

The Red Thread

How to Read, Understand, and Apply the Old Testament in Your Life Today

Session 1 Introduction

Thoughts About the Old Testament

- It is important
- There are important lessons
- Approach with humility
- There are mysteries

Big Ideas in the Bible

- God created, sustains, and is sovereign.
- God is building his kingdom.
- God is ministering to his spiritual family.
- God operates through his covenants.
- Spiritual conflict manifests itself in the physical world.
- God rewards obedience and disciplines disobedience
- God will conclude history as we know it.
- God does all for his glory.
- It is all about Jesus.

The Bible is a Christian document - All of it!

What are your struggles with the Old Testament?

The BIG Picture

- Timeline: The order of events
- Structure: The different types of literature
- Themes: The big ideas to consider

Use Good Bible interpretation: Ask 3 Important Questions

We should understand every scripture and how it should be claimed and applied. Here are three questions to help us understand and claim God's Old Testament promises.

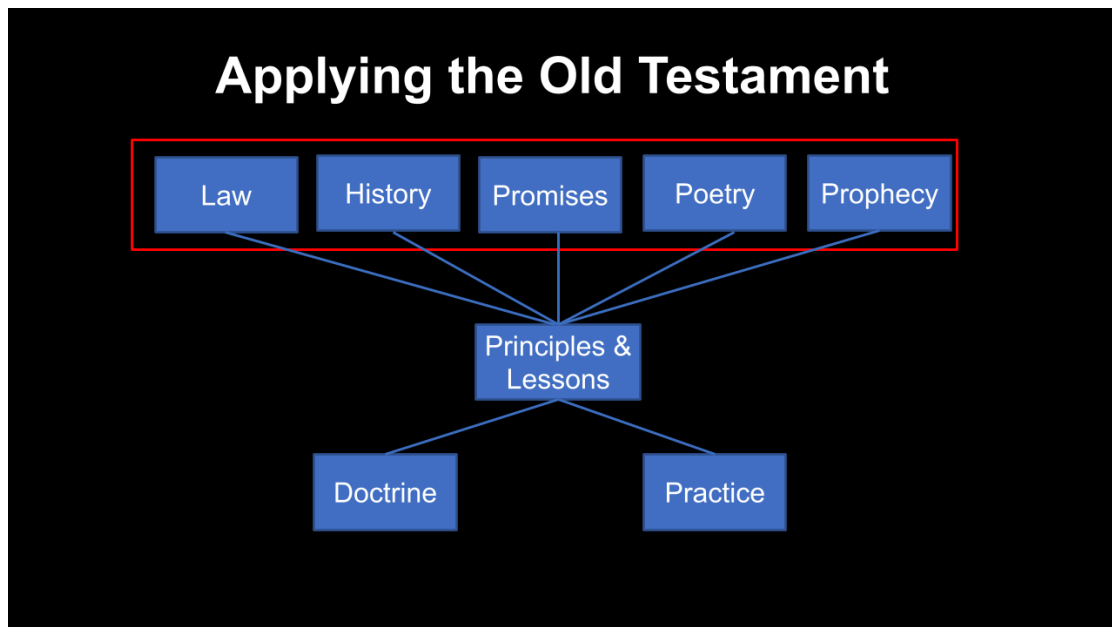
Step 1: Identify and understand the historical context. Try to understand precisely what is being promised, to whom, and why. Understanding the historical context will lead to a more meaningful personal application in step 3.

Step 2: Identify and understand the principle behind the specific promise. Understand God's intent in offering the promise. Was it a conditional promise or unconditional? Which attributes of God are manifested in the promise?

Step 3: Rightly claim and apply the promise in your personal life today. The first two steps will help you in making this decision. When you claim a promise, you must trust it fully. Remember, it is God who is making the promise. He will never let you down.

Learn and Apply the Old Testament Principles

Many practices of the Old Testament have changed, but the principles remain.



It is all about Jesus and what he has done for us!

You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them, you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, John 5:39 NIV

Understanding the Timeline

You should be able to talk your way through the Old Testament at a high level. Putting passages on a timeline as you read gives you historical context.

Download these files from: www.equipsaints.net - Menu item "The Red Thread"

Understanding the Structure

Being able to identify the type of literature you are reading is critical when trying to interpret and apply scripture to your life today.

Understanding the Themes

The Old Testament contains a wide array of themes. For The Red Thread course, we will consider Jesus, the covenants, and God.

Jesus: It is because of his great sacrifice of Jesus on the cross that we have redemption and the hope of eternal life.

Covenants: God has always interacted with us through his covenants. To have an accurate understanding and appreciation for the New Covenant under which we live, you need to understand the covenants of the Old Testament.

God: He is the sovereign creator and sustainer of all things. We must completely trust his love and actions in our lives and the world.

Session 2

Claiming Old Testament Promises

Every promise is YES in JESUS!

I believe Paul answers this question in a simple yet profound verse. In 2 Corinthians 1:20, Paul states,

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. - 2 Corinthians 1:20 NIV

Can Christians today claim promises in the Old Testament?

Paul's one-word answer is YES! However, the final two words of the sentence are critical. The answer is YES, "in him." We cannot overstate the importance of Jesus Christ. All biblical promises are showered down on us because we are members of God's family.

Christians today can claim the promises in the Old Testament.

