portion of Deuteronomy which tells about his death.
   D. These five books lay the foundation for the coming of Christ in that they tell how God chooses and brings into being the nation of Israel.
   E. As God's chosen people, Israel became the custodians of the Old Testament, the recipients of the covenants of promise, and the human lineage God used to bring the birth of the Messiah (Rom. 3:2; 9:1-5).

II. **The Purpose of the Law**
   A. The importance of the Pentateuch cannot be overstated. God is holy; therefore He desires that His people live holy lives. Holy living in the days prior to the birth of Christ was defined by obedience to the laws described in the Pentateuch.
   B. More than just a set of instructions, the purpose of the Law is twofold.
      1. First, the sacraments, covenants, and rituals carried a significance that foreshadowed redemption through the blood of Jesus.
      2. Second, the Law is like a mirror–when meditating upon it, a clear reflection can be seen of the sinfulness of man and the need for a Savior (James 1:23-25).
   C. Through the Pentateuch God established His moral code for Israel; in so doing, the Law became an instrument in His hands to teach mankind that they are sinners in need of forgiveness (Rom. 3:19-24)

III. **Authorship and Unity**
   A. The Pentateuch was originally one manuscript: the "Law of Moses," also called the "Book of the Law of Moses," the "Book of Moses," or, as the Jews designate it, the "Torah" or "Law."
   B. The belief that the Pentateuch was written by a single author is validated by a cohesive theme and purpose. All five books reveal the nature of the covenant between Jehovah and His people, and all are contemporary to the life and times of Moses as God's instrument of revelation.
   C. The history contained in the text before the birth of Moses prepares the reader to understand the Covenant, and the rest of the books develop the details of the Covenant and how it operates.
   D. This unity was formed not as an afterthought by a human author; it flows from the first word to the last in God's design and revelation.
   E. Conclusive testimonies exist to establish Moses as the author of the Pentateuch:
      1. These books contain an explicit claim to have been written by Moses in the name of God (Exo. 17:14; 24:3, 4, 7; Lev. 26:46; 27:34; Deu. 31:9, 24, 25).
      2. Jews of all sects, in all ages, and in all countries testified uniformly and persistently to the authorship of Moses. (Ezra 6:18; Neh. 8:1; Mal. 4:4; Mat. 22:24; Acts 15:21).
      3. Our Lord plainly taught that Moses was the author of these books (Mark 12:26; Luke 16:31; 20:37; John 5:45-46).
      4. From the time of Joshua to the time of Ezra, the intermediate historical books consistently refer to the Pentateuch as the "Book of the Law of Moses."

IV. **Foundational Importance**
   A. The Pentateuch is the foundation upon which is built all the other books of Old Testament history and literture.
   B. Reading and understanding the Pentateuch is essential preparation before other Old Testament books may be correctly understood and interpreted.

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GENESIS – The Book of Beginnings

Author: Moses. Both Jews and Christians have recognized Moses as the author. **Date:** 1450 – 1410 B.C.

Name: The name "Genesis" is taken from the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek Translation of the Old Testament.

Theme and Purpose: Even a casual reading of the Book of Genesis reveals the prominence of the theme of blessing and cursing. Blessings are pronounced for obedience and faith, as seen in the Garden of Eden; but for disobedience, there is a curse. The entire book turns on this dual theme. But perhaps the main theme is the choice of a nation through Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant. Through Abraham God promised to bless the nations (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1-21). Genesis also tells of humanity's tragic fall into sin and death and of God's unfolding plan of redemption through His covenant with Abraham and his descendants.

Key Words & Phrases: "Generations" or "account," "these are the *generations* of" or "this is the *account* of." It is used eleven times to let the reader know there is a transition to another section. Each section is written in narrative style, telling what happened in connection with the key events and persons from the creation of the heavens and the earth to all the patriarchs of Israel.

Key Idea - *Beginnings*: The word "Genesis" means origin, or birth. Genesis is the book of beginnings—the beginning of the world (1:1-25), of the human race (1:26-27), of sin in the world (3:1-7), of the promise of redemption (3:8-24), of family life (4:1-15), of a man-made civilization (4:16-9:29), of the nations of the world (chs.10-11), and of the Hebrew race (chs.12-50).

The book of Genesis gives an historical point of reference from which all subsequent revelation proceeds. In the book of Genesis all the major themes of the Bible have their origin. But it also establishes the beginning of marriage, family, work, sin, murder, capital punishment, sacrifice, races, languages, civilization, Sabbath, and the first attempt to unite nations. The Bible is, through and through, an historical revelation. It is the account of God's activity in history.

Key Chapters: The prominent message of Genesis is the call of Abraham to the nations and the promises of blessing through his seed; the key chapters are those relating to the Abrahamic Covenant and its reiteration (12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-9).

Key Verses: 3:14-19; 12:1-3

Key People: Genesis includes some of the most memorable characters in the Bible: Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, Jacob, Rachel, and Joseph.

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Genesis: Immediately after the fall, the promise of salvation is given in the seed of the woman (3:15). Then, Messianic references continue throughout Genesis: the line of Seth (4: 25), the offspring of Shem (9:26), the family of Abraham (12:3), the seed of Isaac (26:3), the sons of Jacob (46:3), and the tribe of Judah (49:10).

The lives of many characters in the Old Testament have parallels in the life of Christ. This method was orchestrated by God to prepare His people to recognize the Messiah when He came. (In theological terminology, this is called a "type.") Sometimes inanimate objects or happenings were used by God to illustrate some aspect of Christ's mission, nature, or character.

1. Adam is contrasted with Christ (Rom. 5:14). As Adam is the head of the old creation, so Christ is the head of the new spiritual creation. Christ is the new Adam.
2. Abel's offering of a blood sacrifice points to Christ, who would shed His blood for our atonement. Abel's murder by Cain may also illustrate Christ's death.
3. Melchizedek is also an illustration of Christ (see Heb. 7: 3).
4. Joseph's life parallels that of Christ: He was loved dearly by his father, betrayed by his brothers, and yet became the means of their deliverance.

Outline: Genesis begins with "God" and ends "in a coffin." Here is an outline that divides the book into two large thoughts:

I. The entrance of sin on the earth (Chapters 1 - 11)
   1. Creation (Chapters 1 - 2)
   2. The fall (Chapters 3 - 4)
   3. The flood (Chapters 5 - 9)
   4. Tower of Babel and confusion of tongues (Chapters 10 - 11)

II. The preparation for the coming of the Redeemer (Chapters 12 - 50)
   1. Abraham, the man of faith (Chapters 12 - 23)
   2. Isaac, the beloved son (Chapters 24 - 26.
   3. Jacob, loved and chastened by the Lord (Chapters 27 - 36)
   4. Joseph, who suffered and remained true to God (Chapters 37 - 50)

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EXODUS – The Book of Redemption

Author: Moses. **Date:** 1450-1410 B.C.

Name: "Exodus" is a Latin word derived from the Greek *exodus,* meaning "departure," "going out."

Theme and Purpose: Two themes prevail in Exodus:

1. *Redemption* as pictured in the Passover, and
2. *Deliverance* as seen in the exodus out of the bondage of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea.

Exodus continues the history of God's chosen people, the nation of Israel, and describes their deliverance out of Egypt after nearly four hundred years of captivity. During this time, they developed as a nation, into a theocracy, governed by God. Exodus describes the birth, history, and call of Moses by God to lead the people out of their Egyptian bondage and into the Promised Land, the land of Canaan. Through the miracles of the ten plagues (including the symbolism of the Passover lamb and the sparing of Israel's firstborn) and the crossing of the Red Sea, God showed His people that He was not only more powerful than any Egyptian Pharaoh, but was the sovereign LORD, *Yahweh*, the God of redemption and revelation.

Key Words & Phrases: "Redeem" used nine times (6:6; 13:1-3; 15:13; 21:8; 34:20).

Key Idea – *Dependence*: The trials and tribulations of Israel illustrate perfectly the condition of man. Without divine action, the nation was completely unable to deliver itself from bondage to Egypt. The intervention of God in miraculous power, through signs and wonders is intended to teach the Israelites, and us, two lessons:

1. The great love of God for us means that He will never be content to leave us in slavery to sin. (Gal. 5:1)
2. Salvation comes from God alone: He designed the process, He initiates the process, and He completes the process. Man is incapable of saving himself. We are utterly dependent on God. (Eph. 2:8-9)

Key Chapters: Chapters 12-14 record the redemption of Israel from slavery in fulfillment of God's promises. The nation was delivered from slavery by blood (the Passover lamb) and by power (the parting of the Red Sea).

Key Verses: 6:6; 19:5-6

Key People: Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and Pharaoh

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Exodus: While Exodus contains no direct prophecy of Christ, there are a number of beautiful parallels to illustrate the character and nature of Christ.

1. In many ways, the life of Moses has parallels to the life of Christ. Deuteronomy 18:15 shows that Moses, as a prophet, points to Christ. Both are kinsmen-redeemers who were endangered in infancy, renounced their power to serve others, and functioned as mediators, lawgivers, and deliverers.
2. The Passover lamb is a very specific illustration of Christ as the sinless Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36; 1 Cor. 5:7).
3. The Seven Feasts each represent some aspect of the Savior.
4. The Exodus, which the Apostle Paul connects with baptism, pictures our identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor. 10:1-2; Rom. 6:2-3).
5. The Manna and Water are both portrayed as pictures of Christ (John 6:31-35, 48-63; 1 Cor. 10:3-4).
6. The Tabernacle illustrates the Savior in its materials, colors, furniture, arrangement, and the offerings sacrificed there (Heb. 9:1 - 10:18).
7. The High Priest quite clearly foreshadows the person and ministry of Christ (Heb. 4:14-16; 9:11-12, 24-28).

Outline:

I. God prepares Moses, a deliverer (Chapters 1 - 11)
II. Deliverance, by blood and power (Chapters 12 - 14)
III. Marching to Mt. Sinai, the spiritual education of the people (Chapters 15 - 18)
IV. Giving of the Law, God's mirror to show us our exceeding sinfulness (Chapters 19 - 24)
V. Blueprint and construction of the tabernacle, testifying that God was dwelling in the midst of His people (Chapters 25 - 40)

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LEVITICUS – The Book of Holiness

Author: Moses **Date:** 1450-1410 B.C.

Name: Leviticus receives its name from the Septuagint and means "relating to the Levites." The Levites were the priests who were chosen by God to serve as intermediaries between God and man. The book of Leviticus contains many of the laws given by God to direct them in their work as priests for the worship of God.

Theme and Purpose: The purpose of Leviticus was to show Israel how to walk before God as a holy people. Leviticus was designed to help the children of Israel in their religious training, especially in two ways:

1. How to worship and walk with God; and,
2. How the nation was to fulfill its calling as a nation of priests.

The great theme of Leviticus is *holiness*. A holy God can only be approached on the basis of sacrifice through the mediation of a priest. It is also sometimes called the Book of Atonement. "Get right," say the offerings. There are five offerings: burnt, meal, peace, sin and trespass. "Keep right," say the feasts. There are eight feasts: Sabbath, Passover, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles, the Sabbath year, and Jubilee. The sacrifices spoke of the blood that saved; the feasts spoke of the food that sustains.

The Book of Leviticus is God's picture book - every picture pointed forward to the work of Jesus Christ.

Key Word: The key word of Leviticus is "holiness," occurring 87 times. Leviticus 11:45 reads, "Be holy, because I am holy."

Key Idea – *Diligence*: Keeping the Law required daily effort. The laws in Leviticus flow through every aspect of human life, including meal preparation, bathing, and relationships. This illustrates that holy living is a lifestyle, not merely attendance at a ceremonial event. As they diligently lived daily according to the laws in Leviticus, the Israelites were reminded constantly of their sinful, unclean condition, and the distance that it placed between them and a Holy God. The New Testament similarly instructs, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31), and "let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God" (2 Cor. 7:1b).

Key Chapter: Chapter 16 deals with the Day of Atonement, which became the most important day in the Hebrew calendar, because it was the only day the high priest was allowed to enter into the Holy of Holies to make atonement for the people. "… for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you shall be clean from all your sins before the LORD" (16:30).

Key Verses: 17:11; 19:2; 20:7-8

Key People: Moses and Aaron

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Leviticus: Similar to Exodus, a number of illustrations of Christ are evident in Leviticus.

1. The Five Offerings all represent the person and work of Christ in His sinless life, and submission to the Father so that we might have fellowship with God.
2. The High Priest as mentioned above is a very prominent image of Christ in Leviticus.
3. The Seven Feasts, again, as mentioned, also form a picture of the Savior.

Outline:

I. The Offerings (1:1 - 6:7)

II. The Law of the Offerings (6:8 - 7:38)

III. Consecration (8:1 - 9:24)

IV. A Warning Example (10:1 - 20)

V. A Holy God Must Have a Cleansed People (Chapters 11 - 15)

VI. Atonement (Chapters 16 - 17)

VII. The Relationships of God's People (Chapters 18 - 22)

VIII. The Feasts of Jehovah (Chapter 23)

IX. Instructions and Warnings (Chapter 24 - 27)

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NUMBERS – Wilderness Wanderings

Author: Moses **Date:** 1450-1410 B.C.

Name: Numbers gets its name from the two accounts in chapters 1 and 26 of the numbering or counting of the people of Israel, first at Mount Sinai and second on the plains of Moab. It tells about the Israelites as they wander from Sinai to the border of Canaan, the land of promise. It might also be called the Book of Murmurings. Historically, Numbers takes up the story where Exodus ended.

Theme and Purpose: Numbers is primarily concerned with nearly 40 years of wandering in the desert. A journey which should have only lasted eleven days became a 38-year, agonizing trek of defeat simply because of the disbelief and disobedience of the people. Numbers, then, shows the consequence of failing to believe the promises of God (see Heb. 3: 16-4: 2). Furthermore, Numbers teaches us that while life does have its wilderness experiences, God's people do not have to remain there.

Key Word: "Wanderings"

Key Idea – *Discipline*: Obedience to God is of primary importance to pleasing Him; He rewards obedience and punishes disobedience. When God told the Israelites to possess the land, they refused because of fear of the Canaanites, saying, "We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them" (Numbers 13:33). Wandering in the desert purged the people of those who doubted; only Joshua and Caleb lived to enter the Promised Land. Those whom God loves, He also disciplines (Hebrews 12:5-7), to build in them the character and faith to act in obedience to His Word regardless of how circumstances appear.

