

A Survey of the Scriptures: The Old Testament

Study Notes
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A Survey of the Scriptures: The Old Testament

Table of Contents

| Sermon Title | Page |
|---|---------------------------|
| <u>Genesis.....</u> | <u>4</u> |
| <u>Exodus.....</u> | <u>6</u> |
| <u>Leviticus - Laws to Gods people.....</u> | <u>8</u> |
| <u>Numbers.....</u> | <u>10</u> |
| <u>Deuteronomy.....</u> | <u>12</u> |
| <u>Joshua.....</u> | <u>14</u> |
| <u>Judges and Ruth.....</u> | <u>16</u> |
| <u>1 and 2 Samuel.....</u> | <u>18</u> |
| <u>1 Kings.....</u> | <u>20</u> |
| <u>2 Kings.....</u> | <u>22</u> |
| <u>1 and 2 Chronicles.....</u> | <u>23</u> |
| <u>Jonah.....</u> | <u>25</u> |
| <u>Amos.....</u> | <u>26</u> |
| <u>Hosea.....</u> | <u>28</u> |
| <u>Joel.....</u> | <u>30</u> |
| <u>Isaiah.....</u> | <u>31</u> |
| <u>Micah.....</u> | <u>33</u> |
| <u>Nahum.....</u> | <u>34</u> |
| <u>Zephaniah.....</u> | <u>35</u> |

A Survey of the Scriptures: The Old Testament

Contents continued

| Sermon Title..... | Page |
|---|---------------------------|
| <u>Habakkuk.....</u> | <u>36</u> |
| <u>Jeremiah.....</u> | <u>37</u> |
| <u>Lamentations and Obadiah.....</u> | <u>39</u> |
| <u>Ezekiel.....</u> | <u>40</u> |
| <u>Daniel.....</u> | <u>42</u> |
| <u>A Survey of history from the time of Daniel to the end of the Old Testament.....</u> | <u>44</u> |
| <u>Haggai.....</u> | <u>45</u> |
| <u>Zechariah.....</u> | <u>46</u> |
| <u>Esther.....</u> | <u>48</u> |
| <u>Ezra.....</u> | <u>50</u> |
| <u>Nehemiah.....</u> | <u>52</u> |
| <u>Malachi.....</u> | <u>54</u> |
| <u>Job.....</u> | <u>55</u> |
| <u>Psalms.....</u> | <u>57</u> |
| <u>Proverbs.....</u> | <u>59</u> |
| <u>Ecclesiastes.....</u> | <u>61</u> |
| <u>The Song of Solomon.....</u> | <u>63</u> |

A Survey of the Scriptures.

Genesis.

1. Primeval History (1:1 – 11:9).

- From the Creation to the Fall (Chapters 1- 3).
 - The Creation and God's week of work 1:1-2:3.
 - The Garden, and the probation of Man 2:4-25
 - The Serpent, and the Fall of Adam & Eve Chapter 3.

- From the Fall to the Flood (4:1 – 8:14)
 - Cain and Abel, and their offerings. 4:1-16.
 - The genealogies of Cain & Seth. 4:17-5:32.
 - The great apostasy and divine judgment. 6:1– 8:14

- From the Flood to Babel (8:15 – 11:9).
 - The new covenant of God with man. 8:15-9.
 - The descendants of Noah's three sons. Chapter 10.
 - The confederacy & confusion at Babel. 11:1-9.

2. Patriarchal History (11:10 - Chapter 50.)

- Abraham (11:10 – 25:18)
 - The awakening of faith
From his call in Chaldea to his settlement in Canaan 11:10 - Chapter 13
 - The disciplining of faith.
From his settlement in Canaan to the birth of Isaac 14-21:21
 - The perfecting of faith.
From the birth of Isaac to Abraham's death 21:21-25:16

- Isaac (Chapter 21 - Chapter 36)
 - The submissive son.
From his birth to his marriage with Rebekah Chapters 21- 24
 - The faithful husband
From his marriage to his settlement at Beersheba Chapters 25 - 26
 - The indulgent father
From his settlement at Beersheba to his death Chapters 27 - 36

- Jacob. (25:19 – 50:13).
 - The supplanter
From his birth to his departure from home 25:19 -28:9
 - The servant
From his departure from home to his covenant in Gilead 28:10- Chapter 31
 - The saint
From his covenant at Gilead to his descent into Egypt Chapters 32- 45
 - The seer
From his descent into Egypt to his burial at Mamre Chapter 46-50:13

- Joseph. (30:22 - Chapter 50).
 - The period of his training. The son.
From his birth at Haran to his arrival in Egypt 30:22- Chapter 38
 - The period of his testing. The sufferer.
From his arrival in Egypt to his promotion to power Chapter 39-41:36.
 - The period of his triumph. The sovereign.
From his promotion to power to the end of his life 41:37-50:26.

Questions:-

1. Of all the great themes of the Bible, of which can you trace the 'beginning' in Genesis?
2. Show how divine electing grace dominates this book.
3. Which parts of the book give teaching concerning God's omnipotence - omniscience - holiness - grace - sovereignty?
4. On what particular sins does the book focus; and which traits of godly living-does it emphasise?'
5. How was a person saved during the patriarchal period?
6. What features in the career and character of Joseph justify us in regarding him as a type of Christ?

* * *

Exodus.

HISTORICAL

1. Israel in Egypt. 1:1 – 12:36.

- The persecution of the people, Chapter 1.
- The preparation of a deliverer. 2:1 – 4:28
 - Moses, the prince in Egypt. 2:1-15a
 - Moses, the shepherd in Midian. 2:15b-4:28
- The mission of Moses to Pharaoh. 4:29 – 7:13.
- The nine plagues. 7:14 – 10:29.
- The last plague, and the Passover, 11:1 – 12:36.

2. Israel from Egypt to Sinai. 12:37 – 19:2.

- To the Red Sea. 12:37 – 14:14.
- Through the Red Sea. 14:15 – 15:21.
- From the Red Sea. 15:22 – 19:2.

LEGISLATIVE

3. Israel at Sinai. 19:3 – 40:38.

- The will of God disclosed. Chapters 19 - 31.
 - the Law. Chapter 19- Chapter 24
 - the Tabernacle. Chapters 25- 27
 - the priesthood. Chapters 28- 29
 - the service, Chapters 30- 31.
- The will of God despised. Chapters 32- 34.
 - the great transgression. 32:1-6.
 - the divine displeasure 32:7 - Chapter 33.
 - the Law and the Covenant renewed. Chapter 34.
- The will of God fulfilled. Chapter 35- Chapter 40.
 - the construction of the Tabernacle. Chapter 35 – 39:31.
 - the completion of the Tabernacle. 39:32 – 40:33.
 - the consecration of the Tabernacle. 40:34-38.

Questions:

1. What does Exodus teach us about God? and about man?
2. What lessons about spiritual leadership may be learned from the example of Moses?
3. What is the difference between the ceremonial law and the moral law? In what ways are they binding today?
4. How would you define worship? What important truths about worship does Exodus teach?
5. In what other ways is Christ set forth or foreshadowed in Exodus?

* * *

Leviticus - Laws to God's people,

Introduction

Author: Moses
Background: Israel at Mt Sinai, God speaks out of Tabernacle!
Theme: "Holiness": A redeemed people should walk worthy of the Lord!
Key words: Holy; blood; life; "before the Lord".
Key passages: Leviticus 16 - Atonement Day.
Outstanding character: Aaron.
Best commentary: Hebrews.

Outline of book – LAWS: six main divisions:

1. Laws for offerings Chapters 1-7

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------|----------------------|
| a. Burnt offering | Chapter 1 | |
| b. Meal offering | Chapter 2 | Offerings of Praise |
| c. Peace offering | Chapter 3 | |
| d. Sin offering | Chapter 4 | Offerings for Pardon |
| e. Trespass offering | Chapter 5 | |
| f. The offering of the offerings | 6:8 – 7:38 | |

2. Laws for the, Priesthood, Chapters 8-10.

- | | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| a. Consecration | (Aaron' and sons anointed) | Chapter 8 |
| b. Inauguration | (Aaron's offering) | Chapter 9 |
| c. Transgression | (Madab and Abihu) | Chapter 10 |

3. Laws of Purity, Chapters 11-15.

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| a. Be careful what you eat and touch. | Chapter 11 |
| b. Purification of women after childbirth, | Chapter 12 |
| c. Test and cleansing of leprosy. | Chapter 13-14 |
| d. Unclean bodily discharges. | Chapter 15 |

| | | |
|----------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| THE DAY OF ATONEMENT | Chapter 16 | (The scapegoat) |
| Atonement by Blood | Chapter 17 | (The sacredness of Blood) |

4. Laws of Behaviour, Chapters 17-24.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| a. Don't eat blood. | 17:10-16 |
| b. Don't be sexually immoral. Love God. Love thy neighbour. | Chapter 18-20 |
| c. Distinctness to characterise the Priesthood. | Chapter 21-22 |
| d. Worship God in His appointed way. | Chapter 23(feast laws) |
| e. Do justly! | Chapter 24 |

5. Laws concerning special times, Chapter 25.

- a. The Sabbatical year (every 7th year).
- b. The year of Jubilee (every 50th year).