Christians today can claim the promises in the Old Testament. Many Old Testament promises are made to individuals and Israel. However, they generalize for the church. We draw principles and lessons from the Old Testament to drive our doctrine and practice.

We cannot claim specific promises that do not generalize.

Promised birth to Sarah in her old age. Then one of them said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son." Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. - Genesis 18:10-11 NIV
Use common sense.

Does the New Testament support or fulfill the promise?

When you claim an Old Testament promise, look for the same promise in the New Testament. Here are two examples.

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. - Psalm 46:1 NIV

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. - 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NIV

Major Promise Categories

Here are the general promise categories that most promises fall under.

God is always present and aware of you – no need to fear (Isaiah 43:2-3)

God is sovereign – things are never out of control (Isaiah 55:8-9)

God is good – he will do what is best for you (Jeremiah 29:11)

God always wins – and he will win in the end (Isaiah 25:8-9)

The list of Old Testament promises is long. They all reflect the character and attributes of God. They are eternal. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He can not lie and he does not change. Therefore, we claim his great and wonderful promises, no matter where they are found in the Bible.

The Red Thread

Sin & Death	Love	Faith	Forgiveness	Eternal Life
				
It's all about Jesus and what he has done for us!				

Claiming Old Testament Promises - Examples

Deuteronomy 31:6

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." - Deuteronomy 31:6 NIV

Context—This verse is part of Moses' farewell address to the Israelites, who are about to enter the Promised Land under Joshua's leadership. Moses knows he will not be with them when they enter the land, so he prepares them for the challenges ahead.

Promise Principle - Regardless of what is happening around us, we can be sure that God is with us.

2 Chronicles 7:14-15

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place."

Context: Solomon had just completed the temple and asked God to make provisions for the people when they sinned.

Promise Principle - God gives four requirements for forgiveness and healing. 1. Approach with a humble attitude. 2. Pray, asking for forgiveness. 3. Seek God. 4. Turning from sinful behavior.

Psalms 91:14-16

Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation."

Context - Historical context unclear. The preservation and protection of those whose confidence is in God.

Promise Principle - We receive true protection from God. He rescues us from trouble, answers our prayers, and gives us an abundant, satisfying life.

Isaiah 26:3-4

Context - God's people have been banished and driven out due to their iniquity. However, they have the hope of restoration.

Promise Principle - God offers restoration in His Son Jesus.

Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Context—Jeremiah prophesied just prior to the 70-year captivity in Babylon. He told the people that things were going to get worse before they got better after the captivity. We can be sure that the Jews treasured this proclamation during their time of captivity.

Promise Principle - Promises can help us through times of difficulty. Know God has good plans for you. You are his child, and he wants the best for you.

Exodus 33:14

"The Lord replied, 'My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.'"

Context: Moses and the people were at Sinai, where they received the Law, built the Tabernacle, and entered the wilderness.

Promise Principle: Matthew 11:28 says, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." God still promises to walk with us and provide rest.

Psalms 37:4-5

"Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this."

Context

As an old man, David shares advice on how to react regardless of what is happening around us.

Promise Principle

Our focus needs to be on the Lord, not ourselves and the world around us. If that is true, God will bless and guide us.

Isaiah 40:29-31

"He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow

tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

Context

In this section of Isaiah (chaps. 40-66), the prophet looks forward to Judah's return from Babylonian captivity and the entire nation's future restoration at the Second Advent of Christ.

Promise Principle

When we become weary, tired, and worn out from life and ministry, God will renew our strength to press on.

Session 3

Understanding the Old Testament Timeline

Memorize a high-level sequence of Old Testament events.

Pre-Patriarchal Period (Creation to about 2000 BCE)

- Creation story
- Early events in Genesis, including Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and the Flood

Patriarchal Period (2000 BCE to 1500 BCE)

- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), and the twelve tribes of Israel
- Stories of Joseph and his brothers in Egypt

Egyptian Bondage (1500 BCE to 1200 BCE)

- The enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt
- The Exodus led by Moses

The Wilderness Wanderings (Late 15th century BCE)

- Israel's forty years of wandering in the wilderness after leaving Egypt
- Reception of the Ten Commandments and the establishment of the Mosaic Covenant

Conquest of Canaan (Late 15th to Early 13th century BCE)

- Led by Joshua, the Israelites conquered the Promised Land of Canaan
- The period of the Judges begins

The Period of the Judges (12th to 11th century BCE)

- It was a time of tribal leaders and sporadic warfare against neighboring peoples
- Spiritual and moral decline among the Israelites

United Monarchy (11th to 10th century BCE)

- Saul becomes the first king of Israel
- David succeeds Saul and establishes Jerusalem as the capital
- Solomon builds the First Temple in Jerusalem

Divided Monarchy (10th to 6th century BCE)

- The kingdom splits into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.
- Periods of conflict between the two kingdoms, with various kings reigning in both

Exile and Return (6th to 5th century BCE)

- Assyrian and Babylonian captivity: Assyria conquers Israel and the Babylonians conquer Judah, destroy Jerusalem, and exile the Israelites to Babylon
- The Persian Empire conquers Babylon and allows the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple and the city walls.

Post-Exilic Period (5th to 4th century BCE)

- The rebuilding of the Temple and Jerusalem under leaders like Ezra and Nehemiah
- The period of prophetic activity, including the writings of prophets like Malachi

Use Resources and Guides

Have resources available to refer to often to identify and understand the historical context for what you are reading. For example, have a timeline and a list of kings and prophets available.