Key Chapters: Chapters 13-14 stand as the key chapters because they record a critical turning point for the nation. At Kadesh-Barnea (Numbers 32:8), ten of the twelve spies sent out by Moses to spy out the land reported terrifying giants. (The two exceptions were Joshua and Caleb.) The ten and the people of Israel failed to believe God, and refused to enter, possess and conquer the land, even though it was a land that flowed with milk and honey.

Key Verses: 14:22-23; 20:12

Key People: Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Joshua, Caleb, Balak

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Numbers: Perhaps no place in the Old Testament is there a clearer portrait of Christ and His crucifixion than in the serpent lifted up on the standard (cf. Num. 21:4-9 with John 3:14). Other parallels in the book of Numbers:

1. The rock that quenched the thirst of the people (1 Cor. 10:4).
2. The daily manna pictures Christ as the bread come down from heaven (John 6:31-33).
3. The pillars of cloud and fire represent the guidance of Christ, and the cities of refuge certainly foreshadow Christ as our refuge from judgment.
4. Finally, the red heifer is also an illustration of Christ (ch. 19).

Outline:

I. The divine legislation (Chapters 1 - 10)
II. The story of the nation's failure (Chapters 11 - 20)
III. Record of Israel's return to Jehovah's favor and final victory, even in the wilderness (Chapters 21 - 36)

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DEUTERONOMY – Reiteration and Reviewing

Author: Moses **Date:** 1410 B.C.

Name: The English title, which comes from the Septuagint, means "second law-giving" and comes from the mis-translation of 17:18, which actually says "a copy of this law." Deuteronomy is not a second law, but rather a review, expansion, and reiteration of the original law given at Sinai.

Theme and Purpose: 'Watch yourself lest you forget,' is the theme of Deuteronomy. This book is very much a repetition or remembrance of both the history and the laws contained in the three foregoing books, which Moses delivered to Israel a little while before his death. After forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the Israelites were on the eve of entering the Promised Land. Before they did, it was necessary that they be reminded about all that God had done for them and about God's holy law. Keeping this law was vital to their ability to remain in the land and function as God's holy nation and as a kingdom of priests to the nations (Deut. 4:1-8). As a part of this theme, the book also emphasizes the vital necessity of teaching children to love and obey God. Deuteronomy ends with the renewal of God's covenant with Israel (chapter 29), Joshua's appointment as the new leader (chapter 31), and Moses' death (chapter 34). Jesus often quoted from Deuteronomy. He answered the devil from its writings.

Key Word: "Covenant" occurring 27 times.

Key Idea – *Choice*: Having endured and benefitted from the discipline of the Lord, the Israelites stood at a pivotal point. Success or failure, life or death, blessings or curses–each would depend upon what choices were made by the people and their leaders. God would not force them to follow Him. He had demonstrated to them through miracles His divine love and power, but He wanted them to choose to obey His Laws. The effectiveness of the warnings in Deuteronomy can be seen later in Joshua's charge to the people after they had faced their temptations and their enemies, "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve" (Joshua 24:15).

Key Chapters: Chapter 27 is key because in it there is a formal ratification of Israel's covenant as Moses and the levitical priests call upon all Israel to take heed and listen. Chapters 28-30 are also important because of the promises regarding Israel's near and distant future as it pertains to blessing for obedience or cursing for disobedience.

Key Verses: 4:31; 10:12-14; 30:19-20.

Key People: Moses and Joshua

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Deuteronomy: The statement about Moses in 18:15 is one of the clearest portraits of Christ. It reads, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him." Further, Moses, as a type of Christ, is the only figure other than Christ to fill all three of the offices of prophet (34:10-12), priest (Ex. 32:31-35), and king. (Although Moses was not king, he functioned as ruler of Israel; 33:4-5.)

Outline:

I. Summary of the history of Israel in the wilderness (Chapter 1 - 3)

II. A restatement of the Law, with warnings and exhortations (Chapter 4 - 11)

III. Instructions, Warnings, and Predictions (Chapter 12 - 27)

IV. The great closing prophecies summarizing the history of Israel to the second coming of Christ, including the promise to gather the people again in Palestine after they had been dispersed [a.k.a the Palestinian Covenant] (Chapters 28 - 30)

V. Last counsels to Priests, Levites, and to Joshua (Chapter 31)

VI. The Song of Moses and his parting blessings (Chapters 32 - 33)

VII. The Death of Moses (Chapter 34)

Review of the Pentateuch

In Genesis, we see man ruined; in Exodus, man redeemed; in Leviticus, man worshiping; in Numbers, man serving; in Deuteronomy, man learning to obey.

Key Words and Themes to Remember in the Pentateuch:

Genesis	Beginnings	Election of the nation
Exodus	Redemption	Redemption of the nation
Leviticus	Holiness	Sanctification of the nation
Numbers	Wandering	Direction of the nation
Deuteronomy	Review	Instruction of the nation

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PART 2 – THE BOOKS OF HISTORY: History of the Nation of Israel

A second group of books follows the Pentateuch; twelve books record the history of the nation of Israel from the time of Joshua to the restoration of the temple after the peoples' captivity in Babylon/Persia. These books record the life of the nation from their possession of the land through the two deportations and loss of the land because of unbelief and disobedience. Covering about 800 years of Israel's history, these twelve books tell about the conquering and possession of Canaan, the reigns of the judges, the establishment of kings, the division of Israel into the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, the fall of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria, the exile of the Southern Kingdom into Babylon, and the return to Jerusalem under the leadership of men like Nehemiah and Ezra.

Historical Books: The Preparation for Christ		
Joshua	The possession of the land by the nation	The Theocracy: These books cover the period when Israel was ruled directly by God (1405-1043 B.C.).
Judges-Ruth	The oppression of the nation	
1 Samuel	The stabilization of the nation	
2 Samuel	The expansion of the nation	The Monarchy: These books trace the history of Israel's monarchy from its establishment to its destruction in 586 B.C.
1 Kings 1 - 10	The glorification of the nation	
1 Kings 11 - 22	The division of the nation	
2 Kings 1 - 17	The deterioration of the Northern Kingdom	
2 Kings 18 - 25	The deportation of the Southern Kingdom	
1 Chronicles	The preparation of the temple	
2 Chronicles	The destruction of the temple	
Ezra	The restoration of the temple	The Restoration: These books describe the return of a remnant to the land after 70 years of captivity (605-536 B.C.).
Nehemiah	The reconstruction of the city	
Esther	The protection of the nation's people	

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JOSHUA – Possession and Conquest

Author: Joshua **Date:** 1400-1370 B.C.

Name of the Book: Unlike the first five books of the Old Testament, this book appropriately takes its name from the chief human personality of the book, Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses' servant. Joshua's original name was *Hoshea* (Num. 13:8; Deut. 32:44) which means "salvation." But during the wilderness wanderings Moses changed his name to *Yehoshua*, meaning "*Yahweh* is salvation" or "Save, *Yahweh*" (Num. 13:16).

Theme and Purpose: The possessing, conquering, and division of the Promised Land is the theme and purpose of Joshua. The book of Joshua is designed to show God's faithfulness to His promises, doing for Israel exactly as He had said (cf. Gen. 15:18 with Josh. 1: 2-6 and 21:43-45). The events recorded in Joshua are selective, intended to set forth God's special intervention on behalf of His people against all kinds of tremendous odds.

Key Words: Possession, conquest, victory, dividing the land

Key Idea – *Might:* Story after story of the possession of Canaan illustrates the power of God over evil. Clearly, battles were won by the manifestation of God's mighty power working through human vessels. This power continued to flow as long as the Israelites were obedient to God's Law; when they compromised or sinned (as at Ai, chap. 7), God's mighty hand withdrew and the Israelites suffered defeat. This key idea confirms the truth of the Pentateuch – blessings flow from obedience, curses flow from disobedience. In his sinful state, man is powerless. Only God is mighty. The Apostle Paul confirmed this idea when he prayed in Colossians 1:11 that the believers would be "strengthened with all power according to *His* glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience."

Key Chapter(s): Chapters 1 - 4, 24

Key Verses: 1:3, 8-9, 18; 11:23; 24:14-15

Key People: Joshua, Rahab, Caleb

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Joshua: Though there are no direct Messianic prophecies of Christ, there are a number of illustrations which point to the Savior.

Joshua is a portrait of Christ in two very important ways.

1. First, his name, *Yeshua*, a contracted form of *Yehoshua*, meaning, "*Yahweh* is salvation," is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek name *Jesus*.
2. Second, Joshua is seen as an illustration of Christ in his work of leading Israel triumphantly into the rest of their promised possession, the land of Canaan (cf. Heb. 4:8). This is but a foretaste of the rest we enter by faith in Christ. He surely foreshadows the Savior who leads "many sons to glory" (Heb. 2:9-10).

Further, Joshua was met by the Commander of the Lord's army in 5:13-15. Some scholars interpret this to be a Christophany, a preincarnate appearance of Christ. His presence there, and his answer to Joshua's question (stating that He was on neither side), indicates the sovereignty of God in human conflicts, and His direct intervention when He so chooses, to accomplish His will.

Finally, Rahab's scarlet cord (2:21) portrays salvation through the blood and death of Christ (cf. Heb. 9:19-22). This Gentile prostitute heard of the mighty works of God, believed, hid the spies, was delivered when Jericho was destroyed, and is found in the genealogy of Christ (Mat. 1:5).

Outline:

I. The Invasion of Canaan (1:1 - 5:12)

II. The Conquest of Canaan (5:13 - 12:24)

III. The Division of Canaan (Chapters 13 - 21)

IV. Conclusion (Chapters 22 - 24)

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JUDGES – Seven Cycles of Apostasy, Judgment, and Deliverance

Author: Tradition tells us that Samuel wrote the book, but its authorship is actually uncertain. Samuel may have assembled some of the accounts from the period of the judges and prophets like Nathan and Gad may have had a hand in editing the material (see 1 Chr. 29:29). **Date:** 1050- 1000 B.C.

Name of the Book: This book takes its name from the thirteen (12 men and one woman), called judges, whom God raised up to deliver Israel from their oppressors. The title for the book is best expressed in 2:16, "then the LORD raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them."

Ultimately, however, God was Israel's Judge and Deliverer because it was God Himself who would first allow the times of oppression as divine discipline for Israel's repeated apostasy, and then raise up judges to bring deliverance after the nation repented and cried out for help.

Theme and Purpose: Spiritually, Judges is the account of the Dark Ages of the people of Israel. The people forsook God (Judges 2:13) and God forsook the people (2:23). This phrase runs through the whole book: "Every man did what was right in his own eyes" (e.g. 21:25). Two facts stand out--the utter failure of Israel; the persistent grace of Jehovah.

Historically, Judges bridges the gap from the time of Joshua to the time of the prophet Samuel and the beginning of the monarchy under Saul and David. There was no king in those first 350 years in the land of promise. It records the history of seven cycles of decline, oppression, supplication, and deliverance.

Doctrinally, Judges draws our attention to a number of important truths. As God had warned in Deuteronomy, obedience brings blessing, but disobedience results in God's discipline and oppression. But Judges also reminds us that when people will turn to the Lord, cry out to Him and repent, God, who is long-suffering and gracious, responds in deliverance. Judges unfolds its theme by describing cycles of apostasy followed by oppression as a form of divine discipline followed by supplication and repentance by the people followed by judges whom God raised up to deliver the nation.

Key Words: Evil (14 times), judge, judged, judgment (22 times)

Key Idea – *Mercy:* The seven repeated cycles of repentance, forgiveness, apostasy, and judgment illustrate the truth that God is merciful; His great love for Israel causes Him not to forsake them utterly in spite of their sin. In the Book of Judges, this cycle is repeated seven times, a number often associated in the Bible with *completion.* Yet the Jews' understanding of God's great mercy, and our duty as believers to also be merciful, was incomplete. The Apostle Peter asked the Lord if we should forgive seven times (see the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant in Matt. 18:21-35). Jesus' reply was, "not seven times, but seventy times seven." This number meant "infinity" to the Jews; so is God's mercy to us infinite.

Key Chapters: Chapters 4 - 5 (Deborah and Barak), 6 - 7 (Gideon); 13 - 16 (Samson)

Key Verses: 2:15-16; 2:20-23; 21:25

Key People: The Judges—Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Tola and Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, and Samson. The best-known judges are Deborah, Gideon, and Samson.

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Judges: Since each judge functioned as a ruler-deliverer, they served as pictures of the Savior in His work as Savior and Lord, the Righteous, Deliverer King.

Outline:

I. Deterioration—An Introduction, the Reason for the Period of the Judges (1:1 -3:6)

II. Deliverance—The History and Rule of the Period of the Judges (3:7 - 16:31)

III. Depravity—Apostasy and Anarchy, the Ruin of the Period of the Judges (17:1 - 21:25)

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RUTH – An Addendum to Judges

Author: As with Judges, the author is uncertain. **Date:** 1000 B.C.

Name of the Book: Ruth gets its name from one of its main characters, a young woman of Moab, the great-grandmother of David, who is in the genealogical line of the Savior (Matthew 1:5).

Theme and Purpose: Ruth speaks to us of Jesus Christ, our Kinsman-Redeemer. This book is a bright picture on the black background of the Judges and is a lovely picture of Christ and the Church. It records the events during the rule of Gideon or Jephthah. Ruth was the great-grandmother of David, the ancestor of Christ. This book tells the beginning of the immediate Messianic family and nation into which the Messiah was to be born. Ruth was a Moab-itess, of the people who were descendants of Lot, a heathen people. What a picture of God's grace, adopting the Gentiles into Christ's family!

Ruth is the story of loyalty, purity and love in a day when anarchy, selfishness, and depravity was generally the rule. As such, Ruth serves as a positive picture of faith and obedience in the midst of apostasy, and shows how such faith brings blessing to the family of God.

Key Words: In thought, a key term would be *Kinsman-Redeemer*. Kinsman (14 times), Redeem (9 times).

Key Idea – *Belonging:* The Book of Ruth describes characters who each had a sense of where they belonged, though others might disagree. After her husband and son died, Naomi felt she belonged with her own people. Though Naomi disagreed, Ruth thought she belonged with Naomi, in a land foreign to her. Though another had the rights of being the kinsman-redemeer, Boaz believed he belonged in that role, as did the women. This book illustrates that human thinking about belonging, family, and relationships can be over-ruled by a God who has a design and a plan for blessing. Just as Ruth, a Gentile, was grafted into the lineage of Jesus, so we are grafted into God's family, belonging there because God has accepted us into the beloved (Eph. 1:3-6).