6. Laws of consequence, Chapter 26.

- Obey and be blessed!
- Disobey and be cursed!

Appendix: Concerning Vows and Tithes. Chapter 27

Application: See Christ in Leviticus:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Offerings | Eph 5:2, Heb 9:26 |
| 2. Priesthood | Hebrews8:7-10:25 |
| 3. Day of Atonement | Rom 5:9-11, Heb 10:1-18 |
| 4. Lepers | Rom 4:25 |
| 5. Blood | 1 Peter 1:18-19, Col 1:14, Heb 10:14. |

Questions:

- 1. What keeps Christians from studying Leviticus? What practical advice can we give, or steps can we take, to overcome this?
- 2. What do you consider is the most important practical teaching of Leviticus for today?
- 3. What New Testament principles confirm the teaching of Leviticus concerning our behaviour?
- 4. What are we commanded to offer to God?
- 5. What are the ingredients for a life of holiness?

* * *

Numbers.

1:1 – 10:10 Preparations for leaving Sinai.

- Organisation of the camp. Chapters 1-4.
The men of war numbered: the order of the camp: the separation, service, and number of the Levites.
- Legislation for the people. Chapters 5-6.
Regarding the leper: trespass against a fellow: husband & wife: the Nazarite: the priestly blessing on Israel.
- Provision for the service. 7:1 – 9:14.
Dedication of the altar s consecration of the Levites: celebration of the Passover.
- Anticipation of the march. 9:15 – 10:10.
The law of the cloud: and of the trumpets.

10:11 – 14:45. From Sinai to Kadesh.

- the departure from Sinai. 10:11-36.
- the complaint at Taberah. 11:1-3.
- the lusting at Kibroth-Hattaavah (quails). 11:4-35.
- the sedition at Hazeroth (Aaron & Miriam). Chapter 12.
- the apostasy at Kadesh Barnea (spies: rebellion). Chapters 13-14.

15:1 – 19:22. From Kadesh to Kadesh again.

- legislation for the future. Chapter 15.
- insurrection of the princes under Korah. Chapter 16.
- vindication of the priesthood (Aaron's rod). Chapter 17.
- direction of the priests and Levites. Chapter 18.
- provision against pollution (red heifer). Chapter 19.

20:1 - 36:13. From Kadesh to the plains of Moab.

- the return to Kadesh. 20:1-21.
- the sojourn at Mount Hor. 20:22 - 21:3.
- the march through the Arabah. 21:4-9.
- in the coasts of the East. 21:10-35.
- the encampment at Shittim. Chapters 22-36:
 - the story of Balaam. Chapters 22-25.

- the numbering of warriors & Levites. Chapter 26.
- various laws - inheritance: Moses' successor: offerings: major feasts: vows. Chapters 27-30 and Chapter 36.
- various instructions - the Midianites: the 2½ tribes: record of the journey: the inhabitants of the land: possessing the land. Chapters 31-35.

Questions:-

1. What does this book reveal about God's character?
2. Why did God perform such extreme miracles in the days of Numbers?
3. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition . . ." (1 Corinthians 10:11). What encouragements and warnings can be derived from this book?
4. What in particular is to be learned from the failure of the first generation to enter the promised land? Substantiate your answer by reference to the book of Hebrews.
5. What other types and prophecies and theophanies of the Lord Jesus Christ are to be found in this book?

* * *

Deuteronomy.

1:1 – 4:43. Remembrances of the past.

- Preface. 1:1-5.
- From Horeb to Kadesh. 1:6-46.
- From Kadesh to Heshbon and Bethpeor. Chapters 2 and 3.
- Exhortations to obedience, with a warning. 4:1-43.

4:44 - 26:19. Commandments for the present.

The Sinaitic Law. Chapters 5-11

- recital of the Decalogue. 5:1-21.
- discourse on the Decalogue. 5:22 – 11:32.

Special Laws. 12:1 – 26:19

- Laws concerning religion. 12:1 – 16:17.
The central sanctuary: idolatry: food: tithes: year of release: firstlings of the flock: annual feasts.
- Laws concerning government. 16:18 – 20:20.
The judge, priest, king: priests & Levites: spiritualism: prophets, true & false: cities of refuge: witnesses: war.
- Laws concerning private and social life. 21:1 – 26:15
- Conclusion. 26:16-19.

27:1 – 30:20. Options affecting the future.

- the blessings and the curses. Chapters 27-28.
- solemn affirmations. Chapters 29-30.

31:1 – 34:12. parting words of Moses.

- solemn charges. 31:1-29.
- the prophetic song of Moses. 31:30 – 32:47.
- the final events. 32:48 - 34:12.

Briefer summary of the book (Dr William Hendriksen)

Jehovah's gracious dealings: an incentive unto grateful obedience

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1-4 | 1. Jehovah has dealt graciously with you (from Sinai to Moab). |
| 5-26 | 2. Observe, therefore, his law (the law reviewed beginning with the 10 Commandments). |
| 27-28 | 3. In order that you may be blessed, not cursed. |
| 29-34 | 4. Conclusion. 29-30. The covenant made in Moab. 31-34. Moses' farewell and death. |

Questions:

1. What are some of the other leading ideas of Deuteronomy?
2. In what other ways is the Lord Jesus Christ set forth in this book?
3. What place, if any, should we give to 'looking back'?
4. Why do we so easily fall into spiritual forgetfulness and disobedience? What can we do to guard against this?
5. What lessons may a Christian learn from the life of Moses, particularly as it is recorded in Deuteronomy?

* * *

Joshua.

1. Entering the Land 1:1 – 5:12.

1. Preparation of the people. 1:1 – 3:13.

- i. Inward preparation. The Law. 1:1-18
 - the Lord to Joshua (1-9)
 - Joshua to the people (10-15)
 - The people to Joshua (16-18)
- i. Outward preparation. The spies. 2:1-24.
 - the mission of the spies (1-7)
 - the covenant of the spies (8-21)
 - the report of the spies (22-24)
- ii. Onward preparation. The Ark. 3:1-13.

2. Passage of the people. 3:14 – 4:24.

- the crossing of Jordan 3:14-17.
- the memorial in- Jordan 4:1-18
- the encampment over Jordan. 4:19-24.

3. Purification of the people. 5:1-12.

- the consternation of the enemy. 1.
- the circumcision of the sons. 2-9.
- the cessation of the manna. 10-12.

2. Conquering the Land. 5; 13 - 12; 24.

1. The Revelation of victory. 5:13-15.

2. The Realisation of victory. Chapters 6 - 11.

- the central campaign. Jericho & Ai 6:1 – 9:27.
- the southern campaign. Gibeon & Beth-Horon Chapter 10.
- the northern campaign. Merom Chapter 11

3. The Record of victory, ch.12

- east of Jordan. 1-6.
- west of Jordan. 7-24.

3. Possessing the Land. ch.13 - ch.24.

1. Distribution of the Land among the tribes, ch.13-ch.21.

- the 2½ tribes Chapter 13.
- Caleb Chapter 14.
- the 9 ½ tribes Chapter 15-19.
- the cities of refuge Chapter 20.
- the cities of the Levites. Chapter 21.

2. Dispute about an altar on the border. Chapter 22.

- the charges. 1-20.
- the clearance. 21-29.
- the conclusion. 30-34.

3. Discourse and death of Joshua. Chapters 23 - 24.

- the first address Chapter 23.
- the second address 24:1-28.
- the three graves 24:29-33.

Questions:

1. What lessons regarding spiritual leadership may be learned from the record of Joshua's life?
2. What do you think of the allegorical interpretation of the book of Joshua?
3. List a number of practical lessons which can be learned from this book.
4. How can the wars and destructions recorded in this book possibly be justified?

* * *

Judges and Ruth.

1. Introduction. 1:1 – 3:6.

1. Retrospective. 1:1 – 2:10.

- the failure of Israel. Chapter 1
- the rebuke of the Angel. Chapter 2:1-5
- the death of Joshua recalled. Chapter 2:6-10.