Use online resources such as commentaries and dictionaries to better appreciate what is happening.

Online Resources

The Blue Letter Bible
www.blueletterbible.org/

The Topical Bible
www.openbible.info/topics/

The Bible Hub
biblehub.com/

Summary of Bible Chapter
<https://www.bradwarden.com/christian/biblechapter/>

Bible Cross References
www.openbible.info/labs/cross-references/

eSword Bible App
www.e-sword.net

Session 4

Understanding the Old Testament Structure

The Law Books

The Law (Pentateuch or Torah)

- The Torah consists of the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
- These books are traditionally attributed to Moses and are foundational to the Jewish faith.
- The Torah contains narratives about the world's creation, the patriarchs (such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), the exodus from Egypt, and the giving of the Mosaic Law.

The History Books

- The history books include Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.
- Tell the history of the Israelites, from their entry into the Promised Land to the period of exile.
- Narrate the establishment of the Israelite monarchy, the reigns of various kings, the division of the kingdom, and events such as the Babylonian exile.
- Describe ancient Israel's formation and the repeated cycle of rising to prominence, collapse into moral and physical defeat and restoration.

The Poetic and Wisdom Books

- The poetry and wisdom books include Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs.
- Provide profound insights into the human experience, including suffering, joy, wisdom, and the pursuit of meaning.
- Heartfelt prayers and practical wisdom.
- Guidance for righteous living, spiritual reflection, and connection with God.

The Prophet Books

Major / Minor Prophets

Some are major because of their length, not because of their importance.

The Prophets

- Spoke after Israel was divided
- Confronted idolatry and injustice
- Called for repentance
- Predicted future events
- Issued warnings
- Promised restoration
- Spoke for God, holding the people accountable

The Old Testament

The Old Testament is a captivating journey through the heart and soul of ancient Israel, where every page pulsates with tales of triumph and tragedy, wisdom and wonder, beckoning you to immerse yourself in its rich tapestry of history, prophecy, and divine encounters, inviting you to explore the depths of the human spirit and the enduring promise of redemption.

Session 5

Understanding the Structure: The Law and Salvation

The Law = Torah = Instruction

The Law - First five books of the Old Testament

Author - Moses

Addresses the beginning of the universe, man, and the law

Salvation

How does it happen?

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. - Romans 10:9 NIV

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV

Salvation brings freedom.

For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace. - Romans 6:14 NIV

Salvation in the Old Testament - No one has ever been saved by obeying the Law.

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. - Romans 3:20 NIV)

People have always been saved by faith.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast. - Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV

Abraham was saved by faith.

What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." - Romans 4:3 NIV

Credited to your account

In finance and banking, "credited" refers to the process of adding funds to an account. For example, if you receive a payment or deposit into your bank account, the funds are said to be credited to your account adding the amount to your available balance.

The Blood of Jesus

When Jesus died, his blood washed over the span of history and forgave the sins of every person who had ever put their faith in the one, true, living God. And his blood washed forward in time to forgive you and me.

The blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. For every person during every time!

Purpose of the Law

Reason 1: It declares that God is holy.

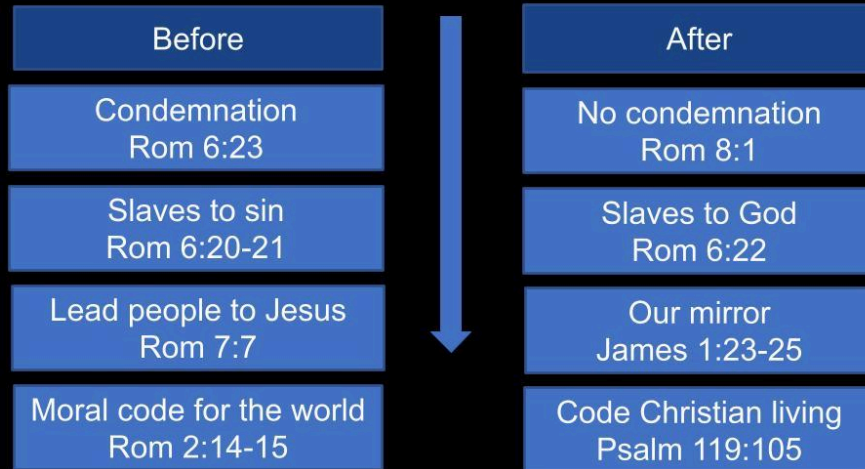
- Nothing sinful can come into his presence.
- Because we are sinful, we cannot approach God.
- We need to be forgiven.
- We need a savior.

Reason 2: It declares that we are not holy.

- We are headed for God's wrath.
- We need forgiveness.
- That forgiveness is found in the blood of Jesus .

Purpose of the Law of God

Conversation



The Nature and Content of the Mosaic Law

The Moral Law or the Ten Commandments

Governed moral life giving guidance to Israel in principles of right and wrong in relation to God and man (Exodus 20:1-17).

The Judicial Law

Governed Israel in her secular, social, political, and economic life (Exodus 21:1–23:13).

The Ceremonial Law

The religious portion of the law guided worship and spiritual relationship with God. It included the priesthood, tabernacle, sacrifices, and feasts. (Exodus 25:-31: Leviticus).