Key Chapters: Chapter 1 is key because it demonstrates Ruth's decision of faith, devotion, and commitment to stay with Naomi, a decision that led to her redemption.

Chapter 4 is another key chapter because it tells the transformation of Ruth from being a widow in poverty to being married and wealthy through the Kinsman-Redeemer.

Key Verses: 1:15-17, 3:11-13

Key People: Ruth, Naomi, Boaz

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Ruth: In the Old Testament, if a person or an estate were sold into bondage, they could be redeemed if certain requirements were met by what is called the Kinsman-Redeemer or *goel*, "close relative." This is a perfect illustration of the redemptive work of the Savior. The Kinsman-Redeemer must be:

1. A blood relative (a kinsman) of those he redeems (Deut. 25: 5, 7-10; John 1:14; Rom. 1:3; Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 2:14-15
2. Able to pay the price of redemption (cf. 2:1; 1 Pet. 1:18-19)
3. Willing to redeem or pay the price (cf. 3:11; Mat. 20:28; John 10:15, 19; Heb. 10:7)
4. Free himself, as Christ was free from the curse of sin, being without sin (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5)

Outline:

I. Ruth ***deciding,*** Chapter 1

II. Ruth ***serving,*** Chapter 2

III. Ruth ***requesting,*** Chapter 3

IV. Ruth ***rewarded,*** Chapter 4

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FIRST SAMUEL – Transition from Judges to Kingship

Author: The authors of the books of Samuel were probably Samuel, Gad, and Nathan. Samuel penned the first twenty-four chapters of the first book. Gad, the companion of David (1 Sam. 22:5), continued the history; and Nathan completed it, probably arranging the whole in the form in which we now have it (1 Ch. 29:29).

Date: 930 B.C. and later

Name of the Book: Originally, the books of 1 and 2 Samuel were placed together as one book in the Hebrew Bible. These books bear the name of Samuel in the title, not because he penned them, but because the first book begins with a long account of his life; his birth and childhood, his ministry, and his governance. The rest of these two volumes contain the history of the reigns of Saul and David, kings who were both anointed by him.

Theme and Purpose: 1 Samuel is the first of the six books telling the history of Israel as governed by kings. The events recorded in 1 Samuel cover a period of about 115 years. Beginning with the birth of Samuel and his training in the temple, 1 Samuel describes how this great man of God led Israel as prophet, priest, and the last judge.

During Samuel's leadership, the people of Israel, wanting to be like other nations, demanded a king. Under God's direction, Samuel then anointed Saul to be the first king. But Saul was rejected by God because of his disobedience. To replace Saul, again under God's direction, Samuel anointed David, who was a man after God's own heart, to become the king of Israel. The rest of the book describes the struggles between jealous and demented Saul and godly David.

Key Word: In thought, the key word is transition, but in use, anoint (7 times) and rejected (7 times) are two key terms to this period of transition.

Key Idea – *Authority:* God is sovereign: any authority exercised by men can be done so only as God permits. God's original plan for the government of Israel was that He would be the only King, and He would exercise His authority through the prophets. His acquiescence to the pleading of the people for an earthly King was done only reluctantly. Still, God's instruction to Samuel to anoint Saul, His later rejection of Saul, and the anointing of David confirm that God remains in charge; it is He who appoints governments and allows them to fall (Rom. 13:1-5).

Key Chapters: Chapter 8 records the sad complaint of the nation in their desire for a king over them like that of other nations, to judge them and fight their battles. In answer to their request, Samuel is told by the Lord to appoint a king for the people, and the prophet assumes his role of becoming a king-maker.

Chapter 15 records the transition of kingdom authority from Saul to David because of Saul's disobedience and self-willed character (cf. 15:23).

Chapter 16 records the choice and anointing of David.

Key Verses: 8:6-7; 13:14; 15:22-23

Key People: Samuel the prophet, Saul the disobedient king, and David the shepherd

Christ as Seen Prophetically in 1 Samuel: Samuel forms an interesting portrait of Christ in that he was a prophet, a priest, and a judge who was used of God to inaugurate a new age.

Samuel is the first biblical book to use the word *anointed* (2:10). Furthermore, the portrait and anticipation of the *Messiah* is found in the life of David.

Outline:

I. Samuel, God's prophet, and the last judge (Chapters 1 - 7)

II. Saul, the First King, a king disobedient to God (Chapters 9 - 15)

III. David, the Second King, a man after God's own heart (Chapters 16 - 31)

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SECOND SAMUEL – David's Reign; Expansion of the Nation

Author: See comments under 1 Samuel. **Date:** 930 B.C. and later.

Name of the Book: See comments under 1 Samuel.

Theme and Purpose: While First Samuel records the failure of man's king, Saul, Second Samuel describes the enthronement of God's king, David, and the establishment of the "House of David" through which the Messiah would later come. David was a man after God's own heart—not perfect, but repentant when he failed. He was extremely versatile—shepherd boy, court musician, soldier, true friend, outcast captain, king, great general, loving father, poet, sinner and brokenhearted old man, but always the lover of God.

Beginning with Saul's death and continuing with David, Second Samuel is distinctively about the 40 years of Israel's kingdom. 2 Samuel continues the narrative reign of David (5:4-5) and traces his reign through his triumphs and tragedies, which include his sins of adultery, murder, and their consequences on his family and the nation.

The theme, as 2 Samuel recounts David's reign, could be summarized as "how sin turns triumphs into troubles." Whereas the kingdom was established under Saul, it is expanded by David. Saul's kingdom gave stabilization to Israel from the time of the judges, but David's reign brought growth or expansion. In the typical fashion of the Bible which candidly tells the story of its leaders, warts and all, 2 Samuel portrays the good, the bad, and the ugly of the life of King David.

Key Word: Since the name of David occurs some 267 times (NASB), his name clearly becomes the key word.

Key Idea – *Humility:* David is portrayed in the scripture in all his humanity. No pains are taken to cover up his sins. David's humanity is what makes him an enduring and endearing character. Though he achieved great power and military victories, he also had great failures. What differentiated him from Saul, and showed that he was a "man after God's own heart," was his haste to repent. When confronted with his sin, Saul hardened his heart and offered excuses. When David was confronted, he repented immediately, with great grief. He resisted the pride that came upon Saul, and in his humility, God permitted him to continue as king. God's Word says in Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."

Key Chapter: Chapter 5 is a key chapter in that it records David's reign as king over all Israel, but chapters 11-12 are perhaps the more pivotal chapters in that they record David's sin with Bathsheba and her husband Uriah, his rebuke by Nathan the prophet, and the discipline that came on David's house as a result.

Key Verses: 7:12-16; 12:12-14

Key People: David, Bathsheba, Nathan, Absalom, Joab, Amnon, and Ahithophel

Christ as Seen Prophetically in 2 Samuel: With the exception of his sins, David remains a portrait of Christ as the King of Israel. It is in this chapter that God establishes the Davidic Covenant which ultimately has its fulfillment in the person of Christ.

Outline:

I. Triumphs of David (1 - 10)

II. Transgressions of the King (11:1-27)

III. Troubles of the King (12:1 - 24:25)

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FIRST KINGS – David's Death; Destruction of the Kingdom

Author: The author is unknown, though the Jews credit its writing to Jeremiah. **Date:** About 550 B.C.

Name of the Book: First and Second Kings, originally one book (like 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Chronicles) and simply called "Kings" in the Hebrew tradition (*Melechim*), are appropriately titled since they trace the history of the kings of Israel and Judah from the time of Solomon to the Babylonian captivity.

Theme and Purpose:

The Books of Kings are just a continuation of the Books of Samuel. They cover a period of 400 years and record the growth, and then the decay and division of the Jewish nation. The Southern Kingdom, Judah, had 20 kings, and the Northern, Israel, had 19. Both Judah and Israel were led into captivity.

First Kings traces David's life and death (chaps. 1 - 2), the reign of Solomon, including Israel's rise to the peak of her glory, the spread of the nation's kingdom, and the construction of the temple and palace in Jerusalem. But in Solomon's later years, he drifted from the Lord because of his pagan wives who influenced him and turned his heart away from the worship of God in the temple.

The central theme is to show how disobedience led to the destruction of the kingdom. The welfare of the nation depended on the faithfulness of its leadership and people to the covenants of God with Israel. First Kings not only gives a record of the history of these kings, but it demonstrates that the success of any king (and of the nation as a whole) depends on the measure of the king's allegiance to God's law or truth. The book truly illustrates how "righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people" (Prov. 14:34). Unfaithfulness to God's covenant resulted in decline and captivity.

Key Word: While the key word is "kingdom," which occurs some 357 times (NASB), the key concept is the division of the kingdom.

Key Idea – *Separation:* The lessons of 1 and 2 Kings show in vivid detail what happens when sin enters into man's relationship with God. Sin separates. It blocks the promises and power of God from flowing to the people He loves and has made a covenant to bless. These books also illustrate that God's people are the strongest and most blessed when they are united. When strife leads to separation, everyone is more vulnerable to the attack of the enemies of the cross. This is why the Lord Jesus prayed for the Church in John 17:21 " that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

Key Chapters: Chapters 11 and 12: They describe the demise of Solomon and the division of the kingdom.

Other significant chapters that have key roles are 3 and 4 dealing with Solomon's choice of wisdom and wise rule, chapter 8 the dedication of the temple, chapters 17 through 19 recording the great ministry of Elijah.

Key Verses: 3:7; 11:11

Key People: Solomon, Jeroboam, Rehoboam, Elijah, Elisha, Ahab, and Jezebel.

Christ as Seen Prophetically in 1 Kings: Like David, Solomon (during the times when he was faithful to God) is an illustration of the Messiah in His future reign on earth. Solomon especially shows this as his fame, glory, wealth, and honor all speak of Christ in His earthly kingdom. Solomon also portrays Christ in the great wisdom he demonstrated.

Outline:

I. The United Kingdom: The Forty-Year Reign of Solomon (1:1 - 11)

II. The Divided Kingdom: The First Eighty Years of the Two Kingdoms (12 - 22)

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SECOND KINGS – Dispersion: Willful Sin Has a Woeful End

Author: The author used historical sources (11:41; 14:19, 29). He was one of the exiles who lived in Babylon, perhaps an unknown one, or Ezra or Ezekiel or Jeremiah. **Date:** Same as 1 Kings.

Name of the Book: See previous lesson.

Theme and Purpose: Second Kings continues the history of Elijah and his successor, Elisha, but it also continues what might be termed the "Tale of the Two Kingdoms." As such, it continues to trace the history of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah until they are finally conquered and taken into captivity. Israel fell to Assyria in 722 B.C. and Judah fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C. In both kingdoms the prophets continued to warn the people that God would punish them unless they repented.

Second Kings teaches that willful sin in a nation has a woeful end. In 1 and 2 Samuel, the nation is born, in 1 Kings it is divided, and in 2 Kings it is dispersed. After years of pleading with His people through the prophets, God's patience finally turns to discipline just as He promised.

Because both books were originally one, 1 and 2 Kings share the same theme and goal. They teach us how unfaithfulness (disobedience to God's law and rebellion) must lead to God's discipline and the overthrow of the monarchy. The two kingdoms collapsed because of the failure of the kings to rule righteously and give heed to God's truth.

Key Word: The key term that describes the content would be *dispersion* or *captivities*.

Key Idea – *Consequences:* The division and dispersion of the people of Israel and Judah is a somber reminder that no matter how much God wants to love, heal and forgive, there comes a time when He will allow His people to reap the consequences of their choices. Many warnings went unheeded, and eventually the main consequence of their rebellion was the withdrawal of His hand of favor and protection. Without God's blessing, the people fell prey to the attacks of their much stronger neighbors. It is important to remember that this was the peoples' choice in action, not God's; they reaped what they had sown (Galatians 6:7-9).

Key Chapters: A number of chapters fall into this category: chapter 2, Elijah taken to heaven; chapter 4, Elisha's miracle for the widow; chapter 5, the healing of Naaman and Gehazi's greed; chapter 6, Elisha's prayer for his servant and the capture of Syria; chapter 17, Israel's fall and the Assyrian Captivity (722 B.C.); chapters 18 - 19, Sennacherib's invasion of Judah and Hezekiah's prayer; chapters 22 - 23, Josiah's revival, reforms, and renewal; chapters 24 - 25, the fall of Judah to Babylon (586 B.C.).

Key Verse: 23:27

Key People: Elijah, Elisha, Josiah, Naaman, Hezekiah

Christ as Seen Prophetically in 2 Kings: Elijah anticipates the forerunner of Christ in John the Baptist (Mat. 11:14; 17:10-12; Luke 1:17) and Elisha in many ways reminds us of Jesus Christ in His ministry.

Outline:

I. The Divided Kingdom (1:1 - 17:41)

II. The Surviving Kingdom of Judah (18:1 - 25:30)

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FIRST CHRONICLES – God's Covenant People

Author: Chronicles (originally both 1 and 2 Chronicles were one book) does not identify the author, but Jewish tradition has generally ascribed the book to Ezra. The consistency of style throughout the book indicates that though several sources were used in compiling the book, one editor shaped the final product. **Date:** 450-425 B.C.

Name of the Book: Though the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles cover the same period of Jewish history as 1 and 2 Kings, the perspective is very different. So while the content is similar, it is not a mere repetition, but more of a spiritual editorial of the history of the people of Israel.

The Books of 1 and 2 Kings give man's viewpoint while the Chronicles give God's perspective. In Kings the history of the nation is given from the throne; in Chronicles it is from the altar. In Kings the palace is the center; in Chronicles, it is the temple. Kings records the political history, Chronicles the religious.

Theme and Purpose: First Chronicles begins with an outline of history from Adam through the death of King Saul. The rest of the book is about the reign of King David. The books of Chronicles seem like a repeat of parts of 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings, but they were written for the returned exiles to remind them that they came from the royal line of David and that they were God's chosen people. The genealogies point out that the Davidic promises had their source in those pledged to Abraham that He would make him the father of a great nation, one through which He would bless the nations. The main theme is that God is faithful to His covenant.

Key Word: The key words are David (183 times) and the Davidic Covenant.

Key Idea – *Faithfulness:* God is a covenant-keeping God. In human terms, when one party breaks the agreement (covenant) the other party is no longer bound. God demonstrates His great faithfulness in that, even though David and the Jewish people broke covenant many times, God continued to honor His part of the agreement. This illustration of the faithfulness of God teaches us His moral superiority, and goodness that far surpasses that of any human being. Deuteronomy 7:9 proclaims, "He is the faithful God, keeping His covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commands."