2. Prospective. 2:11 - 3:6.

- a summary of the period (rest – rebellion – retribution – repentance – restoration – rest) Chapter 2:11-23.
- a summary of the enemies. Chapter 3:1-6

2. History. 3:7 - 16:31.

| <u>Cycle</u> | <u>Reference</u> | <u>Enemy</u> | <u>Subjection</u> | <u>Deliverer</u> | <u>Peace</u> |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|--------------|
| 1 | 3:7-11 | Mesopotamia | 8 years | Othniel | 40 years |
| 2 | 3:12-31 | Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites | 18 years (3:31, Shamgar delivers from Philistines). | Ehud | 80 years |
| 3 | 4:1 - 5:31 | Canaanites | 20 years | Deborah & Barak | 40 years |
| 4 | 6:1 – 8:32 | Midianites | 7 years | Gideon | 40 years |
| 5 | 7:33 – 10:5 | | (Usurpation of Abimelech: 3 years Judgeships of Tola and Jair: 45 years). | | |
| 6 | 10:6 -12:15 | Ammonites | 18 years | Jephthah (also Ibzan, Elon, Abdon) | 31 years |
| 7 | 13:1 – 16:31 | Philistines | 40 years | Samson | 20 years |

3. Appendices. 17:1 - 21:25, & Ruth.

1. A story of apostasy - Micah and the Danites. Chapters 17 & 18.

Infidelity

- Micah and his gods. Chapter 17
- the Danite migration. Chapter 18

2. A story of revenge - a Levite and the Benjamites. Chapters 19-21

Immorality

- the outrage at Gibeah. Chapter 19
- the war with Benjamin, Chapters 20-21

3. A story of devotion - Ruth the Moabitess. Ruth 1-4.

Piety and purity

- the migration to Moab of the Elimelech family. 1:1-5.
- the return to Judah of Naomi with Ruth. 1:6-22.
- the meeting of Boaz with Ruth. Chapters 2 and 3
- the redemption by Boaz of Elimelech's inheritance. Chapter 4

Questions:

1. What does Judges teach about the providence of God?
2. Why do believers disobey the Word of God, even though they know the blessings promised to obedience?
3. Why does God use weak vessels to accomplish His work?
4. In what ways did those mentioned in Hebrews 11:32 display faith?
5. What spiritual lessons are taught in the book of Ruth?

* * *

1 and 11 Samuel.

1 Samuel 1-7. Samuel, the man of prayer.

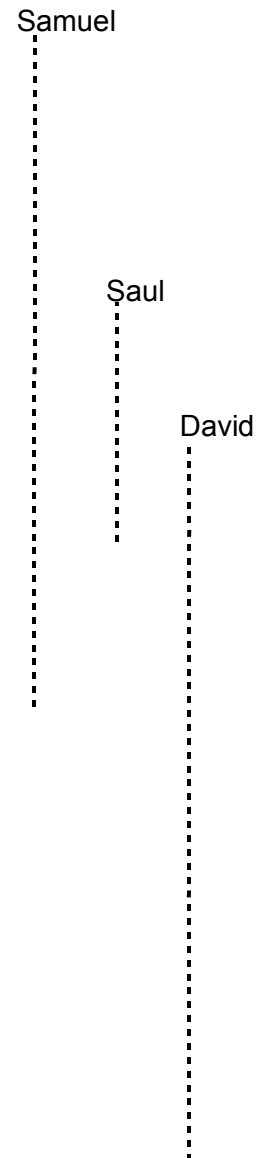
- 1-2 Samuel and his mother (he is born in answer to her prayer).
- 2-3 Samuel and his Lord (he ministers to Jehovah – in contrast to the wicked sons of Eli - and from Jehovah he receives the prophetic call).
- 4-7 Samuel and his people (though ignored by them when they rely upon the ark to give them victory in battle, he prays for them and leads them back to God: Ebenezer).

1 Samuel 8-31. Saul, the king who played the fool.

- 8-12 His early success (anointed king; victory over Ammonites; acclaimed king).
- 13-15 His grievous sins (ill-advised sacrifice; disobedience).
- 15-31 His lack of genuine sorrow (embitterment against David whom he pursues; the tragic end of his life).

11 Samuel 1-24. David, the man after God's heart.

- 1-10 His early success (king over Judah; then, over all Israel; makes Jerusalem his religious and political capital; gains victory over Philistines).
- 11-12 His grievous sins (Bathsheba; Uriah). See also Chapter 24.
- 13-24 His genuine sorrow (hence, pardon; but his sins have sad results; four children die). See also 1 Kings 1-2.



Questions:

1. Why does God sometimes let His people have the things they request, even though the thing desired is evil? 1 Samuel 86-9
2. How do these books reveal the difference between apostasy and backsliding?
3. In what ways do the main characters give us examples to follow?
4. What do you learn here about jealousy and hate, and about faithful friendship?
5. How are the offices of Christ as prophet, priest and King foreshadowed and illustrated in these books?
6. How did David typify Christ in his person, office, and life?

* * *

1 Kings.

| Chapters 1-11 | Chapter 12 | Chapters 13 - 22 |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| <p><u>The kingdom in tranquillity</u></p> <p>God rules His people through a king: * Solomon.</p> | <p><u>The kingdom splits</u></p> | <p><u>The kingdoms in turmoil</u></p> <p>God speaks to His people through a prophet: * Elijah.</p> |

1. The United Kingdom. 1:1 – 11:43.

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Solomon's co-regency with David | 1:1 – 2:46 |
| Solomon's reign | 3:1 – 4:34 |
| Solomon's temple | 5:1 – 9:9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> preparation for building | 5:1 - 18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building and furnishing | 6:1 – 7:51 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dedication | 8:1 - 9:9 |
| Solomon's last years | 9:10 - 11:43 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the prosperity of the kingdom | 9:10 – 10:29 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the apostasy of the king | 11:1 - 43. |

2. The Divided Kingdom. 12:1 – 22:53.

| | | |
|----------|---------------|--|
| + Judah | 12:1-19 | accession & folly of Rehoboam; rebellion of the ten tribes. |
| = Israel | 12:20 – 14:20 | accession & sin of Jeroboam; God's interposition; his continued sin; God's message; his death. |
| + Judah | 14:21 – 15:24 | Judah's sin & idolatry; God's chastisement & mercy; death of Rehoboam; Abijah; Asa. |
| = Israel | 15:25 – 22:40 | Nadab; Baasha; God's message; Elah; Zimri; Omri; Ahab (Elijah; 16:29 – 19:21). |
| + Judah | 22:41-50 | Jehoshaphat. |
| = Israel | 22:51-53 | Ahaziah. |

Questions:

1. What place had the building and worship of the temple as a preparation for the coming of Christ? (See Acts 7:1, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 2 Corinthians 6:16, Revelations 11:19, 15:5, 21:22).
2. Did Solomon die an apostate?
3. Is anything to be learned from Rehoboam's action in chapter 12?
4. What light does this book shed on the question of ambition - false and true?
5. Does the book present any examples to follow - or avoid?
6. What is the main point of the book?

* * *

2 Kings.

"Kingdoms taken captive"

The Divided Kingdom - continued. 1-17. (853-722 B.C.).

- 1:1 – 8:15 Mainly about Elisha.
- 8:16 – 16:20 Mainly about the kings of Israel and Judah.
- Chapter 17 The fall of Samaria - Israel captive to Assyria.

The Surviving Kingdom - Judah. 18-25. (722-586 B.C.).

- 18:1 – 23:30 The closing years of Judah (Hezekiah s Josiah).
- 23:31 – 25:26 The fall of Jerusalem – Judah captive to Babylon.
- 25:27-30 Epilogue.

Prominent subjects:

Elisha 1:1 - 8:15, 13:14-21.

Fall of Samaria (north) 7:1-41.

Hezekiah 18:1 – 20:21.

Josiah 22:1 - 23:30.

Fall of Jerusalem (south) 25:1-26.

Epilogue 25:27-30.

Questions

1. Could Judah have escaped its fate? How?
2. Compare and contrast the careers of Elijah and Elisha.
3. What is to be learned, negatively and positively, from Hezekiah and Josiah?
4. Is Christ really in ALL the Scriptures? Where is He to be seen in 2 Kings?

1 & 2 Chronicles.