Session 6

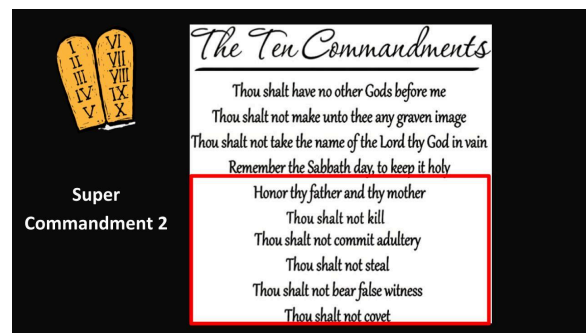
Understanding the Structure: The Moral Law



The 2 Super Commandments

The Laws of Love

Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." - Matthew 22:37-40 NIV



Jesus fulfills the Law! He does not abolish it!

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. - Matthew 5:17 NIV

Jesus tells us that his teaching does not contradict the Old Covenant law but is the ultimate fulfillment of its spiritual intent. Even in the most minor matter, the slightest statement—the jot and the tittle—the law must be fulfilled.

That is something we cannot do!

- God demands the Law be fulfilled (1 Peter 1:15-16)
- That is impossible (Rom 3:23)
- Jesus fulfilled the Law
 - Lived a perfect life (1 Peter 2:22)
 - Died as the perfect sacrifice (Isaiah 53:1-5)
- He offers us a full pardon (Isaiah 55:7)
- We put on the robe of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10)

Salvation through Faith in Jesus

While upholding the Law, Jesus inaugurates a new covenant through his sacrificial death and resurrection. Salvation is no longer attained solely through adherence to the Law but through faith in Christ.

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering.

And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. - Romans 8:1-4 NIV

Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. - Romans 10:4 NIV

Understanding Jesus' fulfillment of the Law is essential for comprehending the coherence and continuity between the Old and New Testaments. It reveals God's unfolding plan of redemption culminating in the person and work of Jesus Christ, who perfectly embodies the divine will and ushers in a new era of grace and salvation.

The Essence of Fulfillment

Jesus' teaching on the fulfillment of the Law extends beyond mere adherence to its external commands. He emphasizes a profound transformation of the heart, urging his followers to embody the principles of love, justice, and mercy at the core of God's commandments. Jesus challenges the prevalent legalistic interpretation of the Law commonplace in his time, advocating for a deeper, more holistic understanding.

Internal Righteousness over External Observance: Jesus criticizes the Pharisees and religious leaders for their outward piety while neglecting matters of the heart. He emphasizes that true fulfillment of the Law involves not only following its letter but also its spirit. For instance, while the Law prohibits murder, Jesus delves deeper, condemning anger and hatred as well (Matthew 5:21-22).

Love as the Fulfillment of the Law: Jesus encapsulates the essence of the Law in the commandment to love God with all one's heart, soul, and mind, and to love one's neighbor as oneself. He teaches that all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments, highlighting the centrality of love in fulfilling God's requirements. (Matthew 22:37-40)

Transformative Grace: Jesus' emphasis on fulfillment through love underscores the transformative power of grace. He offers forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration to those who repent and turn to him in faith. Rather than rigidly adhering to legalistic rules, Jesus invites his followers into a dynamic relationship characterized by grace and mercy. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

A New Covenant of the Heart: Jesus heralds the inauguration of a new covenant, not based solely on external adherence to the Law, but on inward transformation wrought by the Holy Spirit. He promises to write his laws on the hearts of believers, enabling them to walk in obedience. This new covenant surpasses the old, offering a deeper,

more intimate communion with God. (Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10)

Jesus' teaching on the fulfillment of the Law challenges his audience to move beyond surface-level obedience to a deeper, more authentic expression of righteousness rooted in love and grace. It emphasizes the transformative power of God's kingdom, where hearts are renewed and lives are characterized by genuine love for God and neighbor.

Jesus expands our thinking about the law.

Let's explore how Jesus expanded the understanding of various topics addressed in the Sermon on the Mount concerning Jewish law:

Murder (Matthew 5:21-26):

In Jewish law, murder was prohibited (Exodus 20:13), but Jesus deepened the understanding of this commandment. He taught that not only the act of murder itself but also the underlying attitudes of anger and contempt toward others were contrary to God's will. Jesus emphasized reconciliation and the importance of resolving conflicts amicably before offering sacrifices to God. By doing so, Jesus highlighted the significance of inner attitudes and the need for genuine love and respect for others.

Adultery (Matthew 5:27-30):

The Mosaic Law forbade adultery (Exodus 20:14), but Jesus went beyond the external act to address the root causes of lust and sexual immorality. He taught that even looking at another person with lustful intent constituted adultery in the heart. By emphasizing the importance of purity of heart and self-control, Jesus challenged his listeners to address their actions and thoughts and desires.

Divorce (Matthew 5:31-32):

Under Jewish law, divorce was permitted under certain circumstances (Deuteronomy 24:1-4), but Jesus offered a more stringent standard. He stated that divorce should only occur in cases of sexual immorality, and remarriage after divorce could lead to adultery. Jesus upheld the sanctity of marriage and emphasized the permanence of the marital bond, urging his followers to prioritize reconciliation and forgiveness within marriage.