Key Chapters: Because of the importance of the person of Christ, chapter 17 is the pivotal and key chapter, since it unfolds the Davidic Covenant as does 1 Samuel 7.

Key Verses: 11:1-3; 17:11; 29:11-12

Key People: As mentioned, it is a book about David, though others that were prominent in 1 Samuel are also important here, including Nathan, Bathsheba, and Uriah.

Christ as Seen Prophetically in 1 Chronicles: What was said in 1 and 2 Samuel regarding David as a portrait of Christ would naturally be prominent here also.

Outline:

I. Genealogies from Adam to David (1:1 - 9:44)

II. The Rise and Anointing of David (10:1 - 12:40)

III. David's Reign (13:1 - 29:21)

IV. The Accession of Solomon and Death of David (29:22 - 30)

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SECOND CHRONICLES – Building and Destruction of the Temple

Author: As previously mentioned, 1 and 2 Chronicles were originally one book. As with 1 Chronicles, it does not state who wrote it, but Jewish tradition identifies the author as Ezra. The consistency of viewpoint and style suggest it was probably the work of one person, sometimes referred to by writers as the *chronicler*. **Date:** 450-425 B.C.

Name of the Book: See 1 Chronicles notes.

Theme and Purpose: While 1 Chronicles parallels 1 and 2 Samuel, 2 Chronicles continues the history of David's line and parallels 1 and 2 Kings. But for all practical purposes, it ignores the Northern Kingdom because of apostasy and total absence of any godly kings who patterned their life after David. By contrast, 2 Chronicles focuses on those kings who did walk after the lifestyle of David.

Key Word: References to the House of God and the priest(s) occur often. For this reason, the key word conceptually is "the priestly perspective of Judah."

Key Idea – *Leadership:* Almost without exception, the peoples' commitment to follow God was the same as that of their king. If the king was faithful to God, so were the people. If the king was wicked and forsook God, so did the people. The application is clear: those who are called to leadership in the Church must understand the great responsibility they carry not only to preach and teach faithfully, but to live faithfully according to God's law. This is why Jesus taught, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked" (Luke 12:47-48).

Key Chapters: The chapters covering the reforms of godly kings are key chapters in the way they illustrate the promise of 7:14. See especially chapter 34 and the reforms under Josiah when the book of the Law was found, read, and obeyed.

Key Verses: 7:14; 16:9

Key People: Josiah, Rehoboam, Solomon

Christ as Seen Prophetically in 2 Chronicles: The throne of David has been destroyed, but the line of David remains. Murders, treachery, battles, and captivity all threaten the messianic line; but it remains clear and unbroken from Adam to Zerubbabel. The fulfillment in Christ can be seen in the genealogies of Matthew 1 and Luke 3.

The temple which is so prominent in 2 Chronicles is a beautiful portrait of Christ (see Mat. 12:6; John 2:19; and Revelation 21:22).

Outline:

I. The Reign of Solomon (1:1 - 9:31)

II. The Kings of Judah (10:1 - 36:21)

III. The Decree of Cyrus (36:22-23)

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EZRA – Reconstruction of the Temple and Restoration of the People

Author: Though the book of Ezra does not name its author, Jewish tradition ascribes it to Ezra along with Chronicles and Nehemiah. **Date:** Ezra wrote between 457 B.C. and 444 B.C.

Name of the Book: In the ancient Hebrew Bible, Ezra and Nehemiah were treated as one book and called "The Book of Ezra." Modern Hebrew Bibles designate the two-fold arrangement of Ezra and Nehemiah as in our English versions.

Theme and Purpose: Ezra is the first of the post-captivity books (Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi).

From an historical standpoint, Ezra continues the narrative where 2 Chronicles ends and traces the history of the return of the Jews from exile in Babylon and the rebuilding of the temple. From a spiritual and doctrinal standpoint, Ezra demonstrates how God fulfilled His pledge to return His people to the Promised Land after seventy years of exile, as announced by the prophets.

The theme can be summarized as the spiritual, moral, and social restoration of the Remnant who returned to Jerusalem and the surrounding region under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Ezra.

Key Idea – *Restoration:* God not only is willing to forgive sin–He is also willing to lift us up out of our fallen state and bring us back to a place of blessing. This journey is not without its hardships, as the books of Ezra and Nehemiah illustrate. The people had much work to do, and they needed to demonstrate to God their genuine repentance and willingness to observe God's law. But it is encouraging to note that God not only forgave the people, He also restored their way to be in intimate fellowship with Him by allowing the people to rebuild the temple.

Key Word: It is not surprising, given the theme of the book, that two key words are "Jerusalem," which occurs 48 times, and "temple," which occurs 25 times.

Key Chapters: Key chapters would include (1) the decree of Cyrus allowing the remnant to return, chapter 1, (2) the foundation of the temple completed, chapter 3, (3) the completion and dedication of the temple and the keeping of the Passover, chapter 6, (4) the return under Ezra and his prayer, chapters 7 - 9.

Key Verses: 1:3; 2:1; 6:21-22; 7:10

Key People: Cyrus (Persian king who decreed to allow the return), Ezra (priest and scribe), Jeshua (the high priest), and Zerubbabel.

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Ezra: In keeping with the Davidic Covenant and God's promises to keep the line of descendants alive for Messiah, Son of David, Ezra and Nehemiah show how God continued to keep His promises by restoring His people to their land.

Outline:

I. The Restoration; The First Return to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel (Chapters 1 - 6)

II. The Reformation of the People; the Return under Ezra (Chapters 7 - 10)

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NEHEMIAH – Reconstruction of the Walls of Jerusalem

Author: The author of this book was no doubt Nehemiah himself. There are portions of the book written in the first person (chs. 1 - 7; 12:27-47, and 13). But there are also portions in which Nehemiah is spoken of in the third person (chs. 8; 9; 10). It is supposed that these portions may have been written by Ezra; of this, however, there is no distinct evidence. These portions had their place assigned them in the book, there can be no doubt, by Nehemiah. He was the responsible author of the whole book, with the exception of ch. 12:11, 22, 23. **Date:** 445 B.C. to 425 B.C.

Name of the Book: Nehemiah's name means "*Yahweh* consoles or comforts."

Theme and Purpose: The book of Nehemiah continues the history of the Jews who returned from exile. Nehemiah gave up his position as cupbearer to Artaxerxes, the Persian king, to become governor of Jerusalem and lead the people in repairing the city walls.

Nehemiah was written to show the obvious hand of God in the establishment of His people in their homeland in the years after their exile. Under the leadership of Nehemiah, they accomplished in fifty-two days what had not been done in the ninety-four years since the first return under Zerubbabel. By obedient faith they were able to overcome what appeared to be insurmountable opposition.

Key Words: With the rebuilding of the walls the key element, the key words are "wall" and "walls," used some 33 times and "build," "building," "rebuilding," etc., is found more than 20 times.

Key Idea – *Overcoming:* Whenever God's people undertake God's work, opposition will come. The enemies of the Jews had specific strategies to deceive, divide, and discourage those who were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. The strong leadership of Nehemiah had an impact, but so did the determination of the people, each to build as part of the team, accepting the role which was assigned, and rushing to the aid of others when attacks came. The Apostle John affirms that Christians are overcomers when he wrote, "For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

Key Chapters: Key chapters would include,

1. Nehemiah's prayer and God's answer, chapters 1 - 2,
2. The work on the walls, the opposition, and its completion, chapters 3 - 7,
3. The confession of the people and their reaffirmation of the covenant, chapter 9.

Key Verses: 4:6; 6:15-16; 8:8

Key People: Nehemiah, Artaxerxes, Sanballet, Ezra.

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Nehemiah: Nehemiah surely portrays Christ in his willingness to leave his high position in order to bring about his work of restoration.

Outline:

I. The journey to Jerusalem (Chapters 1 - 2)

II. The building of the wall (Chapters 3 - 6)

III. The census (Chapters 7)

IV. The revival (Chapters 8 - 11)

V. The census of the priests and Levites (Chapters 12:1-26)

VI. Dedication of the wall (Chapters 12:27-43)

VII. Restoration of temple worship (Chapters 12:44-47)

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ESTHER – Protection of God's People

Author: The book gives no hint of who wrote it. But whoever it was, he knew the Persian culture well. The account has all the marks of a person who was there for he described the events as an eyewitness. And he was probably a Jew. **Date:** Esther was written sometime between 470 and 465, during the latter years of Xerxes' reign (see 10: 2-3), or in the reign of his son Artaxerxes (464-424 BC).

Name of the Book: The book takes its name from the chief character, whose Hebrew name *Hadassah* (meaning "myrtle tree") was changed to the Persian name *Esther*, which some believe is derived from the Persian word for "star."

Theme and Purpose:

This book is mostly historical. It has one remarkable peculiarity in that the name of God does not occur in it from first to last in any form. Although the name of God does not appear in this book, the theme and purpose of the book is to show God's providential care of His people in their trials and persecutions.

Esther tells the story of a beautiful Jewish girl whom King Xerxes of Persia chose to be his queen. When Haman plotted to murder all the Jews, Queen Esther's cousin Mordecai persuaded Esther to try to save her people. Risking her own life, she appealed to the king and rescued the Jews.

Key Word: The key word is "Jews," which is repeated some 44 times.

Key Idea – *Providence:* Many times the history of the Jewish people seems to be chaotic; characters come and go quickly, they rise and fall in a way that sometimes seems to be purely coincidental. One of the main messages of Esther is to illustrate that God, in His providence, sometimes places people in circumstances in a very intentional way to accomplish His will. Mordecai teaches Esther this lesson when he urges her to overcome her natural fear, saying, "and who knows whether you are come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (4:14).

Key Chapters: The key chapters would include,

1. Haman persuades Ahasuerus to issue a decree to annihilate the Jews, chapter 3,
2. The honoring of Mordecai, chapter 6;
3. The Jews overcome their enemies, chapter 9

All the events of the book center around three feasts:

1. Feast of King Ahasuerus, King of Persia, when Vashti was rejected and the way was opened for Mordecai to bring Esther, a young orphan in his care, to be introduced to Ahasuerus and became queen, chs. 1 - 2.
2. Feast of Esther, when the Jews' enemy, Haman, was exposed and condemned to death and Mordecai was elevated, ch. 7.
3. Feast of Purim, which celebrated the deliverance of the Jews from a fearful danger, ch. 9.

Key Verses: 4:14; 8:17

Key People: Esther, Haman, Mordecai, Xerxes

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Esther: Esther provides a fitting picture of Christ in that she was willing to put herself in the place of death for her people's salvation and also in that she acted as an advocate for them. In addition, we also see how God continued to providentially protect the Jews through whom He would give the Messiah.

Outline:

I. The Story of Vashti (Chapter 1)
II. Esther is made queen (Chapter 2)
III. The conspiracy of Haman (Chapter 3)
IV. The courage of Esther brings deliverance (Chapters 4 - 7)
V. The vengeance (Chapter 8 - 9:19)
VI. The feast of Purim (9:20-32)
VII. Epilogue (10:1-3)

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PART 3 – THE BOOKS OF POETRY

The previous surveys of the first seventeen books (Law and History), Genesis through Nehemiah, covered the law and the history of the Old Testament. All the remaining books, *Books of Poetry* and *Books of Prophecy*, fit somewhere into the history of those seventeen books.

The next section to be covered, the *Books of Poetry*, is a much smaller section consisting of five books—Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

Before examining them, we should note certain characteristics that all of these five books share.

These five poetic books are *experiential*.

These five poetic books are concerned with *individuals*.

These five have to do with *the human heart*.

These five so-called "books of poetry" are *not the only poetry* in the Old Testament Scriptures. There are segments of poetry in the writings of the prophets.

We ought clearly to understand, also, that the term "poetic" refers only to their *form*. It must not be thought to imply that they are simply the product of human imagination.

These books portray real human experience, grapple with profound problems and express big realities. Further, they especially concern themselves with the experiences of the *godly*, in the highs and lows of this life, which is often filled with change.

Christ-centered aspirations (strong desires) in the Books of Poetry:

1. Job—aspiration for *mediation* by Christ.
2. Psalms—aspiration for *communion* with Christ.
3. Proverbs—aspiration for *wisdom* in Christ.
4. Ecclesiastes—aspiration for ultimate *satisfaction*.
5. Song of Solomon—aspiration for *union* in love with Christ

Specific topics in the Books of Poetry:

1. The Book of Job—*Blessing* Through *Suffering*.
2. The Psalms—*Praise* Through *Prayer*.
3. The Proverbs—*Prudence (Wisdom)* Through *Precept*.
4. Ecclesiastes—*Verity* Through *Vanity*.
5. Song of Solomon—*Bliss* Through *Union.*

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JOB – Blessing Through Suffering

Author: Job was an historical person (Eze. 14:14, 20; James 5:11). The author is unknown and there are no textual claims as to the author's identify. Commentators have suggested Job himself, Elihu, Moses, Solomon, and others.

Date: This book is perhaps the oldest book of the Bible.

The events may have taken place in a patriarchal society in the second millennium B.C., around the time of Abraham. Several facts support this dating: (1) Job lived more than 140 years (42:16), which is not an uncommon life span during the patriarchal period; (2) the economy of Job's day, in which wealth was measured in terms of livestock (1:3), was the type that existed in this period; (3) like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Job was the priest of his family (1:5); (4) the absence of any reference to the nation Israel or the Mosaic Law suggests a pre-Mosaic date (before 1500 B.C.).

Name of the Book: The Book of Job derives its name from its chief character, a man named Job, who, experiencing extreme suffering (the loss of wealth, family and health), struggles with the question of why these things happened to him.

Theme and Purpose: The book is a vindication of God's goodness, justice, and sovereign character in the face of the existence of suffering and evil. It wrestles with the age-old question: "Why do righteous men suffer, if God is a God of love and mercy?" It teaches the sovereignty of God and the need for man to acknowledge it. In their feeble attempts to answer this question, Job's three friends offered essentially the same philosophy: All suffering is due to sin. Elihu, however, declared that suffering is often the means of purifying the righteous.