1 Chronicles

1-10 Introduction - genealogies from Adam to Saul.

| | |
|------------|-------------------------|
| 1:1 – 23 | Adam to Abraham |
| 1:24 – 2:2 | Abraham to Jacob |
| 2:3 – 9:44 | Descendants of Jacob |
| 10:1 – 14 | The end of Saul's reign |

11-29 David and his reign.

| | |
|---------|---|
| 11 - 22 | <u>Prominent events</u> His followers (11-12), enterprises (13-17), conflicts (18-20), failure (21), charges (22). |
| 23 - 27 | <u>Divisions of the people</u> Levites (23), priests (24), singers (25), porters (26), soldiers (27:1-24), stewards (27:25-31), counsellors (27:32-34). |
| 28 – 29 | <u>Final happenings</u> David's charges: to officers (28:1-8), to Solomon (28:9-21), to the people (29:1-5). The worship of giving (29:6-25). The end (29:26-30). |

2 Chronicles

1-9 Solomon and his reign.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 1:1-13 | <u>The beginning</u> His act of worship (1:1-6) His choice of wisdom (1:7-13). |
| 1:14 – 9:12 | <u>The progress</u> His riches (1:14-17). Treaty with Hiram (2:1-18). Temple & its furniture (3:1-5:1). Dedication of Temple (5:2-6:11). Prayer of Solomon (6:12-42). Fire of acceptance (7:1-3). The offerings and the feast (7:4-10). Divine promises and warnings (7:11-22). Various acts of Solomon (8:1-18). The Queen of Sheba (9:1-12). |

9:13-31

The end

His wealth & power (9:13-28). His death & burial (9:29-31).

10-36 Judah's history from the division of the kingdom to the restoration from Babylonian exile.

10:1 – 36:21

The kings of Judah

Rehoboam (10:12), Abijah (13), Asa (14-16), Jehoshaphat (17:1-21:3), Jehoram (21:4-20), Ahaziah (22:1-9), Athaliah (22:10-23:21), Jehoash (24), Amaziah (25), Uzziah (26), Jotham (27), Ahaz (28), Hezekiah (29-32), Manasseh (33:1-20), Amon (33:21-25), Josiah (34-35), Jehoahaz (36:1-4), Jehoiakim (36:5-8), Jehoiachin (36:9-10), Zedekiah: (36:11-21).

36:22-23

The decree of Cyrus

Questions:

1. What virtues and sins of leaders and people called forth God's blessing or punishment?
2. What do these books tell of the value and importance of worship and praise?
3. How was love for the house of God manifested by David and his successors? How would you apply these lessons to Christian believers?
4. If you had to continue the list of the heroes of faith given in Hebrews chapter 11 into the days of the monarchy, which of the names would you single out from 2Chronicles, and for what actions?

* * *

Jonah.

- Chapter 1. Jonah's mission to Nineveh, his disobedience and its results.
- Chapter 2. His prayer from the belly of the fish and his release.
- Chapter 3. His preaching to the people of Nineveh, and their repentance.
- Chapter 4. Jehovah's love contrasted with Jonah's anger.

Questions:

1. What does this book teach about:
 - the universal message of salvation?
 - the divine commission of service?
 - fleeing from God?
 - recompense for disobedience?
 - repentance?
 - forgiveness of sin?
 - complaining?
 - prayer?
 - miracles?
 - God's control of nature?
2. Do our Lord's references to this book conclusively establish its historicity?
Matthew 12:39-41, 16:4, Luke 11:29-30.

* * *

Amos.

1:1-2. Introduction.

1:3-2. Lyric prophecy (oracles).
Key phrase: "Thus saith the Lord".

Woe is at hand for the nations that have committed cruel, inhuman deeds;-

- Syria - savage cruelty (3)
- Philistia - slave trade (6)
- Phoenicia – slave trade and treaty breaking (9)
- Edom - irreconcilability (11)
- Ammon - sadism and mad aggression (13)
- Moab - vengefulness (1)
- Judah - departure from Jehovah (4)
- Israel - exploitation of the poor; sham religion (6)

3-6. Teaching discourse (sermons).
Key phrases "Hear this word".

Therefore woe is at hand for highly-favoured Israel.

- judgment is on its way – chapter 3.
- repeated warnings should lead you to prepare for it - chapter 4.
- if they had sought the Lord they would have escaped the 'Day of the Lord'; but now Assyria will usher it in – Chapters 5-6.

7-9:10. Dramatic revelation (visions).
Key phrase: "The Lord God showed me".

Visions of threatening:

- the devouring locust - 7:1-3
- the consuming fire - 7:4-6
- the searching plumb line – 7:7-9.
 - an interruption; Amos accused by Amaziah - 7:10-17
- the basket of ripe fruit – chapter 8
- the Lord beside the altar - 9:1-10.

9:11-15 Epilogue: promises of future blessing.

Questions:

1. In what ways does Amos provide us with an example to follow:
 - as a person?
 - as a preacher?
2. What new light does the book of Amos shed on the subject of sin?
3. Compare Amos 9:11-15 with Acts 15:13-18. What does this teach us about the interpretation of Old Testament prophecy?

* * *

Hosea.

| | | |
|-------------|---|-------------|
| Sin | : | God is holy |
| Punishment | : | God is just |
| Restoration | : | God is love |

Narrative - Chapters 1-3.

3:3 Gomer's sin, punishment restoration considered as a symbol.

- her sin; unfaithfulness to her husband
- her punishment; deserted by her lovers, and sold into slavery
- her restoration; "So I bought her to me . . ." (3:2)

Sermons - Chapters 4-14.

4:1-6:3 Sin; punishment; restoration.

- those who sin, described
- those who are punished, described
- restoration: "he has torn, and he will heal us ..." (6:1)

6:4-11:11 Sin; punishment; restoration.

- their sins - trusting in burnt offerings; kings of their own choosing; Egypt and Assyria; idols.
- their punishments - exile; barrenness and bereavement; their idols with them; fortresses destroyed; Jehovah's wrath instead of His love.
- their restoration - "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" (11:8)

12:1-14:9 Sin; punishment; restoration.

- the awful character of their sins - unfaithfulness although Jehovah remains faithful; idolatry by a nation to whom Jehovah has revealed Himself; pagan morality in a nation once delivered from pagan tyranny.
- the severity of the punishment - swift; terrible; relentless.
- restoration - "I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely ..." (14:4).

Questions:

1. Show from the book of Hosea what the principal causes of backsliding are. How is restoration brought about?

2. Apply the following phrases to the present day:
 - "Like people, like priest" (4:9)
 - "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice". (6:6)
 - "They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind" (8:7)
 - "The days of recompense are come" (9:7)
 - It is time to seek the Lord" (10;12)

3. Where is Christ in the book of Hosea?

* * *

Joel.

1:1-2:14 The peril of forsaking God.

| | |
|------------|----------------------------|
| 2-20 | The situation |
| 15, 19 | The Cause |
| 8,11,13,14 | The reaction of the people |
| 2:1-11 | The future |
| 2:12-14 | The appeal. |

2:15-27 The sweetness of returning to God.

| | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|
| 15-17 | The manner of returning (how) |
| 18-27 | The blessings of returning (why). |

2:28-32 Future blessings.

| | |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| 28-32 | The privileges of Christ's church. |
|-------|------------------------------------|

3:1:21 God will overthrow the enemies of His people.

| | |
|-------|------------------------|
| 1-8 | The lesson taught once |
| 9-17 | Twice |
| 18-21 | Three times. |

Questions:

1. Where are the five references to the "day of the Lord"? What are its chief features?
2. Can man's repentance change God's pronouncement of judgement? If so, how can He be said to be sovereign? When is a judgement of God irreversible?
3. What other teachings and lessons can be extracted from the book of Joel?
4. Find traces of reference to this prophecy in Matthew 24 and Revelation 9.

* * *

Isaiah.

Chapters 1-39 Judgement.

Prophecies based on events that happened in Isaiah's own time.

- 1-12. I-5. Judah's departure from Jehovah (formalism, materialism, vanity) condemned.
6-12. The Book of Immanuel, beginning with Isaiah's commission to be a prophet. Do not **trust** in Assyria but in Jehovah, who will bring salvation through His Immanuel.
- 13-35 13-24. Judgments upon the nations that are hostile to those who **trust** in Jehovah - Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Syria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Arabia, Edom and Phoenicia.
25-26. Hymns of **trust**.
27-35. **Trust** in Jehovah, not Egypt.
- 36-39 The reward given to those who **trust** in Jehovah (like Hezekiah):
36 - 37. (i) Deliverance from the Assyrian foe.
38 - 39. (ii) Deliverance from death. Babylonian captivity predicted as a punishment for lack of **trust**.