Oaths (Matthew 5:33-37):

The Law allowed for the making of oaths. Still, it warned against breaking them (Leviticus 19:12). However, Jesus cautioned against the casual use of oaths, teaching that one's word should be trustworthy without the need for oaths to validate it. Jesus encouraged a deeper commitment to truthfulness and reliability by emphasizing honesty and integrity in speech.

Retaliation (Matthew 5:38-42):

The principle of "an eye for an eye" was a part of Jewish law, intended to limit retaliation

to proportional justice (Exodus 21:24). However, Jesus challenged his followers to refrain from seeking revenge. Instead he challenged them to respond to evil with love and forgiveness. He taught the radical concept of turning the other cheek and going the extra mile, demonstrating a commitment to nonviolent resistance and a willingness to overcome evil with good.

In each of these teachings, Jesus expanded his listeners' understanding of Jewish law by addressing the outward actions and inward attitudes and motivations. He emphasized the importance of righteousness of the heart and called his followers to a higher standard of moral conduct rooted in love, forgiveness, and integrity.

Session 7

Understanding the Structure: The Judicial Law

Want to pursue righteousness by obeying the Law? GOOD LUCK!

613 Commandments in the Old Testament

Relationship with God	Community
Temple & Priests	Idolatry
Sacrifices	War
Vows	Social interactions
Ritual Purity	Family
Donations	Judicial
Sabbatical Year	Slaves
Animals for consumption	Lawsuits
Dietary Laws	Prohibitions
Festivals	Agriculture
Forbidden relationships	Business Justice
Government	

Law not abolished but fulfilled.

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. Matthew 5:17 NIV

The Law will remain until the end.

For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Matthew 5:18 NIV

Keep the Law? It can't be done.

Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:19 NIV

Good News: There is a big change

The duties of the New Testament believer are written on our hearts!

This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. - Hebrews 8:10 NIV

Duties toward God

Positive

1. Trust Him (Mark 11:22; John 14:1, ASV; Heb 11:6).
2. Love Him and seek to know Him better (1 John 5:2; Phil 3:10, 15; Jas 4:8).
3. Be thankful to Him; worship and praise Him (John 4:23; Col 3:15; Heb 13:15.)
4. Serve Him (Rom 12:6-8, 11; 1 Cor 15:58).
5. Pray to Him (Luke 18:1; Rom 12:12; Eph 6:18; Phil 4:6; Col 4:2; 1 Tim 2:2).
6. Live in accordance with His will (Rom 12:1; Heb 13:21; Jas 4:7).
7. Walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16, 25; Eph 5:18).
8. Hold fast to sound doctrine and contend for the faith (2 Tim 1:13; Heb 13:9; Jude 3).
9. Witness for Christ (John 15:27; Acts 1:8; 1 Pet 3:15).
10. Do everything as unto Him (1 Cor 10:31; Eph 6:7-8; Col 3:17, 23- 24).
11. Be diligent in devotion and study of His Word (John 5:39; Col 3:16; 2 Tim 2:15; Jas 4:8; 1 Pet 2:2).

Negative

1. Do not have idols (1 Cor 10:7, 14; Eph 5:3; Phil 3:19; Col 3:5; 1 Tim 6:17; Heb 13:15; 1 John 5:21).
2. Do not receive false teachers (2 John 10).
3. Do not mock or speak against God (Gal 6:7; Col 3:8)

Duties toward other People

Positive

1. Love all, especially our brethren (John 15:17; Rom 12:10; 1 Cor 16:14; 1 Pet 1:22; 1 John 3:23; 4:7 {1 John 4:7}).
2. Be sympathetic and compassionate (Eph 4:32; Phil 2:4; Col 3:12).
3. Forgive and forbear (Rom 12:19; Eph 4:32; Col 3:13).
4. Deal honestly and fairly (Rom 12:17b; 13:7 {Rom 13:7}; 13:13 {Rom 13:13}; 1 Thess 4:12; Jas 2:1).

5. Do good to all and help all (Rom 12:13; Gal 6:2, 10; 1 Thess 5:15; Titus 3:1; Heb 13:16; Jas 4:17; 3 John 11).
6. Tell the truth (Eph 4:25).
7. Be courteous and live peaceably with all (Rom 12:18; 1 Pet 2:17; 3:8 {1 Pet 3:8}).
8. Treat others as we want them to treat us (Luke 6:31; Rom 12:17a).
9. Provide a good example for others (1 Cor 8:9, 13; Phil 2:15).
10. Urge brethren to good works and seek to restore backsliders (Gal 6:1; Heb 10:24).

Negative

1. Do not lie or bear false witness (Eph 4:25; Col 3:9; Titus 2:3).
2. Do not steal (Eph 4:28; 1 Pet 4:15).
3. Do not murder (1 Pet 4:15).
4. Do not commit adultery or fornication (1 Cor 6:18; 1 Thess 4:13).
5. Do not judge or speak evil of others (Rom 14:13; Titus 3:2; Jas 4:11; cf. John 7:24).
6. Do not be unequally yoked with an unbeliever (2 Cor 6:14).
7. Do not have fellowship with professing Christians who live in scandalous sin (1 Cor 5:11; 2 Thess 3:14).
8. Do not go to law with other believers (1 Cor 6:1ff).
9. Do not glory in men (1 Cor 3:21).
10. Avoid troublemakers and useless disputes (Rom 16:17; 2 Tim 2:23; Titus 3:12).
11. Do not have unpaid debts (Rom 13:8)