God's purpose was to strip away all of Job's self-righteousness and to bring him to a place of complete trust. The answer given in this book to the question of suffering comes in a threefold form:

1. God is worthy of love even apart from the blessings He bestows;
2. God may permit suffering as a means of purifying and strengthening the soul in godliness;
3. God's thoughts and ways are moved by considerations too vast for the puny mind of man to comprehend. Even though man is unable to correctly perceive the issues of life with the breadth and vision of the Almighty, God knows what is best for His own glory and for our ultimate good.

A further purpose is certainly to demonstrate the conflict of the ages between God and Satan and to show the relationship of suffering to this conflict. In the end, it demonstrates the truth of Romans 8:28.

Key Words: The key words are "affliction, misery, hardship, etc." (9 times), "righteous" or "righteousness" (20 times), but the key concept is the *sovereignty* of God.

Key Idea – *Perseverance*: Job's wife urged him, "Curse God and die" (2:9). Job was severely tempted to abandon his faith in a loving God based on his circumstances. Besides the financial turmoil of the loss of his fortune and the emotional pain of losing his children, he was afflicted in his own body. Yet he endured the great suffering; because Job refused to abandon God, God did not abandon him. This book is one of those which Paul might have had in mind when he penned Romans 15:4: "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope."

Key Chapters: Chapters 1-2 are key in that they introduce the reader to the source of Job's suffering—Satan's accusations and the affliction that fell upon Job. The next key chapters are chapters 38-41, God's speech and silencing of Job, followed by Job's repentance and restoration, chapter 42.

Key Verses: 2:3-6; 13:15; 42:5-6; 42:10

Key People: Job, a blameless and upright man; Satan; Job's friends (and sometime accusers), Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zopher; and Elihu, a younger and wiser friend who sought to give Job counsel.

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Job: Job acknowledges a Redeemer (19:25-27) and prays for a Mediator (9:33; 33:23). He knows he needs someone who can explain the mystery of "suffering" which is answered only in Christ. He identifies with our suffering and ultimately both answers Satan's accusations and defeats him (Heb. 2:14-18; 4:15; Rom. 8:32-34).

Outline:

I. The Prologue: the Disasters (Afflictions) of Job (1 - 2)

II. The Dialogues or False Comfort of the Three Friends (3:1 - 31:40)

III. The Words of Elihu (32:1 - 37:24)

IV. God's Revelation from the Whirlwind (38:1 - 42: 6)

V. The Epilogue: God's rebuke of the comforters; Job's restoration and reward of a long and blessed life (42:7-17)

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PSALMS – Praise Through Prayer

Author: The Book of Psalms is the largest book of the Bible, perhaps the most widely used in Scripture because of the way it speaks to the human heart in all of our experiences in life. It has many authors; the titles often indicate the writer of the various psalms. **Date:** The writings likely span several hundred years. It is thought that they were gathered in their present form after the return from the captivity, sometime near the year 537 B.C.

Name of the Book: In the Hebrew, The Book of Psalms is titled *Tehillim* (praise) or *Sepher Tehillim* (book of praises). The Septuagint gives the name *Psalmoi* (psalms), that is "songs or poems sung with musical accompaniment."

Theme and Purpose: The Psalms provide a message of hope and comfort through the theme of worship. They are an antidote to fear and complaining through a personal response to the person and work of God. They are an expression of the worship, faith, and spiritual life of Israel. The Psalms are a mirror of the heart of God's people recording the simple, universal human experiences of man in light of God's person, promises, plan, and presence.

The great themes of the Psalms are, Christ, Jehovah, the Law, the Word of God, creation, the future of Israel, and the exercises of the renewed heart in suffering, in joy, in perplexity. The promises of the Psalms are primarily Jewish, and suited to a people under the law, but are spiritually true in Christian experience also, in the sense that they disclose the mind of God, and the exercises of His heart toward those who are perplexed, afflicted, or cast down.

Key Words: *Praise*, occurs 166 times, and some form of the word *bless, blessing, bless*, occurs over 100 times.

Key Idea – *Honesty:* One of the reasons the Book of Psalms is greatly beloved by God's people is the absolute transparency of the authors in conveying authentic thoughts and feelings. Whether in the heights of ecstasy or the depths of despair, the communication of genuine emotions common to the human condition is comforting and enlightening. The Book of Psalms is written *by* real people *for* real people; its power and comfort flows from authenticity and an emphasis on the ever-changing human condition in relationship with a never-changing God.

Key Chapters: Psalm 1, 22, 23, 24, 37, 78, 100, 119, 121, 150.

Key Verses: 1:1-3; 19:8-11; 19:14; 119:9-11; 145:21

Key People: The focus seems to be on the people of God in their worship and walk with God.

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Psalms:

Typically messianic: Some of the psalms show a portrait of Christ (cf. 34:20; 69:4, 9), but some aspects of the passage do not apply. Jesus and the apostles applied familiar psalmic expressions to their experiences (109:8 in Acts 1:20).

Typological-prophetic: In some psalms, though the psalmist describes his own experience, the language is such that points beyond his own life and becomes historically true only in the person of Christ (ch. 22).

Indirectly messianic: Some psalms, when they were written, referred to the house of David or a specific king, but will find their final and ultimate fulfillment only in the person of Christ (chs. 2, 45, 72).

Purely prophetic: Some psalms refer directly to Christ without any reference to any other person or son of David (ch. 110).

Division and Classification of the Psalms:

Psalms is a book of praise, prayer and worship. The Psalms magnify and praise the Lord. Every human experience is related to Him. The life of the believer is pictured in all of its joys and sorrows, victories and failures. The Psalms are full of Christ. They describe His entire journey of suffering and death. Someone has outlined the Psalms after the pattern of the Pentateuch:

1. Genesis section, Psalms 1 - 41, views man in a state of blessedness, then his fall and recovery.
2. Exodus section, Psalms 42 - 72, pictures Israel's ruin and redemption.
3. Leviticus section, Psalms 73 - 89, depicts our sanctuary in God, in both darkness and dawn.
4. Numbers section, Psalms 90 - 106, focuses on the earth, its peril and protection.
5. Deuteronomy section, Psalms 107 - 150, shows the perfection and praise of the Word of God.

Another way of looking at the book divisions can be seen in the chart below:

Book	Psalms	Author	General Content
Book I	Psalms 1 - 41	David	Songs of worship
Book II	Psalms 42 - 72	David & Korah	Hymns of petition
Book III	Psalms 73 - 89	Mainly Asaph	Hymns of petition
Book IV	Psalms 90 - 106	Mainly Anonymous	Anthems of praise
Book V	Psalms 107 - 150	David and Anonymous	Anthems of praise

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PROVERBS – Prudence (Wisdom) Through Precepts

Author: According to 1 Kings 4:32, Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs. While he wrote most of the proverbs in this book, later chapters indicate that he was not the only author of the book. Chapter 30 is specifically attributed to Agur, son of Jakeh, and 31:1-9 to King Lemuel. **Date:** 950-700 B.C.

Name of the Book: Proverbs obviously gets its name from its contents—short sayings or maxims that convey truth and precepts in a pointed and pithy way.

Theme and Purpose: As suggested by the title and the meaning of the term *proverb*, the theme and purpose of the book is wisdom for living through special instruction on every conceivable issue of life: folly, sin, goodness, wealth, poverty, the tongue, pride, humility, justice, family (parents, marriage, children), discipline, vengeance, strife, gluttony, love, laziness, friends, life, and death. No book is more practical in terms of wisdom for daily living than Proverbs.

The fundamental theme is "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (1:7a). The absence of a fear of God leads to an unbridled and foolish life. To fear the Lord is to stand in awe of His holy character and power. At the same time, Proverbs shows that true wisdom leads to the fear of the Lord (2:1-5).

Key Words: The key word is "wisdom," "wise," etc., occurring some 110 times. Also important and related to wisdom are the terms, "instruction" and "taught, teach," together occurring some 23 times.

Key Idea – *Relationships:* One Christian leader says that the Book of Psalms helps us be in right relationship with God and the Book of Proverbs helps us be in right relationship with other people. The wisdom contained in Proverbs, when incorporated into the Christian's life, will help to keep relationships healthy. Psalm 133:1 exclaims, "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" It is important to God that we "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3) The Book of Proverbs reveals that our relationships, whether with Christians or non-Christians, friends or family members–all are important to God.

Key Chapters: There are obviously many sections of Proverbs that might be considered key, such as chapter 1:20-33 where wisdom is personified as a woman inviting all to come to her and learn, but the majority of people refuse to heed her appeal. Chapter 31 is also key, particularly to women.

Key Verses: 1:5-7; 3:5-6; 9:10

Christ as seen in Proverbs: In chapter 8, wisdom is personified and seen in its perfection. It is divine (8:22-31), it is the source of biological and spiritual life (3:18; 8:35-36), it is righteous and moral (8:8-9), and it is available to all who will receive it (8:1-6, 32-35). This wisdom became incarnate in Christ "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). "But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30; cf. 1 Cor. 1:22-24).

Outline:

I. Introduction: the Purpose of Proverbs (1:1-7)

II. The Precepts of Wisdom: Proverbs for Youth (1:8 - 9:18)

III. The Proverbs of Solomon (10:1 - 24:34)

IV. The Proverbs of Solomon copied by Hezekiah's Men (25:1 - 29:27)

V. The Words of Agur (30:1-33)

VI. The Words of Lemuel (31:1-9)

VII. The Capable Wife (31:10-31)

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ECCLESIASTES – A Search for Purpose

Author: All indicators point to King Solomon as the author. **Date:** 931 B.C.

According to Jewish tradition, Solomon wrote the Song in his early years, expressing a young man's love. He wrote the Proverbs in his mature years, manifesting a middle-aged man's wisdom. He reportedly wrote Ecclesiastes in his declining years, revealing an old man's sorrow (cf. 12:1). Perhaps Ecclesiastes is the record of Solomon's regret for, and repentance from, his serious moral lapses recorded in 1 Kings 11.

Name of the Book: The name Ecclesiastes stems from the title given in the Greek translation, the Septuagint. The Greek term, *ecclesiastes*, means "assembly" and is derived from the word ekklesia, "assembly, church." The Hebrew title is Qoheleth, which means "one who convenes and speaks at an assembly," or "preacher."

Theme and Purpose: Ecclesiastes is the record of all that human thinking and natural religion have been able to discover about the meaning and goal of life. The arguments in the book are not God's arguments, but God's record of man's arguments.

Ecclesiastes is a book of perspective. The narrative of "the Preacher" (1:1KJV), reveals the depression that inevitably results from seeking happiness in worldly things. This book gives Christians a chance to see the world through the eyes of a person who, though very wise, is trying to find meaning in temporal, human things. Most every form of worldly pleasure is explored by the Preacher, and none of it gives him a sense of meaning.

In the end, the Preacher comes to accept that faith in God is the only way to find personal meaning. He decides to accept the fact that life is brief and ultimately worthless without God. The Preacher advises the reader to focus on an eternal God instead of temporary pleasure.

Key Word: Vanity (meaningless) and "under the sun."

Key Idea – *Contentment*: The deep, inner satisfaction that comes from living according to God's law cannot be counterfeited by anything the world has to offer. The constant striving for *more* (whether it is possessions, authority, influence, etc.) is a trap that leads only to emptiness. Obedience to God yields its own reward, and it is not merely heaven. Godly living brings peace and contentment in this earthly life as well. The theme of the Book of Ecclesiastes is reflected in the Apostle Paul's letter to Timothy (1 Tim. 6:5-7) when he writes, "Godliness with contentment is great gain."

Key Chapter: Chapter 12 resolves the book's extensive inquiry into the meaning of life with the single conclusion, "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (12:13).

Key Verses: 1:2: 1:18; 2:11; 12:1; 12:13-14

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Ecclesiastes: For all of the vanities described in the Book of Ecclesiastes, the answer is Christ. According to 3:17, God judges the righteous and the wicked, and the righteous are only those who are in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21). God has placed the desire for eternity in our hearts (3:11) and has provided the Way to eternal life through Christ (John 3:16). We are reminded that striving after the world's wealth is not only vanity because it does not satisfy (5:10), but even if we could attain it, without Christ we would lose our souls and that there is no profit in that (Mark 8:36). Ultimately, every disappointment and vanity described in Ecclesiastes has its remedy in Christ, the wisdom of God and the only true meaning to be found in life.

Outline:

I. Introduction: The Problem Stated (1:1 - 2:26)

II. God's Immutable Plan for Life (3:1-22)

III. The Futility of the Circumstances of Life (4:1 - 5: 20)

IV. The Futility of Life as a Whole (6:1-12)

V. Counsel About Living with the Vanities of Life (7:1 - 12:8)

VI. Conclusion (12:9-14)

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SONG OF SOLOMON – A Royal Wedding

Author: Though some critics reject King Solomon as the author and take 1:1 to mean, "which is about Solomon," the internal evidence supports the traditional belief that Solomon is its author. **Date:** About 965 B.C.

Name of the Book: The Hebrew title is taken from verse 1, The Song of Songs, which means "the most superlative, or best, of songs;" the English title, also from verse 1, is The Song of Solomon, which designates the author. It is also called the Canticles, meaning simply "songs," derived from the Latin.

Theme and Purpose: The interpretation for the theme of the book is twofold: Primarily, the book is the expression of pure marital love as ordained of God in creation, and affirming the superiority of that love in contrast to both pleasure-seeking and lust, the two sins that profane the holiness of marriage.

The secondary and larger interpretation is of Christ, the Son and His heavenly bride, the Church (2Co 11:1-4, refs).

Key Word: Love

Key Idea – *Intimacy:* The reciprocated passion of the King and the Shulamite is an indication of the importance of intimate fellowship with God. Our Lord is not content with an occasional visit or a chatty friendship, although that is all some Christians offer. The Song of Solomon indicates the depth of passionate love God has for us, expressed through the sacrificial price Christ Jesus paid to make possible the oneness He desires. Anything less than an intimate relationship falls short of His plan. Failing to return God's love in grand measure, allowing our times of fellowship with Him to become infrequent or meaningless, is the ultimate insult. We must pursue Christ as the Shulamite pursued her Beloved, lest it be asked of us, "how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?" (Heb. 2:3a).

Key Chapters: Chapter 4 is key, as it contains beautiful imagery of the King declaring His loving desire, and the last verse showing that the Shulamite welcomes and returns His love. The consummation of their love continues into chapter 5 and verse 1, which completes the picture. (Remember that chapter and verse designations were added to the Bible in later years; sometimes a thought is not finished at the end of a chapter.)

Key Verses: 7:10 "I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me."

Key People: The book has three major players: the bride (Shulamite), the king (Solomon), and a chorus (daughters of Jerusalem).