Chapters 40 – 66 Comfort.

Prophecies based on the event that happened after Isaiah's time (the exile).

- 40-48. Jehovah, incomparable in greatness, will redeem His people; He will deliver them from **Babylonian captivity** through His "anointed" Cyrus.
- 49-57. Jehovah will deliver His people from **spiritual captivity** through "The Servant of Jehovah".
- 58-66. The glory of redeemed Zion.

The unity of Isaiah.

The theory.

| | | |
|---------------|---|----------------|
| Chapters 1-39 | - | Isaiah |
| 40-55 | - | deutero-Isaiah |
| 56-66 | - | trito-Isaiah |

The facts.

- John declares that first-Isaiah and deutero-Isaiah were BOTH Isaiah!!
(John 12:38-41, quoting from Isaiah 6 and 53).
- Matthew declares that deutero-Isaiah WAS Isaiah!!
(Matthew 12:17-18, quoting Isaiah 52).
- Luke declares that deutero-Isaiah and trito-Isaiah were BOTH Isaiah!!
(Acts 8:28-35 quoting Isaiah 53; Luke 4:17 quoting Isaiah 66).
- So does Paul!!
(Romans 10:16, 20, quoting Isaiah chapters 53 and 65).

Questions:

1. According to Luke 24:45-48 the Gospel speaks of Christ's suffering and exaltation; commands repentances; promises remission of sins in His name; and is to be announced to all nations. How are all these themes foreshadowed by Isaiah?
2. What various aspects of Christ's person and work are to be found in the following chapters of Isaiah: 7, 9, 11, 35, 41-44, 49, 52, 53, 63?
3. Collect and summarize Isaiah's teaching on the attributes of God – especially His majesty, His holiness, and His mercy.
4. What doctrine of the atonement is taught in Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12?

* * *

Micah.

Chapters 1 - 2. Jehovah's controversy with the capitals – Samaria and Jerusalem.

- Idolaters and those who exploit the poor will be punished.
- The **remnant** will be blessed – “their king shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them”.

Chapters 3 - 5. Jehovah's controversy with the rulers – prophets, priests, princes.

- Those who exploit the needy "will go into Babylonian exile.
- The **remnant**, rescued from Babylon, shall be blessed, when he comes who shall be “ruler in Israel; whose going forth have been from old, from everlasting.”

Chapters 6 - 7. Jehovah's controversy with the people.

- Ritualism should ponder the question - "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?"
- The **remnant** shall be blessed when Jehovah will “cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.”

Four short questions:

1. Isaiah 3:11 suggesting that a paid ministry is evil?
2. Why do you think God chose Bethlehem for Messiah's birth? (5:2)
3. How does 6:8 fit in with what the New Testament says about being saved?
4. What is the meaning of 7:19b?

* * *

Nahum.

Chapter 1: Judgement upon Nineveh declared.

Introduction. 1.

His look at God. 2-8.

- a God of justice
- a God of power
- a God of mercy

His look at the wicked. 9-15.

- God is just - He notices the wicked
- God is powerful - He will confound the wicked
- God is merciful - He will deliver His people from the wicked.

Chapter 2: Judgement upon Nineveh described.

- A taunt-song upon Nineveh. 1-2.
- The siege of Nineveh. 3-7.
- The doom of Nineveh. 8-10.
- The reason for Nineveh's fall. 11-13.

Chapter 3: Judgement upon Nineveh defended.

- Nineveh's overthrow. 1-3.
- The reason for it. 4-7.
- The certainty of it. 8-10.
- The hopelessness of it. 11-19.

Questions:

1. List half a dozen valuable spiritual lessons which can be learned from the book of Nahum.
2. Comment upon the following quotation - "A man who is deeply and truly religious is always a man of wrath. Because he loves God and his fellow men, he hates and despises inhumanity, cruelty and wickedness. Every good man sometimes prophesies like Nahum."

* * *

Zephaniah.

Introduction 1:1.

1:2-18. Sin brings God's judgement.

- Judgement is certain. 2-6.
- Judgement will be in the form of an invasion. 7-13.
- Judgement will be terrible. 14-18.

2:1-3:8. Wherever sin is found, God will judge.

- A call to repentance. 1-3.
- Sin among the Philistines. 4-7. (West).
- Sin in Moab and Ammon. 8-11. (East).
- Sin among the Ethiopians. 12. (South).
- Sin among the Assyrians. (North).
- Sin in God's people. 3:1-8. (Bull's eye !)

3:9-20. Restoration!

- Conversion. 9-13.
- Restoration. 14-20.

Questions:

1. What phrase summarises the central message of this book?
2. What does Zephaniah teach about God? about sin?
3. What does the prophet mean when he talks of the Lord being "in the midst of" His people? (3:5, 15, 17)
4. What are some other applications of Zephaniah to today?

* * *

Habakkuk.

- 1:1 Introduction.
- 1:2-4 The prophet's complaint of unchecked violence in Judah.
- 1:5-11 The Lord's answer; The Chaldeans are His instrument of punishment.
- 1:12-2:1 A second problem; The Chaldeans are more wicked than the Judeans.
- 2:2-4 The Lord's second answer; The purpose is certain, and faith will be rewarded.
- 2:5-20 Five woes upon iniquity, whether Jewish or Chaldean.
- 3:1-16 A vision of divine judgment.
- 3:17-19 The triumph of faith.

Questions:

1. What is the relevance of this book to today?
2. Chapter 2:4 does not really appear to teach anything about justification by faith. How then can the apostle appeal to this verse in Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11?
3. What light does this book (and especially 3:17-19) cast on the nature of faith?
4. Is it ever right to question God, or to complain to Him?
5. Why does God often move slowly in performing His work?

* * *

Jeremiah.

The best way to study Jeremiah is to follow **an outline of the prophet's life**, and to slot in the appropriate chapters where they fit. In Jeremiah's life there were six main stages:

1. 626-621. From the call of Jeremiah to the finding of the Book of the Law.
2. 621-608. From the finding of the Book of the Law to the death of Josiah, and the accession (after Jehoahaz) of wicked Jehoiakim.
3. 608-605. From the accession of wicked Jehoiakim to the year of the battle, of Carchemish.
4. 605-597. From the year of the battle of Carchemish to the accession of Zedekiah.
5. 597-586. From the accession of Zedekiah to the fall of Jerusalem.
6. 586 and afterwards. The fall of Jerusalem & subsequent events.

The chapters of the book can also be grouped **according to the sort of literature they contain:**

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 1 – 20 | Mainly prophetic oracles, |
| 21 – 33 | An interweaving of discourse and narrative. |
| 34 – 45 | Mainly narrative. |
| 46 – 52 | Mainly oracles. |

Although there is not a strict chronological sequence, there is, none the less, a **general** chronological progression. All Jeremiah's discourses and experiences point to the great climax, the hour of tragedy - the fall of Jerusalem!

The chapters of the book may also be arranged into **groupings containing similar subject matter**:

- 1 Introduction.
- 2 – 20 Series of prophecies of doom.
- 21 - 29 Nebuchadnezzar appears throughout this section,
- 30 - 33 The bright prophecies concerning the new covenant.
- 34 - 39 Account of the siege and fall of Jerusalem.
- 40 - 44 After the fall of Jerusalem.
- 45 - 51 Prophecies concerning the foreign nations.
- 52 Historical appendix.

Strictly, chapter 45 should stand on its own. But it is clear that the arrangement of the book is basically **topical**.

* * *

Lamentations and Obadiah.

(1) Lamentations: Mourning over affliction.

Dirges (funeral songs; elegies - over Jerusalem).

- Chapter 1 Jerusalem's desolate condition.
- Chapter 2 The author of this desolate condition - Jehovah.
- Chapter 4 The bitter siege which resulted in this desolate condition.

Plaints (songs of personal or collective sorrow).

- Chapter 3 Personal sorrow with hope of relief.
- Chapter 5 Collective sorrow with a prayer for relief.

(2) Obadiah: A rock that fails and a kingdom that endures.

The doom of Edom (1-16).

- the certainty of the overthrow, 1-9
- the reason for the overthrow, 10-14
- the character of the overthrow, 15-16.

The deliverance of Israel (17-21).

- the triumph of Israel, 17-18
- the possessions of Israel, 19-20
- the establishment of Israel, 21.

Questions:

Lamentations

1. What grounds does this book afford for hope of restoration to nations and individuals who suffer for their own sin and folly?
2. Where is Christ to be seen in the Book of Lamentations?