Duties toward yourself

Positive

1. Be holy (1 Pet 1:15; 2:11 {1 Pet 2:11}; 2 Pet 3:1).
2. Cleave to the good and do good to all (Rom 12:9; 1 Thess 5:15).
3. Study the Word of God and meditate on sacred things (1 Thess 4:11; 2 Tim 2:15).
4. Grow spiritually (2 Pet 3:18).
5. Think of good things (Phil 4:8).
6. Think soberly of yourself (Rom 12:3).
7. Be ambitious in the right way (1 Cor 12:31; 14:1 {1 Cor 14:1}; 2 Cor 5:4).
8. Be content with what God gives you (Heb 13:5).
9. Rejoice in the Lord (Rom 12:12; Phil 3:1; 4:4 {Phil 4:4}; 1 Thess 5:16).
10. Live in the light of the judgment seat of Christ (1 Cor 9:24).
11. Judge yourself and confess sins to God (1 Cor 11:31; 2 Cor 13:5; 1 John 1:9).
12. Conserve time for good purposes (Eph 5:11; Col 4:5).
13. Cultivate your mind (1 Pet 1:13).
14. Do useful work (Eph 4:28; 2 Thess 3:12).
15. Keep your body clean and in good health (1 Cor 6:15; 6:19,20 {1 Cor 6}; 10:31 {1 Cor 10:31}; Rom 12:1).

Negative

1. Abhor evil (Rom 12:9; 1 Thess 5:22).
2. Avoid pride (Rom 12:3; Jas 4:10; 1 Pet 5:6).
3. Do not conform to or love the world (Rom 12:2; 1 John 2:15).
4. Do not fellowship with evil (Eph 5:11).
5. Do not sin through anger (Eph 4:26).
6. Do not worry (Phil 4:6; 1 Pet 5:7; 1 John 14:1,27).
7. Do not be lazy (Rom 12:1).
8. Do not use filthy speech (Eph 4:29; 5:4 {Eph 5:4}).
9. Do not become drunk (Eph 5:18).
10. Do not complain (1 Cor 10:10; Phil 2:14).

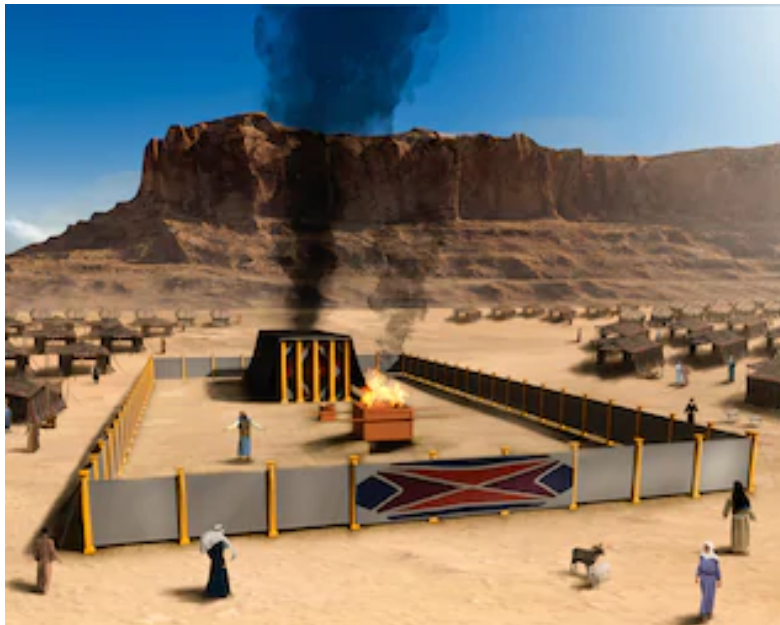
Our longing and commitment

I long for your salvation, LORD, and your law gives me delight. Let me live that I may praise you, and may your laws sustain me.

Psalms 119:174-175 NIV

Session 8

Understanding the Structure: The Ceremonial Law



Ceremonial Law

- Pointed prophetically to Jesus Christ
- Distinction between what was clean and unclean
- Practical benefits as well
- Showed the holiness of God
- Showed honor and respect to God
- Were fulfilled through the death and resurrection of Jesus
- Ceremonial laws have passed and no longer need to be kept
- However, some principles remain

Examples of ceremonial laws

- Men were circumcised (Lev 12:3 Gen 17:10-14)
- Could not eat or touch pigs (Lev 11:7-8 Deut 14:8)
- Could not eat the fat or blood of animals (Lev 7:22-27 Lev 3:17 Lev 17:10-12)
- Could not touch any dead person (Num 19:13,16 Num 31:19 Num 5:2)
- Could not wear clothing made of two different materials or sow a field with two kinds of seed (Lev 19:19)
- Priests could not have a defect (Lev 21:16-23)

Two main lessons from ceremonial law

Be holy (set apart or different from the world)

Be healthy and safe

The Feasts



Shadows of Things to Come

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Colossians 2:16-17 NIV

The Feasts	Feasts for the Jews Historical Significance	Feasts for Christians Fulfilled in Jesus
Passover - Spring Freedom	The angel of death passed over their homes.	Jesus was crucified. Speaks of redemption.
Unleavened Bread - Spring Provision	Remember the fast exodus from Egypt and the need to be free from sin.	Jesus was buried. Speaks of purity through sanctification.
Firstfruits - Spring Thanksgiving	Expressing thanksgiving for the harvest and faith God will provide.	Jesus rose from the dead. Speaks of resurrection.