Christ as Seen Prophetically in the Song of Solomon: This book illustrates Christ's love for the Church which is seen as the bride of Christ in the New Testament (cf. 2 Cor. 11: 2; Eph. 5:23-25; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9).

Outline:

I. Title (1:1)

II. Falling in Love (1:2 - 3:5)

III. United in Love (3:6 - 5:1)

IV. Struggling in Love (5:2 - 7:10)

V. Maturing in Love (7:11 - 8:14)

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PART 4 – THE MAJOR PROPHETS

The Prophets of Israel Viewed as a Whole

Their Designation:

The prophets were men whom God raised up during the dark days of Israel's history. They were the evangelists of their days. The period of the prophets covered 500 years from the ninth to the fourth centuries B.C. These prophets spoke fearlessly to kings and people alike of their sins and failures.

Their Directive or Message:

As a mouthpiece or spokesman for God, the prophet's primary duty was to speak forth God's message to God's people in the historical context of what was happening. The broadest meaning is that of *forthtelling*; the narrower meaning is that of *foretelling*. In the process of proclaiming God's message, the prophet would sometimes reveal that which pertained to the future, but, contrary to popular opinion, this was only a small part of the prophets' messages.

Forthtelling involved *insight* into the will of God; it was *exhortative*, challenging men to obey.

On the other hand, *foretelling* entailed *foresight* into the plan of God; it was *predictive*, either encouraging the righteous in view of God's promises or warning them in view of coming judgment. So the prophet was the divinely chosen spokesman who, having received God's message, proclaimed it in oral, visual, or written form to the people. For this reason, a common formula used by the prophets was, "Thus says the Lord."

As God's spokesmen, their messages can be understood in the light of the a three-fold function they had among the people of God in the Old Testament:

1. *First, they functioned as PREACHERS* who expounded and interpreted the Mosaic Law to the nation. It was their duty to admonish, reprove, call to denounce sin, threaten with the terrors of judgment, call to repentance, and bring consolation and pardon. Their activity of rebuking sin and calling for repentance consumed far more of the prophets' time than any other feature of their work. The rebuke was driven home with predictions about the punishment that God intended to send on those failing to heed the prophets' warnings (cf. Jonah 3:4).
2. *Second, they functioned as PREDICTORS* who announced coming judgment, deliverance, and events relating to the Messiah and His kingdom. Predicting the future was never intended merely to satisfy man's curiosity, but was designed to demonstrate that God knows and controls the future, and to give purposeful revelation. The prediction given by a true prophet would be visibly fulfilled. The failure of the prediction to be fulfilled would indicate that the prophet had not spoken the word of *Yahweh* (cf. Deu. 18:20-22). In 1 Samuel 3:19 it is said of Samuel that the "Lord was with him and let none of his prophetic words fail" (lit. "fall to the ground").
3. *Finally, they functioned as WATCHMEN* over the people of Israel (Ezek. 3:17). Ezekiel stood as a watchman on the walls of Zion ready to trumpet a warning against religious apostasy. He warned the people against political and military alliances with foreign powers, the temptation to become involved in idolatry and Canaanite cultic worship, and the danger of placing excessive confidence in religious formalism and sacrificial ritual.

While the prophets functioned in various ways as they communicated God's message, *they occupied one major role* in Israel's religious system. The prophets in Israel occupied the role of *a royal diplomat or prosecuting attorney,* indicting the nation for violations of the Mosaic covenant.

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ISAIAH – Salvation is of *Yahweh*

Author: As the book clearly declares, the author is Isaiah, the son of Amoz, an apparently influential and distinguished Jewish family. Isaiah appears to have been on familiar terms with the royal court even in the reign of Ahaz.

Date: 740–680 B.C.

Name of the Book: The title, *Isaiah*, is obviously taken from the name of the human author who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, composed it. The Hebrew name of this prophet means "*Yahweh* is salvation," which appropriately, is an excellent summary of the theme and contents of the book.

Theme and Purpose: As just mentioned, Isaiah's name provides the theme of the book, "salvation is of *Yahweh*." This is made most evident by the fact that the term "salvation" occurs twenty-six times in Isaiah but only seven time in all the other prophets combined. Because of this, Isaiah has been called "the evangelical prophet" because he says so much about the salvation and redemptive work of the Messiah.

In fact, more is said about the person and work of the Messiah in His first and second advents than in any other Old Testament book. In some respects, Isaiah is a miniature Bible in structure. It has 66 chapters, just as the Bible has 66 books. There are two great divisions, just as there are in the Bible, with 39 chapters in the first, like the Old Testament, and 27 chapters in the second, like the New Testament. The book has been labeled "The Gospel According to Isaiah." Christ's virgin birth, His character, His life, His death, His resurrection and His second coming are all presented with precision and clarity.

Key Word: Again in keeping with the theme and Isaiah's name, the key word is *salvation*.

Key Idea – *Order:* Some would look at the history of mankind, and particularly the nation of Israel, and see only happenstance and chaos. Isaiah reveals clearly that God is allowing history to unfold according to a plan. One of the main purposes of including the books of prophecy in the Old Testament is that they make the Bible a stand-alone book. Proof of the authority of the scriptures is found within its own pages as very specific information about the Messiah is known and recorded centuries before His birth. Indeed, the plan of redemption was in the heart of God the moment man sinned, when He announced to the serpent, "he (the offspring of the woman) will crush your head, but you shall bruise his heel." In fact, the Apostle Paul announced to the Ephesians (1:8b-12) "With all wisdom and understanding, He (God) made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined ***according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will,*** in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory." Our God is a God of order, and He is working out His plan.

Key Chapters: Chapter 53: With a book so full of rich truth and Messianic anticipation, deciding on a key chapter is not easy, but surely Isaiah 53, which points to the Messiah as a suffering Savior who must die for our sin, is the most remarkable and key chapter of the Old Testament.

Key Verses: 7:14; 9:6-7; 53:4-7.

Key People: Isaiah the prophet is the key human person, but *Yahweh* is the key person. He is exalted as the *Mighty One of Israel*, as *the Holy One of Israel*, and as *the Lord God of Hosts*, and is clearly the chief focus of Isaiah's book.

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Isaiah: No book of the Old Testament presents a portrait of Christ that is as complete and comprehensive as does Isaiah. Isaiah portrays the Messiah in His sovereignty above (6:1f), in His birth and humanity (7:14; 9:6; 11:1), in His ministry by the Spirit (11:2f), His divine nature (7:14; 9:6); His Davidic descent (11:1); His work of redemption as our substitute (53), His ministry as the Servant Savior (49ff), and much more.

Outline:

I. Prophecies of Denunciation and Judgment (1:1 - 39:8)
   - A. Prophecies Against Judah (1:1 - 12:6)
   - B. Prophecies Against Gentile Nations (13:1 - 23:18)
   - C. Prophecies of the Day of the Lord (24:1 - 27:13)
   - D. Prophecies Against Israel and Judah (Woes and Blessings) (28:1 - 35:10)
   - E. Prophecies Against Sennacherib (36:1 - 39:8)

II. Prophecies of Comfort or Consolation (40:1 - 66:24)
   - A. Prophecies of Israel's Deliverance and the Greatness of God (40:1 - 48:22)
   - B. Prophecy of Israel's Deliverer; the Salvation of the Suffering Servant (49:1 - 57:21)
   - C. Prophecies of Israel's Glorious Future; God's Program for Peace (58:1 - 66:24)

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JEREMIAH – Warning Against Sin and Judgment

Author: As with Isaiah, this book clearly identifies the human author, Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah from the priest city of Anathoth in the land of Benjamin (1:1). Jeremiah dictated his prophecies to Baruch, his secretary. Only chapter 52 was not written by the prophet. **Date:** 627-585 B.C. Jeremiah began his ministry in the 13th year of Josiah, about 60 years after Isaiah's death.

Name of the Book: The book takes its name from it author, Jeremiah. Some suggestions for the meaning of his name are: "The LORD exalts" and "The LORD establishes," but a more likely proposal is "The LORD throws," either in the sense of "hurling" the prophet into a hostile world or of "throwing down" the nations in divine judgment for their sins.

Theme and Purpose: Two themes are prominent: (1) Warnings of God's judgment against sin (2) The message of hope and restoration if the nation would genuinely repent.

Jeremiah is called the "weeping prophet." The message he was called to give broke his own heart. It was the most unwelcome ever delivered to a people. He was called a traitor because he said they were to yield to Babylon (38:17-23). There was only one thing left for Israel to do—surrender.

Jeremiah predicted the 70 years of captivity in Babylon (25:9-12). However, he saw beyond the darkness to the light, and no prophet spoke so glowingly of the future as he did (23:3-8; 30; 31; 33:15-22).

Jeremiah used many object lessons given him by Jehovah in teaching the people. His message was not only unpopular, it was rejected, and even his friends demanded his death.

Key Words: 6 key verbs (4 negative and 2 positive) - Uproot, Tear Down, Destroy, Overthrow, Build and Plant. There are more references to Babylon in Jeremiah (164) than in all the rest of the Bible together.

Key Idea – *Sincerity:* During the days of Jeremiah, the Jews had already been through several cycles of sin, judgment, repentance, and restoration. Each cycle amplified the magnitude of the judgment, and the worst was yet to come. True repentance includes the forsaking of sin. God judges the heart; mere words of repentance do not necessarily mean that the heart is indeed repentant. Prior instances of repentance had not been sincere. God desires *sincere* worship and *sincere* repentance from sin. In Jeremiah 8:12, the Lord indicts the people, "Are they ashamed of their detestable conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush." The lesson that can be learned from Jeremiah is that the Lord is not slack in doing what He warned He would do. So, "let us draw near to God with a *sincere* heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:22).

Key Chapters: Chapter 1 is surely a key chapter in that it records the call of the prophet. Then chapter 23 is key in that it gives the prophecy of the Messiah, the "righteous branch" who is seen in contrast to the wicked shepherds and lying prophets described in this same chapter. Twenty-four is another important chapter because it prophesies the Babylonian captivity which will last for seventy years. Finally, chapters 31-32 are key in that they speak of restoration, the New Covenant when the Lord will "Put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts …" (31:33).

Key Verses: 1:4-10; 7:23-24; 8:11-12.

Key People: The key person throughout is of course Jeremiah, his preaching, resistance, and persecution.

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Jeremiah: Many pictures of Christ are seen in Jeremiah: The fountain of living waters (2:13; cf. John 4:14), the balm of Gilead (8:22), The Good Shepherd (23:4), A Righteous Branch (23:5), and the Lord Our Righteousness (23:6). He is seen as the one who will bring in the New Covenant (31:31-34).

Outline:

I Jeremiah's Call and Commission (1:1-19)

II. Prophecies to Judah (2:1 - 45:5)

III. Prophecies to the Gentiles (46:1 - 51:64)

IV. Historical Supplement (52:1-34)

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LAMENTATIONS – A River of Tears

Author: The consensus of Jewish tradition attributes the book to Jeremiah. There are a number of similarities between the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations (e.g., the phrase "daughter of" occurs about 20 times in each book).

Date: 586 or 585 B.C.

Name of the Book: The Hebrew Bible has the title "'Ekhah," meaning "How … !" or "Alas," being the formula for the commencement of a song of wailing. It is the first word in the first, second, and fourth chapters. The title in the Septuagint is "Wailings." Because of its subject matter, the book is also referred to in Jewish tradition as "Lamentations."

Theme and Purpose: The primary theme of the book is a lament or mourning over the woes that had fallen on sinful Judah and the pitiable destruction of the holy city and the temple. God's promised judgment for Judah's sin has come. A second theme flows out of this of judgment for sin. Thus the prophet appeals to the chastened nation that they recognize God was just and righteous in His dealings with them, and that they cast themselves upon His mercy in a spirit of repentance.

Key Word: In view of the theme and nature of the book, the key word is *mourning* or *lamentations*.

Key Idea – *Grief:* Sin grieves the heart of God. It separates us from fellowship with Him, and thwarts His plan to bless, protect, and provide for us. Sin builds a wall; that separation from God should appropriately bring in our hearts almost inconsolable grief, making us so miserable that repentance flows easily and sincerely. It is the pride and stubbornness of man, illustrated in the history of the Jewish people, which makes us unrepentant and content to remain in our sinful condition. Grief is an important and necessary sign of true repentance. When we have sinned, the Book of James exhorts us to "Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. *Grieve, mourn and wail*. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up" (4:8-10).

Key Verses: 2:5-6; 3:21-24

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Lamentations: Lamentations includes two elements that portray the Savior:

1. It portrays Him as the Man of Sorrows who was acquainted with grief, who was afflicted, despised, and scorned by His enemies (cf. 1:12; 3:19: 2:15-16; 3:14, 30).
2. Jeremiah's weeping over the destruction of Jerusalem is perhaps also a picture of Christ who wept over Jerusalem (see Mat. 23:37-38).

Outline:

I. The Destruction of Jerusalem (1:1-22)

II. The Lord's Anger Against His People (2:1-22)

III. The Distraught Prophet (3:1-66)

IV. The Defeated People of Jerusalem (4:1-22)

V. The Prayer for Restoration (5:1-22)

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EZEKIEL – They Shall Know That I Am *Yahweh*

Author: The author is Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi, who received his call as a prophet while in exile in Babylon (1:1-3). **Date:** 593-571 B.C.

Name of the Book: As with Isaiah and Jeremiah, the book of Ezekiel gets its name from its author, Ezekiel, which in Hebrew means "God strengthens" or "strengthened by God."

Theme and Purpose: Ezekiel was a prophet during the captivity in Babylon. He tried to remove Israel's false hopes of an early return to Palestine and to prepare them for the news of the tragic destruction of their beloved Jerusalem.

His message was the most spiritual of the prophets', as he deals more with the person of God. He spoke in the darkest days of the nation. The people would not listen to him or to his message, so he resorted to a new method. Instead of speaking in parables, he acted them out (24:24). Ezekiel is the prophet of the glory of the Lord.

Key Words: The words "shall know that I am the Lord" occur some 63 times. Other distinctive phrases that are repeated are "the word of the Lord came" (50 times), and "glory of the Lord" (10 times).