Obadiah

3. In what ways is Edom's sin reduplicated today?
4. Does justice triumph? Many people have asked this question through the ages. Does the book of Obadiah give any answers?
5. Is Genesis 12:3 fulfilled in Obadiah? In what ways does that principle apply today?

Ezekiel.

1. Prophecies before the siege of Jerusalem. Chapters 1-24.

BC 592-588

Theme: The state of Judah will cease to exist.

Purpose: To demolish the false hopes of those who expect a speedy return.

1-3 The prophet's call and commission.

4-7 Prophecies of approaching judgment

8-11 The moral necessity for judgment.

12-19 The absolute certainty of judgment.

20-24 The character of Judah the cause of judgment

2. Prophecies during the siege of Jerusalem. Chapters 25-3

BC 597-586

Theme: The surrounding nations will also be judged.

Purpose: To show that God is angry with sin wherever it is found.

25:1-7 Ammon

25:8-11 Moab

25:12-14 Edom

25:15-17 Philistia

26:1-28:19 Tyre

28:20-26 Sidon

29:1-32:32 Egypt

33 The watchman; Jerusalem falls.

3. Prophecies after the siege of Jerusalem. Chapters 34-48.

BC 586-570.

Theme: A glorious future for Israel.

Purpose: To encourage the remnant, by showing that the exile will end, and Gospel days will follow.

34 "David" to replace unrighteous shepherds.

35 Edom to be punished.

36 Israel to be avenged and restored.

37 Israel to be revived, and re-united under "David".

38-39 Israel's enemies to be destroyed.

40-43 A description of a new temple.

44-46 The establishment of a new worship.

47-48 A new organisation of the nation outlined.

Questions:

1. What valuable lessons, have you learned from the book of Ezekiel?
2. What does this book teach us about communicating God's truth?
3. How much attention should we give to those parts of the Bible which are obviously difficult to understand?
4. What should be our attitude to Christians who look for a literal restoration of Israel, the rebuilding of the Temple, and Millennial glories?

* * *

Daniel.

Chapters 1-6. God's sovereignty in history

- 1 Daniel and his three friends refuse to defile themselves with royal food and are rewarded, Daniel receiving the ability to interpret dreams and visions.
- 2 He interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream about the image with its four parts, is rewarded, and secures high positions for his friends.
- 3 The three will not compromise with idolatry and are put in the fiery furnace, but their wonderful deliverance causes the king to glorify the Most High God.
- 4 The king soon forgets, glorifies himself, and is deposed for a period - in fulfillment of his dream about a hewn-down tree.
- 5 This divine judgment is disregarded by Belshazzar, who at a feast exalts himself against God and is slain, so that Darius the Mede receives the kingdom, and promotes Daniel.
- 6 Daniel's jealous enemies plot against him, but he is divinely delivered from the den of lions.

Chapters 7 - 12. God's sovereignty in prophecy.

- 7 The prophetic vision of the 4 beasts, surveying world history from that time until its end.
- 8 The vision of the ram and the he-goat, leading to predict, the rise and certain downfall of Antiochus Epiphanes.
- 9 Daniel's penitent prayer for the end of the exile, and his vision of the seventy sevens, arousing expectancy of the coming of Christ.
- 10-12 A vision giving detailed predictions of the inter-testamental period, merging to consider the rise and fall of Antichrist, the persecution and survival of the Church; and the certainty that God's holy purposes will ultimately triumph.

Questions

1. What is the secret of courage?
2. What is the difference between compromise and legitimate accommodation?
3. What does the book of Daniel teach about prayer?
4. In what practical ways should the expectancy of a personal Antichrist affect us?
5. Why should we try to alter the course of history seeing that it is all in God's hands anyway?
6. Does it really matter what we believe about the authorship of the book of Daniel?

* * *

A Survey of the Scriptures.

[Menu](#)

A survey of history from the time of Daniel to the end of the Old Testament.

B.C.

- 559 - Cyrus becomes king of Persia
- 550 - Cyrus becomes king of Media,
- 546 - Cyrus conquers Asia Minor.

Cyrus 539 - 530.

- 539 - Cyrus becomes king of Babylon.
 - decrees issued, permitting Jews to return to their own land, and to rebuild the Temple.
- 538 - party sets off under Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest.

(Cambyses II 529-522.

Gaumata (Pseudo-Smerdis) 522-521).

Darius I (not Darius the Mede), 521 - 486.

- 520 - ministry of **Haggai** begins s soon joined by **Zechariah**.
- 515 - rebuilding of Temple completed
 - long period of spiritual & moral deterioration follows.

Xerxes I (Ahasuerus), 486 - 465.

- Jewish people in the entire empire saved from a decree which otherwise would have destroyed them (**Esther**).

Artaxerxes I 465 - 424,

- 458 - **Ezra** leads a company of Jews to Jerusalem, and commences reformation.
- 444 - **Nehemiah** arrives, to rebuild the walls, and to govern the Jews. Ezra reappears on the scene.
- 432 - Nehemiah goes back to Artaxerxes. The Jews return to their evil ways. Ministry of **Malachi**.
 - 'after certain days' Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem and institutes reforms, especially with regard to tithes and Sabbath-keeping.

During this period **1 & 2 Chronicles** were written, and **the Psalms** finally collected - and thus the Old Testament was finished,

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Haggai.

First things, first.

Message 1: A word of reproof (1:1-15).

- 1-6 The temple of the Lord is unfinished.
- 7-11 The trouble of the people is explained.
- 12-15 The testimony of the prophet is heeded.

Message 2: A word of encouragement (2:1-9).

- 1-3 Discouragement.
- 4-5 God's promise.
- 6-9 Future glory.

Message 3: A word of blessing (2:10-19).

- 10-13 A principle; uncleanness is passed on by contact.
- 14-17 This explains the past.
- 18-19 But the future will be different.

Message 4: A word of promise (2:20-23).

- 20-23 A personal promise to Zerubbabel, a type of Christ.

Questions:

1. What are the causes of procrastination? What is its cure?
2. Should we always interpret financial setback as a judgement?
3. How can we work out precisely how much commitment we should give to the Lord's work, and how much to our homes?
4. What does the book of Haggai teach us about how to motivate people in the Lord's work?
5. Do any of the principles of Haggai apply when it comes to the care of the fabric of the church building?

* * *

Zechariah.

The future glory of Zion, and of its Shepherd King.

1:1 – 6:8. Eight visions in one eventful night.

1:7-17. the man among the myrtle trees, and those who follow him.

1:18-21. the four horns and the four blacksmiths.

2: the man with the measuring line

3: Joshua the high priest pardoned and clothed with beautiful garments.

4: the golden candlestick and the olive trees

5:1-4. the flying roll.

5:5-11. the ephah and the woman.

6:1-8. the four horse-drawn chariots.

6:9-15. A symbolic act.

The coronation of Joshua as priest-king; a symbol and type of the Branch.

7:1 – 8:23. A four-fold answer to a question.

Should the fasts be continued? (8:1-3)

7:4-7. they should discover their motives in fasting, and remember the former years.

7:8-14. the Lord requires inward righteousness rather than outward forms.

8:1-7. the Lord will restore to His people what they have lost.

8:8-23. the fasts will be turned into feasts of gladness.

9:1 – 14:21. Predictions and promises.

The future of Zion, and the rejection and subsequent glory of its Shepherd-King.

9:1-11:17 the first burden, panorama of Christ's two advents.

12:11-14:21 the second burden. Prophecies of Christ's Kingdom.

Questions:

1. What should be our attitude to those parts of the scripture which the meaning does not seem clear, and over which there has been widespread disagreement?
2. What does Zechariah 4:6 really mean?
3. Why in Scripture are mourning and praying so often linked with fasting? (see Zechariah 7:5, Acts 13:3)
4. Do you have any thoughts on the fact that Matthew 27:9-10 attributes Zechariah 11:13 to Jeremiah?

* * *

Esther.

“Providence at work.”

1 – 4. The Jews are threatened.

- 1: The deposition of Vashti.
- 2:1-20 The exaltation of Esther.
- 2:21-23 The plot against Xerxes (Ahasuerus),
- 3: The malice of Haman.
- 4: The appeal of Mordecai.

5-10. The Jews are spared.

- 5:1-8 The venture of Esther.
- 5:9-14 The design of Haman.
- 6:1-12a The recognition of Mordecai.
- 6:12b-7:10 The downfall of Haman.
- 9:1-9:16 The avengement of the Jews.
- 9:17-32 The feast of Purim.
- 10: The greatness of Mordecai.