Weeks/Pentecost - Summer The Spirit	Remembering the Law given at Mount Sinai and the start of a new harvest.	The Holy Spirit came down on the followers of Jesus.
Trumpets - Fall (Rosh Hashanah) Preparation	Announced the new year and called the people to assemble for the Day of Atonement.	Future announcement of the return of Jesus.
Day of Atonement - Fall Christ's Return	The High Priest went into the Holy of Holies seeking atonement.	Future judgment on the world.
Tabernacles - Fall Fellowship	Lived in huts for seven days remembering wilderness wanderings.	Reinstated during the millennial reign of Jesus on earth.

Feast	Sundown to Sundown
Passover	March/April
Unleavened Bread	March/April
First Fruits	March/April
Trumpets	September
Atonement	September/October
Tabernacles	September/October



Traditions of Man

Abandoning the command of God, you hold on to human tradition. (Mark 7:8)

Session 9

Approaching God: The Tabernacle

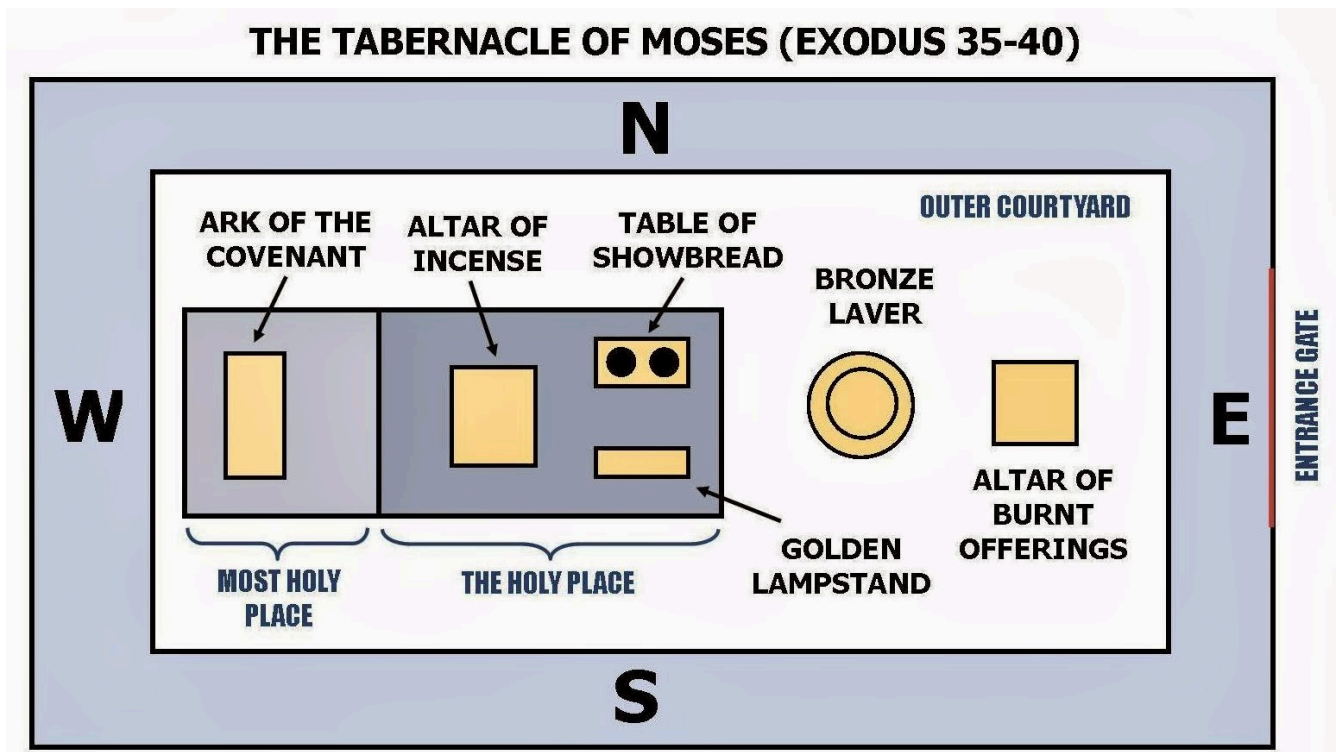
The Tabernacle

They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. Therefore, Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." Hebrews 8:5 NIV

Courtyard: 150 feet long x 75 feet wide

Holy Place: 45 feet long x 30 feet wide x 30 feet high

Most Holy Place: 30 feet long x 30 feet wide x 30 feet high



Station 1: The Gate & Court

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. - Psalm 100:4 NIV

Time at the Gate

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NIV

Time in the Court

David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, "Praise be to you, LORD, the God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. - 1 Chronicles 29:10-11 NIV