Key Idea – *Glory:* One of the inherent qualities of God (Yahweh) is His glory. It is so powerful that He only reveals it in a perceptible way on earth in limited measure, or all humans would be undone. Whenever any Bible character catches a glimpse of the glory of God they are in danger of death. Consider the experiences of Abraham (Ex. 33:21-23), Moses (Ex. 40:34-35), and Solomon and the priests (2 Chron. 7:1-3). The human body cannot endure the power of God's glory; when the spiritual and physical realms intersect, there is a reaction in the physical world. See examples in the transfiguration of Christ (Matt. 17:1-3), the arrest of Jesus (John 18:5), the resurrection (Matt. 28:4), and the encounter of Saul with Jesus on the Damascus road (Acts 9:4). It is humbling to remember that just because we do not always perceive the glory and greatness of God, it does not mean that it does not exist. One day every knee will bow at the name of Jesus when His glory is revealed (Philippians 2:9-11).

Key Chapters: Chapters 36-37 speak of the blessings that will come to the mountains of Israel followed by the hope of restoration of Israel in the vision of the valley of dry bones, which outlines the clear process of restoration of Israel's future. Chapters 38-39 anticipate the great global conflict that will occur on the mountains of Israel but with Israel's enemies defeated by God.

Key Verses: 36:24-30; 36:33-35

Key People: Ezekiel

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Ezekiel: Christ, the Messiah, is pictured as a tender sprig that will be planted on a high and lofty mountain (17:23-24), a picture similar to that of the Branch in Isaiah (11:1), in Jeremiah (23:5; 33:15), and in Zechariah (3:8: 6:12). Ezekiel also speaks of the Messiah as the King who has the right to rule (21:26-27) and who will minister as the true Shepherd (34:11-31).

Outline:

I. Pre-siege, chapters 1 - 24. Ezekiel began his prophecies six years before Jerusalem's destruction and kept predicting its certainty until it occurred.

II. Siege, chapters 25 - 32. After that, his prophecies deal with Judah's enemies and the overthrow of the heathen nations.

III. Post-siege, chapters 33 - 48. Finally, the restoration and reestablishment of Judah are pictured.

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DANIEL – Israel's Ultimate Destiny

Author: Daniel, like Ezekiel, was a Jewish captive in Babylon. While a youth, Daniel was taken as a captive to Babylon in 605 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar. There he became a statesman in the court of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius. Though he did not occupy the office of a prophet, Christ identified him as a prophet (Mat. 24: 15; Mark 13: 14). Daniel has been called the prophet of dreams because God revealed to him His secrets. **Date:** 537 B.C.

Name of the Book: The book is named after its author. The Hebrew word for Daniel means either "God is Judge" or "God is my Judge."

Theme and Purpose: The theme of Daniel is God's sovereign power as the one true God, who judges and destroys the rebellious world powers and will faithfully deliver His covenant people according to their steadfast faith in Him. Daniel was written to encourage the exiled Jews through revealing God's sovereign plan for Israel during and after the period of domination by the Gentile world powers.

Key Words: Kings, kingdoms, visions, dreams

Key Idea – *Preservation:* When the nation of Israel came under judgment all the people suffered, whether they were righteous or evil. Daniel and his friends were captured just as their neighbors, but their hearts were full of faith in their God. The early chapters of Daniel reveal the power of God to preserve the righteous no matter their circumstances. Even when their nation was under judgment, Daniel and the three Hebrew children were blessed by God and preserved, even from death. In the later chapters of Daniel, it can be seen that though they are under judgment, God still preserves the nation of Israel and will miraculously restore them. We have seen evidence of this in recent history when Israel was gathered from the ends of the world and given again possession of the land of Palestine in 1948. God's preservation of the Jews will continue until the end of human history; once again He alone will be seen as their protector in a supernatural way.

Key Verses: 2:20-22; 2:44; 7:14.

Key People: Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Cyrus - the Persian monarch, and Michael, the archangel who ministered to Daniel in chapter 10.

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Daniel: One of the key portraits of Christ in Daniel is that of the coming Messiah who will be cut off (a reference to the cross) (9:25-26). However, Christ is also portrayed as the great stone who will crush the kingdoms of this world (2:34, 45), the son of man (7:13), and the Ancient of days (7:22).

Outline:

I. The private life of Daniel, (1:1 - 2:3)

II. The public life of Daniel—a portrayal of the times of the Gentiles (2:4 - 7:28)

III. The prophetic visions of Daniel—the prophetic history of the nation (8 – 12)

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PART 5 – THE MINOR PROPHETS

The Title:

The common title for these twelve books of the English Bible is "minor prophets." This title originated in Augustine's time (late fourth century A.D.), but they are minor only in that they are much shorter than the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel (called "major prophets").

Literary Features of the Minor Prophets:

Common themes of the Minor Prophets:

1. Warning of impending judgment because of the nations' sinfulness;
2. A description of the sin;
3. A description of the coming judgment;
4. A call for repentance;
5. A promise of future deliverance.

To outline a prophetic book, an introductory or concluding formula is used, such as "This is what the Lord says…"

Chronological Overview of the Minor Prophets:

Their Order in the English Bible

1. Hosea	3. Amos	5. Jonah	7. Nahum	9. Zephaniah	11. Zechariah
2. Joel	4. Obadiah	6. Micah	8. Habakkuk	10. Haggai	12. Malachi

Their Grouping According to the Exile and the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah

Group	Book	Approximate Dates
Pre-Exilic Prophets of Israel	Jonah (preached to Nineveh) Amos Hosea	780-850 765-750 755-715
Prophets of Judah	Obadiah Joel Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah	840 835-796 740-690 630-612 606-604 625
Post-Exilic Prophets Prophets of the Returned Remnant	Haggai Zechariah Malachi	520 515 430

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HOSEA – Persevering Love

Author: As declared in verse 1, the author is Hosea, the son of Beeri and the husband of Gomer (1: 3). **Date:** The prophetic career of Hosea extended from 784 to 723 B.C.

Name of the Book: The book is named after its author, Hosea. Interestingly, the names Hosea, Joshua, and Jesus are all derived from the same Hebrew word, *hoshea*, which means "salvation." As God's messenger, Hosea offers salvation to the nation if they will turn from their idolatry and return to the Lord.

Theme and Purpose: Hosea was written to demonstrate the steadfast or unfailing love of God for Israel in spite of her continued unfaithfulness. Through Hosea's marital experience, the book shows us the heart of a loving and compassionate God who longs to bless His people with the knowledge of Himself along with all the blessings that come to those who know Him intimately. In keeping with this purpose, the theme of Hosea is a strong testimony against the Northern Kingdom because it had been unfaithful to its covenant relationship with the Lord, as demonstrated in its widespread moral corruption both publicly and privately. Thus, the prophet seeks to get his countrymen to repent and return with contrite hearts to their patient and ever-loving God.

Key Word: "Harlot" (10 times) and "Harlotry" (9 times)

Key Chapters: Chapter 4 is key in that in this chapter we see how in following the ways of idolatry, Israel left the knowledge of God's truth and became rejected as priest.

Key Verses: 3:1; 4:1; 4:6; 11:7-9.

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Hosea: In Hosea, the Messiah is presented as the Son of God (cf. 11:1 with Mat. 2:15), as the only Savior of His people (cf. 13:4 with John 14:6), as the one who will ransom us from the dead (cf. 13:14 with 1Co. 15:55), as the one who loves us with great compassion (11:4), and as the one who heals those who will return to Him (6:1).

Outline:

I. Superscription (1:1)

II. The dishonored wife (1:2 - 3:5)

III. The sinful people (4:1 - 13:8)

IV. The ultimate blessing and glory of Israel (13:9 - 14:9)

JOEL – Coming of the Day of Yahweh

Author: As indicated by 1:1, the author is Joel. **Date:** Between the years 835 and 805 B.C.

Name of the Book: The Hebrew word for Joel means *Yahweh is God*. This name is extremely appropriate in view of the message of Joel, which emphasizes God as the Sovereign One who is the God of history, having all creation and the nations under His power and control.

Theme and Purpose: Joel was a prophet to Judah, writing to them at the time of a terrible plague of locusts. He compared this to future judgments. He spoke of the "day of the Lord" five times, referring to judgment.

Spiritual deliverance is the great central promise of the book of Joel. Joel had the privilege of telling the nation that God would pour forth His Spirit upon all flesh (2:28, 2:32, 3:18). This was fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2:16), and continues to have fulfillment in these days as the Spirit of the Lord stirs and anoints His people.

Key Word: The key phrase, in keeping with the warnings of the book, is the Day of Yahweh.

Key Chapters: Chapter 2 is the key chapter in that it promises that God will relent of the judgment to be poured out on Israel if she will only return to the Lord (vv. 13-14). This is then followed by the promise of the future deliverance of the nation through the outpouring of the Spirit of God, the display of wonders in the sky and on the earth, the coming of the Day of the Lord, and the calling on the name of the Lord (vv. 28-32).

Key Verses: 2:11; 2:28-32.

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Joel: In Joel, Christ is presented as the one who will give the Holy Spirit (cf. 2:28 with John 16:7-15; Acts 1:8), who judges the nations (3:2,12), and who is the refuge and stronghold of Israel (3:16).

Outline:

I. The plague of insects (1:1-20)

II. The Day of the Lord (2:1 - 3:8)

III. Retrospective of the Day of the Lord, and full kingdom blessing (3:9-21)

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AMOS – Judgment for Abused Privilege

Author: This book was written by Amos, a herdsman and a tender of sycamore fruit (1:1; 7:14). He was from Tekoa, which was located near Bethlehem. Though he was a farmer he was very familiar with the Word of God. **Date:** About 760 B.C.

Name of the Book: The name *Amos* means "burden" or "Burden-bearer," which is entirely fitting for the burden given to him. He was given the burden of carrying a message of warning against the greed, injustice, violence, and self-righteousness of the people.

Theme and Purpose: Amos' message was addressed largely to the Northern Kingdom. He feared God so much that he feared no one else at all. Amos started his preaching by proclaiming the Lord's judgment upon six neighboring nations. Then his attention came nearer to home, and he prophesied about the whole nation of Judah and Israel.

The chief peculiarity of the style of Amos consists in the number of allusions to natural objects and agricultural occupations, as might be expected from the early life of the author.

Key Words: The words "transgress" and "transgression" occur 12 times. This highlights one of the key elements of the book, *the judgment of God on Israel* for her sinful ways. A key phrase of the book is "I will not revoke its punishment because . . ." (see 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6).

Key Chapter: Chapter 9 is a key chapter because of its focus on the restoration of Israel.

Key Verses: 3:1-2; 4:11-12; 8:11-12

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Amos: Amos presents Christ as the One who will rebuild David's dynasty (9:11) and as the One who will restore His people (9:11-15).

Outline:

I. The Introduction: the Author and Theme (1:1-2)

II. The Eight Judgments (1:3 - 2:16)

III. The Sermons (3:1 - 6:14)

IV. The Five Visions (7:1 - 9:10)

V. The Five Promises of Restoration for Israel (9:11-15)

OBADIAH – Poetic Justice

Author: The author is an unknown prophet of Judah by the name of Obadiah (1:1). **Date:** The book was probably written between 848-840 B.C. Some scholars argue for a later date, around 586 B.C.

Name of the Book: The Hebrew name Obadiah means "servant or worshipper of *Yahweh*."

Theme and Purpose: Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament—only 21 verses. It is the prophecy of judgment against Edom. It includes two important themes—the doom of the proud and rebellious, and the deliverance of the meek and humble.

The Edomites descended from Esau, who had despised his birthright. Edom continued to be Israel's enemy. She was destroyed, as Obadiah warned. Obadiah, like the other prophets, predicted the coming of the Day of the Lord and the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom.

Obadiah is chronologically the first of the Minor Prophets, and the first to use the formula, "the Day of the Lord."

Key Word: Combined, Edom and Esau occur nine times.

Key Verses: 1:10; 1:15; 1:21

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Obadiah: Christ is seen in Obadiah as the Judge of the nations (15-16), the Savior of Israel (17-20), and the possessor of the kingdom (21).

Outline:

I. The Prophecies of Judgment on Edom (vs. 1-9)

II. The Basis for the Judgment on Edom (vs. 10-14)

III. The Time of the Judgment (v. 15)

IV. The Results of the Judgment (vs. 16-18)

V. The Deliverance of Israel (vs. 19-21)

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JONAH – Fleeing from God's Will

Author: The author of the book is Jonah, the son of Amittai, a prophet from Galilee in the Northern Kingdom of Israel (1:1). **Date:** In 2 Kings 14:27 Jonah is connected with the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel (793-753). Jonah ministered after the time of Elisha and just before the time of Amos and Hosea. The repentance of Nineveh probably occurred in the reign of Ashurdan III (773-755).

Name of the Book: Jonah, in Hebrew "Yo,na,h," means "dove."

Theme and Purpose: Jonah clearly demonstrates that the God of the Hebrews (1) has concern for the whole world and (2) is sovereign over nature and all human affairs. Jonah demonstrates that "salvation is of the Lord" (2:9), and that God's gracious offer of salvation extends to all who repent and turn to Him. The book also demonstrates how our prejudices, like Jonah's warped sense of Jewish nationalism, can hinder us from following the will of God.

There are two events of great importance in the book: the great fish swallowing Jonah, and the huge heathen city of Nineveh being converted by an obscure foreign missionary in just a few days.

Key Word: A word that is repeated several times emphasizing God's sovereignty is the word "prepared." In this book, God prepared four things: a great fish (1:17), a gourd (4:6), a worm (4:7), and a vehement east wind (4:8); God was taking care of His prophet!

Key Chapters: The third chapter stands out in that it records one of the greatest revivals of history.

Key Verses: 2:8-9; 3:10; 4:2

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Jonah: In Jonah, Christ is portrayed in His resurrection (Matthew 12:40). He typifies Christ as the Sent One, raised from death after three days, and carrying salvation to the Gentiles.

Outline:

I. The Fleeing of Jonah (1:1-17)

II. The Praying of Jonah (2:1-10)

III. The Preaching of Jonah (3:1-10)

IV. The Learning of Jonah (4:1-11)

MICAH – Who Is Like God?

Author: The name Micah is a shortened form of Micaiah, which means "Who is like *Yahweh*?" Micah suggests this truth in 7:18 when he said, "Who is a God like You?" In Jeremiah's day the elders referred to Micah and quoted Micah 3:12 in defense of Jeremiah's message of judgment on the nation (Jer. 26:18). **Date:** Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah, prophesied during the days of Jotham (750-732), Ahaz (736-716) and Hezekiah (716-687) (1:1).

Name of the Book: The book takes its title from its author, Micah the prophet.