Questions:

1. What is divine providence? What does the book of Esther teach about it?
2. In what practical ways should the doctrine of providence affect, the way we live? Give examples from the book of Esther?
3. In what ways does the book present us with examples to be followed, and bad examples to be shunned?
4. Derive some spiritual lessons from 4:14b.
5. Is it ever right to refuse to obey the law? If so, when?

Note: God in the book of Esther.

The claim that God's name is hidden in acrostic form four times in Esther is a fact of profound importance. Two of the occasions form the name by **initial** and two by **final** letters. In two cases the name is spelt **backwards**, and in two **forwards**. This cannot be of chance, and the difficulty of constructing such forms will be apparent to anyone who attempts it. Dr. A.T. Pierson has illustrated the occurrences of the Divine title LORD in the following four couplets:

Due **R**espect **O**ur **L**adies, all
Shall give their husbands, great and, small (1:20).

Let **O**ur **R**oyal **D**inner bring
Haman, feasting with a king (5:4).

Gra**D** fo**R** n**O** avai**L** my state,
While this Jew sits at the gate (5:13).

Ill **t**O fea**R** decreed**D** I find,
Toward me in the monarch's mind (7:7).

From: W. Graham Scroggie,
"Know Your Bible", volume 1,
page 96.

Ezra.

"Reconstruction."

1. The Return from Captivity: under Zerubbabel

Chapters 1-6: 536-515 BC: 21years.

The journey (1:1 - 2:70).

- The decree of Cyrus, 1:1-4.
- Preparations for the journey. 1:5-11.
- List of returning exiles. 2:1-70.

The work. (3:1 - 6: 22).

- work begun. 3:1-13 536 BC.
- work opposed. 4:1-24. 534 BC.
- work resumed. 5:1-6:12. 520 BC.
- work finished. 6:13-22. 515 BC.

(In between chapters 6 and 7 is a gap of 57 years, in which the events of the book of **Esther** took place.)

2. The Return from Captivity: under Ezra.

Chapters 7-10: 458-457 BC: 1year.

The journey (7:1 – 8:32.)

- the permission. 7:1-26.
- the psalm. 7:27-28.
- the people. 8:1-14.
- the pilgrimage. 8:15-32.

The work. (8:33 – 10:44).

- programme. 8:33-36.
- problem. 9:1-4.
- prayer. 9:5-15.
- penitence. 10:1-4.
- propitiation. 10:5-17.
- people involved. 10:18-44.

Questions:

1. What qualifications for spiritual leadership are stressed by this book?
2. What does this book show to us about the different ways in which the Devil seeks to destroy God's work? What steps are **we** to take?
3. Give examples from this book of how God uses unbelievers to further His purposes. Then give examples from history, and from the modern scene.
4. What constitutes a mixed marriage today, in the sense in which it was a sin in Ezra's time? Why is it such a dangerous evil?

* * *

Nehemiah.

Reformation

445-420 BC - 25 years,

1 - 12. Nehemiah's first visit to Jerusalem.

1:1-11 Nehemiah in Persia hears of Jerusalem's distress and prays to God.

2:1-11 King Artaxerxes appoints him governor of Jerusalem.

2:12-20 His plans to rebuild the ruined wall.

3:1-32 The list of builders and their allotted work.

4:1- 6:14 Threats to the works

- sarcasm 4:1-6.
- sudden-attacks 4:7-23
- disunity within 5:1-19.
- false accusations. 6:1-14.

6:15 – 7:4 Completion of the wall.

7:5-73 The register of the returned exiles.

8:1-18 Ezra and the Levites read and expound the law.

9:1-38 A corporate prayer of repentance.

10:1-39 The sealing of a covenant promise to obey.

11:1-36 Register of dwellers in Jerusalem and neighbourhood.

12:1-26 List of priests and Levites.

12:27-47 The dedication of the walls and arrangements for worship.

13. Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem.

13:1-31 Abuses and reforms.

Questions:

1. What are your first impressions of the book of Nehemiah? Does any passage of the book stand out prominently in your mind? If so, what?
2. Nehemiah has been described as 'a model organiser'. Analyse his method.
3. What lessons regarding **service to God** can be found in this book?
4. And what can we learn from it about **prayer**?
5. Are there any other ways in which the book of Nehemiah speaks to our own times, and our present situation?

* * *

Malachi.

"Jehovah's love unrequited".

- 1 By an ungrateful people.
- 2:1-9 By profane priests.
- 2:10-16 By adulterous individuals.
- 2:17 - 3:6 By those who doubt that Jehovah will punish the wicked.
- 3:7-12 By those who rob God.
- 3:13 - 4:3 By those who doubt that Jehovah will reward the godly.
- 4:4-6 Closing exhortation and promise.

Questions:

1. What does Malachi have to say which is particularly relevant to our own situation?
2. Is tithing an obligation for a Christian?
3. Are we really to understand that God keeps a record of our daily walk?
(2 Corinthians 5:9-10, Malachi 3:16).
4. What are we to make of Malachi 1:3?

* * *

Job.

Why does a just God afflict God-fearing Job?

- 1-2 **Prologue:** God accepts Satan's challenge ("touch all that he has, and he will renounce thee to thy face"), and Job suffers terrible calamities.
- 3 In the presence of his three "friends":(Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar) Job curses the day of his birth, but he does not renounce God.
- 4-31 The discourses of Job and his friends.
- First cycle of discourses.
- Eliphaz. 4-5.
 - Job 6-7.
 - Bildad 8.
 - Job 9-10.
 - Zophar 11.
 - Job 12-14.
- Second cycle of discourses.
- Eliphaz 15.
 - Job 16-17.
 - Bildad 18.
 - Job 19.
 - Zophar 20.
 - Job 21.
- Third cycle of discourses.
- Eliphaz 22.
 - Job 23-24.
 - Bildad 25.
 - Job (this includes a poem in praise of wisdom) 26-31.
- 32-37 The discourses of Elihu.
- 38-41 Jehovah's address to Job.
- 42:1-6 Job's answer to Jehovah.
- 42:7-17. **Epilogue:** Job prays for his friends and receives twice as much as he had before.

Questions:

1. What is the connection, if any, between personal suffering and sin?
2. Can a believer fall into the depths of despair that Job experienced? If so, are there any preventatives for such a condition? And what is the cure?
3. What does the book of Job teach about the ministry of comforting others?
4. How would you counsel a sufferer who does not believe Job 34:12?
5. How can we come to have greater views of God?

* * *

Psalms.

Introduction.

Every experience of the believer is mirrored in the book of Psalms, or 'psalmoi' (songs to the accompaniment of stringed instruments), which opens the 3rd division of the Hebrew Bible, known as 'the Writings'.

The formation of the Psalter

Authors

73 are ascribed to David, 12 to Asaph, 10 to the sons of Korah, 2 to Solomon, and 1 each to Ethan, Heman and Moses. Of the remaining 50, several are known to have been written by David, although they do not carry his name.

Dates

At least one was written about 1400 BC (90), and one as late as 500 BC (126). Most of the remainder were written in the time of David, and in the 300 years that followed up to the time of Hezekiah.

Titles

The titles, though not original, are full of interest. They consist of technical designations; musical references; statements of purposes; temple instructions etc.

Organisation

Psalms were collected at various times, and eventually formed into five books. Each book ends with a doxology – 41:13, 72:18-19, 89:52, 106:48, 150:6.

Poetic styles

The main literary devices used in the Psalms are simile (1:3); metaphor (84:11); hyperbole (6:6); personification (35:10); apostrophe (114:5-6); and synecdoche (91:5).

Types of psalms

There are basically ten types of psalms, and examples of each are given below:

- prayers 86, 102.
- praise. 47, 68, 104, 145-150.
- pleadings for divine intervention. 38, 88.
- confessions of faith. 33, 94, 97, 136, 145.
- penitence for sin. 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.
- intercession. 21, 67, 89, 122.
- imprecatory psalms. 35, 59, 109.
- psalms of wisdom. 37, 122, 45, 49, 50, 78, 104 -107.
- psalms which deal with strange providences. 94, 99, 16, 17, 73.
- psalms which extol the Law of God. 19, 119.

Some psalms are capable of more than one classification. The following 28 psalms are also Messianic: 2, 16, 18, 20-24, 31, 35, 40, 41, 45, 50, 55, 61, 68, 69, 72, 89, 96-98, 102, 109, 110, 118, 132.

The Psalter and the Christian

This 'Bible within the Bible' nourished our Lord's spiritual life, sustained and fed the early church, and has been especially loved by believers in all ages. This being so, why don't we use it more?