Theme and Purpose: Micah shows how the people had failed to live up to the covenant stipulations God had made with Israel in which there would be blessing for obedience (Deut. 28:1-14).

He indicts Israel and Judah for sins like oppression, bribery among the judges, prophets, and priests, and for covetousness, cheating, pride, and violence. Micah proclaimed judgment on Jerusalem and the cities of Israel. But he hastened on to words of hope. He looked beyond doom and punishment to the day of glory when Christ would reign – The Messiah will come (4:8); He will be born in Bethlehem (5:2-4).

Key Words: Hear, desolation, desolate, destruction, gather or assemble

Key Chapters: Undoubtedly, chapters 6-7 are the key chapters of Micah.

Key Verses: 1:5-9; 6:8; 7:18-20.

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Micah: Micah presents Christ as the God of Jacob (4:2), the Judge of the nations (4:3), and the Ruler who would be born in the city of Bethlehem (cf. 5:2 with Mat. 2:1-6). The priests and scribes quoted Micah 5:2 in answer to Herod's question about the birthplace of the Messiah.

Outline:

I. The Superscription or Introduction (1:1)

II. First Message: Judgment for Samaria and Judah (chaps. 1-2)

III. Second Message: Doom followed by Deliverance (chaps. 3-5)

IV. Third Message: Denunciation for Sin and a Promise of Blessing (chaps. 6-7)

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NAHUM – The Doom of Nineveh

Author: Other than what Nahum tells us in 1:1, that the book is of the vision of Nahum, we know nothing about this prophet. Nahum means "consolation," but his message was certainly not one of comfort to the wicked Assyrians who occupied Nineveh. It would, however, bring comfort to Judah. **Date:** Nahum gave his oracle somewhere between 663 and 607 B.C.

Name of the Book: As with all the Minor Prophets, the book gets it name from the prophet who spoke the prophecy.

Theme and Purpose: Nahum has but one subject--the destruction of Nineveh. According to historian Diodorus Siculus, the city was destroyed nearly a century later, precisely as predicted here.

The moral theme is: the holiness of Jehovah which must deal with sin in judgment.

Key Words: The key word or idea is simply the judgment of Nineveh, but the words that stand out in this connection are "avenging" and "vengeance," occurring three times in the opening chapter (1: 2).

Key Idea – *Backsliding:* The city of Nineveh experienced true revival during the life and times of the prophet Jonah. There can be no doubt that the nation, and the people, truly repented. However, a return to sin means that the judgment of God is once again upon them. The illustration of the history of Nineveh is clear–repentance may be sought and forgiveness granted for *past* sins, but there is no indulgence of God at that moment for *future* sins. This is why Philippians 2:12-13 instructs God's people to "continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose." Examination of one's heart and repentance for sin should be a lifestyle, not a one-time event, lest anyone presume upon the grace of God (Heb. 18:28-30).

Key Chapter: Chapter one stands out as a key chapter because it sets forth the basis of God's judgment against Nineveh as retribution of a Holy God who, though slow to anger, is also great in power and reserves wrath for His enemies.

Key Verses: 1:7-8; 3:5

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Nahum: While there are no direct Messianic prophecies in Nahum, in keeping with the basic christological spirit of all prophecy, Nahum sees Christ as the jealous God and avenger of His adversaries (1:2f).

Outline:

I. The Introduction (1:1)

II. The Prophecy and Certainty of God's Judgment on Nineveh (1:2-15)

III. The Description of God's Judgment on Nineveh (chap. 2)

IV. The Cause for God's Judgment on Nineveh (chap. 3)

Zechariah and Malachi are the last two books in the Old Testament. They will be covered in the last lesson, found on page 40. There was not enough room there to include their Key Ideas, so they are inserted below.

ZECHARIAH:

Key Idea – *Hope:* One of the purposes of prophecy in the Bible is to instill in God's people a sense of hope. God knows that discouraging times wage war against hope. Gloom can descend upon us in our human frailty, and it is easy to forget that a powerful God can instantly change history with one whispered word. As these words of prophecy were written, heard, and read, they were intended to become a seed of hope implanted in the hearts of the people; the result was intended to be spiritual nourishment when hope began to wither.

MALACHI:

Key Idea – *Words:* Malachi makes a clear distinction between the authority of the words of man versus the authority of the Word of God. Man offers many words; they stream forth like a great river, but there is no wisdom or authority in them. In fact, they often are filled with curses and challenges to the authority of God. One truth communicated through the Book of Malachi is that God hears *all* our words. This sobering thought should make us carefully consider the wisdom offered in Ecclesiastes 5:2, "Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few." Also worthy of meditation is James 1:26, "Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless."

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HABAKKUK – The Solution to Perplexity

Author: The author is identified as Habakkuk in 1:1 and 3:1. **Date:** There are suggestions that Habakkuk prophesied shortly before Babylon's invasion in 605 B.C, around 606.

Name of the Book: The book gets its title from the name of the author. Habakkuk comes from a Hebrew word which means "embrace."

Theme and Purpose: Habakkuk asked questions and received answers. The question, "Why do the wicked prosper?" is discussed. In all his difficulties, he went to God in prayer and waited patiently for His answer (2:1). After a sincere prayer (3:1-16), God's glory appeared.

The purposes of his prophecy were:

1. To proclaim that Yahweh, Judah's sovereign warrior, will appropriately judge the evil of Judah by bringing the Babylonians against them;
2. To proclaim that Yahweh, as the protector of His people, will sustain those who trust in Him;
3. To proclaim that Yahweh, as the protector of His people, will deliver Israel from the Babylonians one day;
4. To proclaim that Yahweh, as Judah's sovereign warrior, will one day judge the unjust Babylonians.

The purpose of the prophecy was to prepare the people to live faithfully amidst an unexpected downturn of events. They were not to lose hope; they were to persevere in faith.

The words, "The just shall live by his faith" (2:4) had great significance in the Reformation. These words are quoted in the New Testament: Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11 and Hebrews 10:38.

Key Words: Two words are key not because of their repetition but because of the content of the book. One is "why" as Habakkuk struggled with the issues here and the other is "faith" as declared in 2:4, "the just shall live by faith."

Key Idea – *Faith:* A human proverb says, "tough times make tough people." Times of testing and adversity come to try our faith and to strengthen it. Faith is not dependent on favorable circumstances; faith rises above circumstances. Our faith is not to be placed in leaders, governments, pastors, or any people; faith is to be placed in God alone. It is easy to trust God when life seems easy, but what happens to our faith when life becomes difficult? Remember, the writer of Hebrews says, "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6).

Key Chapters: The book of Habakkuk builds to a triumphant climax reached in the last three verses (3:17-19). The beginning of the book and the ending stand in stark contrast: mystery to certainty, questioning to affirming, and complaint to confidence. Chapter 3 is one of the most majestic of all Scripture and records the glory of God in past history and in future history (prophecy).

Key Verses: 2:4,14; 3:17-19

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Habakkuk: Again in the light of the christological nature of prophecy, Christ is portrayed as the Savior. The word "salvation," which appears three times in 3:13 and 18, is the root word from which the name "Jesus" is derived (see Mat. 1:21). He is also seen as the Holy One (cf. 1:12 with 1 John 1:9), the One who justifies the righteous by faith (2:4), and the One who will one day fill the earth "with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (2:14).

Outline:

I. The Problems of Habakkuk (1:1 – 2:20)
   - A. The First Problem of Habakkuk (1:1-4)
   - B. God's First Reply (1:5-11)
   - C. The Second Problem of Habakkuk (1:12 – 2:1)
   - D. God's Second Reply (2:2-20)

II. The Praise of Habakkuk (3:1-19)
   - A. Habakkuk Prays for God's Mercy (3:1, 2)
   - B. Habakkuk Remembers God's Mercy (3:3-15)
   - C. Habakkuk Trusts in God's Salvation (3:16-19)

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ZEPHANIAH – Blessing Through Judgment

Author: The book was written by Zephaniah, the son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah (1:1).

Date: He prophesied in the days of Josiah, king of Judah (B.C. 641-610), and was contemporary with Jeremiah.

Name of the Book: The book takes its name from the prophet Zephaniah. The name means "hidden of *Yahweh*." (See 2:3.)

Theme and Purpose: Zephaniah is filled with the wrath and judgment of God (1:15; 3:8), but there is the undertone of the love of God (3:17). Zephaniah denounced the various forms of idolatry. He may have been mainly responsible for the revival under Josiah. The book begins with sorrow but ends with singing.

Key Word: The key words are "Day of the Lord," "that day, and " the day," which combined occur some twenty times.

Key Verses: 1:7; 1:12; 1:14-15; 2:3.

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Zephaniah: Though not specifically mentioned in this book, the Messiah is presented as the Righteous One within the nation of Israel (3:5), who is also their King (3:15).

Outline:

I. Introduction (1:1)

II. The Judgment of the Day of Yahweh (1:2 - 3:8)

III. The Restoration of the Day of Yahweh (3:9-20)

HAGGAI – Encouragement

Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi were three post-exilic prophets, all of whom spoke to the returned remnant. Their objective was to encourage the spiritual and moral life of this remnant, now back in their homeland, as they sought to rebuild the temple and the nation.

Haggai and Zechariah dealt mostly with the peoples' spiritual needs as they related to the rebuilding of the temple, and Malachi dealt primarily with the moral and social needs involved with the reconstruction of the nation itself.

Author: Haggai's name means "festal" or "festive." **Date:** 520 B.C.

Name of the Book: As is normal with the writing prophets, the book gets its name from the prophet himself.

Theme and Purpose: The reconstruction and refurbishing of the temple were the supreme passion of Haggai. He rebuked the people for their slowness in rebuilding it, and encouraged and helped them in the enterprise. His book is a series of four brief messages written over a period of four months.

He taught that (1) God blesses His people when they put Him first; (2) we should not grow weary in the service of the Lord; and (3) God's promises for tomorrow become the foundation for our confidence for today.

His stern call to duty was a good tonic. The people arose and began to build the temple (1:12-15).

Key Words: The repetition of the term "house" as it is used in relation to the temple focuses the reader's attention on the *reconstruction of the temple.*

Key Chapters: The Messianic nature of chapter 2:6-9, with its prophecy regarding the future glory of the temple, makes this the key chapter.

Key Verses: 1:7-8; 1:14; 2:7-9.

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Haggai: Here the Messiah is portrayed as the Restorer of the Temple's glory (2:7-9) and the Overthrower of the kingdoms of the world (2:22).

Outline:

I. The First Message: A Call to Rebuild the Temple (1:1-15)

II. The Second Message: A Call to Find Courage in God's Promises (2:1-9)

III. The Third Message: A Call to Cleanness of Life (2:10-19)

IV. The Fourth Message: A Call to Confidence in the Future (2:20-23)

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ZECHARIAH – The Jealousy of *Yahweh*

Author and Name: Zechariah the prophet was the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, the priest who led the Levites (Neh. 12:4), and a contemporary of the previous prophet (Ezra 6:14). His name means "*Yahweh* remembers" or "*Yahweh* has remembered." **Date:** 520-518 B.C.

Theme and Purpose: Zechariah was a young prophet. He stood alongside the aged Haggai, strengthened the children of Israel as they built the temple, and warned them not to disappoint God as their fathers had done. He painted in glowing colors the perpetual blessing that was coming to Israel in far-off ages. Zechariah foretold the Savior more than any other prophet except Isaiah. Looking far into the future he saw Him first in humiliation and suffering, and again, in majesty and great glory.

Key Words: "The Word of the Lord" (13 occurrences) and "The Lord of Hosts" (53 occurrences).

Key Idea – Please find the Key Idea on page 37.

Key Chapter: Chapter 14 is a key chapter. Zechariah discloses the last siege of Jerusalem, the initial victory of the enemies of Israel, the cleaving of the Mount of Olives, the Lord's defense of Jerusalem with His visible appearance on Olivet, judgment on the confederated nations, the topographical changes in the land of Israel, the Feast of Tabernacles in the Millennium, and the ultimate holiness of Jerusalem and her people.

Key Verses: 8:3; 9:9-10

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Zechariah: Zechariah presents the Messiah or Christ in both of his advents and as both Servant and King, as Man and God, as the Angel of the Lord (3:1), the Righteous Branch (3:8), the Stone with the seven eyes (3: 9), the Crucified Savior or the pierced One (12:10), the coming and humble King (9:9-10), the smitten Shepherd who will be abandoned (13:7), and the coming Judge and righteous King (14).

Outline:

I. The Call to Repentance (1:1-6)
II. The Eight Visions of Zechariah (1:7 - 6:8)
III. The Crowning of Joshua (6:9-15)
IV. Questions Concerning the Fasts (7:1 - 8:23)
V. Oracles Concerning the Future (9:1 - 14:21)

MALACHI – Repent and Return

Author: Malachi is mentioned in Malachi 1:1 as the author of this prophecy.

Name: Malachi means "My Messenger" and may be a shortened form of "Messenger of *Yahweh*." **Date:** 450-400 B.C.

Theme and Purpose: Following a period of revival (Neh. 10:28-39), the people had become spiritually cold and morally lax. Malachi came as a reformer, and he encouraged while he rebuked.

Malachi was the last of the prophets to the restored remnant after the 70 years of captivity. The theme of his message is the love of Jehovah, the sins of the priests and of the people, and the Day of the Lord. Malachi, like Zechariah, sees both advents and predicts two forerunners (Mal 3:1; 4:5-6). As a whole, Malachi pronounces the moral judgment of God on the remnant restored by his grace under Ezra and Nehemiah.

Key Words: Twelve times Malachi writes either "you say" (11 times) or "you also say" (once). Also, the word "curse" or "cursed" occurs seven times in four verses. In answer to the peoples' questions and their failure to understand God's judgment, Malachi gives clear replies from God. They are rebuked for waywardness and urged to repent.

Key Idea – Please find the Key Idea on page 37.

Key Verses: 2:17; 3:1; 4:5-6

Christ as Seen Prophetically in Malachi: Malachi predicts the coming of the messenger who will clear the way before the Lord (3:1; cf. Is. 40:30). John the Baptist later fulfills this prophecy, and the next few verses (3:2-5) jump ahead to Christ in His second advent.

Outline:

I. The love of God for Israel (1:1-5)
II. The sins of the priests rebuked (1:6-2:9)
III. The sins of the people rebuked (2:10-3:18)
IV. The day of the Lord (4:1-6)

Malachi is the bridge between the Old and New Testaments. A silence of 400 years lies between Malachi and the voice of John the Baptist saying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

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