Questions:

1. Are **all** the psalms suitable for use in Christian devotion and worship?
2. Should sung worship be restricted to the Book of Psalms?
3. Show how each separate phrase in Luke 24:46-48 can be found predicted in the Psalms.

* * *

Proverbs.

Proverbs tells us, in practical day-to-day terms, how to live our lives in the fear of God. 1:7, 15:33.

Background

Title

This is derived from the book's opening phrase. 1:1

Authors

- 1-9 Solomon.
Mostly commendations of wisdom, (e.g. 3:13)
- 10 – 22:16 The proverbs of Solomon.
Mostly contrasts and observations, (e.g. 10:27, 17:6).
- 22:17 – 24 The words of the wise.
Mostly exhortations and warnings. (e.g. 23:12, 24:17).
- 25 – 29 Proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah copied out.
Mostly comparisons and contrasts. (e.g. – 27:19, 29:8).
- 30 – 31 The words of Agur ... The words of King Lemuel.
Mostly descriptions. (e.g. 30:25, 31:26).

Date

- Solomon's dates are 950-900 BC, and the wise men preceded him.
- Hezekiah's compilation would have been around 700 BC.

Purpose

- to impart wisdom. 1:2-4.

Style

- Poetry - see 1:20-33 (a dramatic monologue), and 3:1-10 (a sonnet).
- Common literary devices - such as antithesis (16:22), -comparison (17:10), imagery (26:27), and personification (9:1).
- Clusters - these are unit proverbs arranged in groups e.g. 26:1-12.

Prominent subjects

Topics

Wisdom; sin; the tongue; wealth; pride; idleness; love; pleasure; success; self-control; morals.

Contrasting subjects

God & man; time and eternity; truth & falsehood; wealth & poverty; purity & impurity; justice & injustice; pleasure & misery.

Social relations

Husband and wife; parents & children; master & servant; friend & friend; rich & poor.

Cameo pictures of social types

The talkative fool; practical joker; talebearer; whisperer; backbiter; false boaster; get-rich-quick; liberal man; speculator; wanderer; unsocial; cheerful.

Proverbs and the New Testament

- The New Testament has 12 direct allusions to .this book - Luke 14:10, Romans 12:16, 20, 2 Corinthians 9:7, Hebrews 12:5-6, 13, 1 Peter 2:17, 3:13, 4:8, 18, 2 Peter 2:22, James 4:6.
- Remembering 1 Corinthians 1:30 and Colossians 2:3, we see our Lord Jesus Christ in Proverbs 8:22-31, 23:11 and 30:4.

Questions:

1. How do you reconcile Proverbs 10: 27 with Genesis 4:8, and Proverbs 16:7 with Acts 14:19?
2. What does this book have to say to young people?
3. What, according to Proverbs, are the characteristics of (a) a fool; and (b) a sluggard?
4. Can you recommend a good way of getting to know this book thoroughly?

* * *

Ecclesiastes.

A timeless book, for ever up-to-date, written 3000 years ago!

Title.

- "qoheleth' (Hebrew of 1:1) = one who speaks to an assembly.
- Greek title, 'Ecclesiastes', means the same thing.

Author; and place in Bible

- undoubtedly Solomon - see 1:1, 16, 2:4-6, 8, 12:9
- the 4th of the 5 poetry books; in Hebrews, the 4th of 'the five rolls', read annually at the feast of Tabernacles.

Its viewpoint.

- in this book Solomon looks at life from 2 very different viewpoints:
 - that of the natural man, who draws conclusions about life without the light of God's revelation. His conclusion "all is vanity". An example – 1:12-14. In the outline such passages are marked (-).
 - that of the man to whom God has revealed Himself, whose words ring with assurance and hope. Examples 3:14, 12:13-14. In the out line such passages are marked (+).
- the key words of (-) sections are 'vanity' (39 times) and 'under the sun' (29).
- the key words of (+) sections are 'God' (46 times) and 'heart'. (40)

OUTLINE

The Introduction to the Book 1:1-11 (-)

- life is pointless, and our actions are without significance.

The 1st sermon 1:12 – 3:15,

- | | | |
|-----|-------------|--|
| (-) | 1:12 – 2:23 | intellect is not the key to life. Nor is pleasure, pre-eminence, or hard work. |
| (+) | 2:24 – 3:15 | there is no satisfaction without God. Everything is part of a plan, and full of purpose. |

The 2nd sermon 3:16 - 5:20.

- (-) 3:16 – 4:16 there is no justice or happiness in this life, human skill is futile, and prosperity brings nothing but trouble. Even popularity brings no lasting joy, for people are so fickle.
- (+) 5:1-7 but God **is**, and is to be worshipped and feared.
- (-) 5:8-17 what use is wealth? It brings neither justice nor satisfaction, and however much you get, you leave it all behind
- (+) 5:18-20 but the godly man enjoys this life. He sees all its good things as gifts from God, and his heart rejoices.

The 3rd sermon 6s 1 - 8s 13.

- (-) 6:1-12 it is a waste of time to hope that wealth will either last or satisfy and that the world will ever be really different.
- (+) 7:1 – 8:13 in this life some things are obviously better than others; and the fear of God is better than evil.

The 4th sermon: 8.-14 - 12:7

- (-) 8:14 – 10:20 enjoy yourself while you can, for God can't be known, and death will soon end this uncertain life. But try to be wise in your speech and behaviour.
- (+) 11:1 – 12:7 do good while you, can, for you soon won't be able to. Serve God while you are young.

Epilogue .12:8-14.

- here Solomon once more summarises the viewpoint of (-), explains his own purpose in writing his book, and draws a (+) type conclusion to the whole matter.

Questions:

1. In what sense is it true that there is "nothing new under the sun" (1:9)?
2. Can you find any parallels between Ecclesiastes and the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)?
3. The message of Ecclesiastes is obviously very relevant to today, but what New Testament truths would you need to stress in addition to what this book says?
4. What **is** the fear of God (12:13)?

* * *

The Song of Solomon.

Introduction

Of all Solomon's songs, this is the best and most important (1:1). It must have been written before his apostasy, and is probably to be dated about 965 BC. The Jews revered this book as uniquely sublime, and read portions of it on each of the eight days of Passover. The book is an oriental poem, full of unusual, figures of speech, and divided into stanzas of different lengths

The setting of the story

The story centres on a single pair - Solomon, and 'the Shulamite' (6:13). The various canticles are linked by the appearance and reappearance of subordinate groups, such as, the 'daughters of Jerusalem' (1:5, 2:7 etc), the 'watchmen' (3:3, 5:7), and the repetition of significant refrains (2:17, 4:6, 2:16, 6:3, 7:10).

The Shulamite was one of a family of keepers of a vineyard owned by Solomon, with whom Solomon fell in love, courted, and eventually married:

Structure

- 1:1 – 3:5. The Shulamite reminisces on her courtship days.
(The Shulamite: Solomon).
- 3:6 – 5:1 The bridal pair enters Jerusalem, where the wedding and its feast takes place. (The Shulamite: Solomon: Daughters of Jerusalem).
- 5:2 – 6:3 The Shulamite recounts a dream she has had. She was alienated from Solomon, and went through agony of soul, until there was a reunion.
(The Shulamite: Daughters of Jerusalem).
- 6:4 – 8:14 The love relationship between the two grows stronger as time goes by, and the book closes with the couple bathing in mutual love.
(Solomon: Chorus: The Shulamite).

Schools of interpretation

Allegorical

- purely figurative, with no foundation in history,
- the love relationship between - Jehovah and Israel (Jews)
- Christ and His church (Origen etc.).

Naturalistic

- a song extolling human love.
- only in marriage is human love in all its aspects truly fulfilled

Typical

- “The songs should be treated, first as simple and sublime songs of human affection. When they are thus understood, reverently the thoughts, may be lifted into the higher value of the joys of communion between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God, and ultimately between the Church and Christ.” (G Campbell Morgan).
 - in this way we preserve Canticles as a love poem, and do justice to its actual language.
 - we do not fall into the impossibilities of the allegorical view trying to find a special meaning in every phrase.
 - and yet we continue to see Christ in all the Scriptures!

Unique features.

The most misunderstood book in the Bible; the only book where love between human is the main theme; with only one reference to God (8:6 see NASB, or NIV margin); with no specific reference to sin; no allusions whatsoever to other Old Testament books; and not alluded to by Christ, or by any New Testament book.

Questions:

1. What, then, are the chief lessons for us to learn from this book?
2. How would you answer the suggestion that the book is sensual, and likely to excite impure thought?
3. Are there any parallels to the Song of Solomon elsewhere in the Scriptures?

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