Station 2: The Brazen Altar

The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. Hebrews 9:22 NIV

The Sacrifices	The Purpose	The Sacrifices Today
Burnt Blood	Complete dedication or surrender to God. The animal was completely consumed on the altar.	Romans 12:1-2 Romans 6:13 Matthew 22:37 Titus 2:12
Grain Thanksgiving Meal No Blood	Thanksgiving to God. Flour, unleavened cakes, or roasted grain was given. A symbolic handful was burnt on the altar, and the rest was eaten.	1 Thessalonians 5:16-17 Psalm 103:1-2 Colossians 2:6-7 2 Corinthians 9:7
Fellowship Peace Wave Blood	Fellowship of peace with God through the shed blood. A portion was given to the priests to waive, and the worshippers and their guests could share a feast as a meal with God.	1 John 1:3 Romans 5:1 Romans 5:10 Colossians 1:19-20
Sin	Animals were offered on the	Hebrews 9:22

Blood	altar to atone for the worshipper's sins against God. The priests consumed portions.	Romans 5:8-9 John 3:16
Guilt Trespass Blood	Animals were offered on the altar to atone for the worshipper's sins against others. Often, restitution was required. The priests consumed portions.	Matthew 5:23-24 Luke 19:1-10 (Zacchaeus)

Time at the Brazen Altar

Only Jesus offers the final and total requirement for sin.

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'Here I am--it is written about me in the scroll--I have come to do your will, my God.' " First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them"--though they were offered in accordance with the law. Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. - Hebrews 10:1-10 NIV

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God--this is your true and proper worship.
Romans 12:1 NIV

Station 3: The Bronze Laver

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. - 1 John 1:9 NIV

Time at the Bronze Laver

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. - Acts 3:19 NIV

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. - Proverbs 28:13 NIV

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.
Psalm 139:23-24 NIV

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
Psalm 51:7 NIV

Station 4: The Holy Place - Menorah (Candelabra)

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12 NIV

Time at the Menorah

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. - Galatians 5:16 NIV

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.
Galatians 5:22-23 NIV

Station 5: The Holy Place - Table of Shewbread (Unleavened Bread)

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. John 6:35 NIV

Time at the Table of Shewbread

The Lord, like the bread, is always present. He will take care of the ongoing needs of His people.

The twelve loaves of bread represent the twelve tribes of Israel, signifying God's presence among His chosen people.

The priests ate the bread as a shared meal in God's presence, representing His communion with His people.

Jesus is the "bread of life." Those who come to Him will never hunger spiritually and will have eternal fellowship with God.

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. Psalm 119:105 NIV

Read the Bible: Use a reading plan

For each passage: Write a title and a 1-2 sentence summary

On each day: Write one main application for your life

Station 6: The Holy Place - Altar of Incense (Prayer requests)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. - Philippians 4:6 NIV

Time at the Altar of Incense

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him. - 1 John 5:14-15 NIV

LORD, thank you for hearing and responding to my prayers. I humbly submit to your sovereign will as I lay my requests before your throne. I ask that you do wonderful and unexpected things in my life today.

Station 7: The Most Holy Place - Ark & Mercy Seat (Worship)

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. - Hebrews 4:16 NIV

Time at the Ark & Mercy Seat

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" Revelation 5:13 NIV

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness. Psalm 29:2 NIV

Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth. Psalm 96:9 NIV

Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool; he is holy. Psalm 99:5 NIV

Approaching God in the New Covenant

Our bodies are the temple - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

We are priests - 1 Peter 2:4-9

Jesus is our High Priest - Hebrews 4:14-16

God's model for approaching Him remains the same.

Session 10

Understanding the Structure: History Books

Remember the past

British statesman Winston Churchill wrote, “Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”

Summary of Old Testament History

Creation	Patriarch	Exodus	Conquest	Judges	Kingdoms	Exile	Return	Silence
Adam Eve Noah	Abraham Isaac Jacob	Moses Aaron Pharaoh	Joshua Caleb Rahab	Gideon Samson Ruth	David Soloman Kings	Daviel Ezekiel Jeremiah	Ezra Nehemiah Esther	Pharisees Sadducees
Creation Fall Flood	Covenant Joseph Egypt	Deliverance The Law Wandering	Conquest of Promise Land New Home	Cycles of sin, repentance and deliverance	Israel gets a king Kingdom is divided	Prophets warn and encourage Israel is taken captive	Return to Jerusalem Physical and spiritual restoration	Greeks & Romans rule Israel Spiritual darkness Looking for Messiah
Adam sins Destroys perfect existence God starts recover plan	God chooses Abraham to bless the world His family becomes Israel	Moses delivers Israel from slavery Moses given the law	Joshua leads conquest of Promised Land God gives victory Israel settles	Judges govern Israel for 400 years People constantly rebel God is faithful	David greatest king Others mostly evil God eventually judges Israel	Prophets predict coming exile due to sin Daniel provides leadership and encourages faithfulness for 70 years	Ezra and Nehemiah lead people back to Israel to rebuild the temple and walls Reintroduce the Law	Religious leaders enslave Israelites into legalism Ruled by Gentile nations Look for Messiah to rescue them

Why 1 and 2 Chronicles?

The books of Samuel and Kings were written around 550-560 BC during the Babylonian exile. They look back.

The Chronicles were written after the exile was over, around 450-440 BC to a new generation. They look forward.

Samuel and Kings shows the people that the nation's troubles were the result of their sinful disobedience rather than God's abandonment of His people.

Chronicles intends to encourage the Israelites and help them turn back to worshipping Yahweh as the one true God.

The focus is on

- the triumphs of David and Solomon rather than their respective failures of adultery and idolatry.
- Judah rather than Israel
- restoration and not judgment

What do we learn from history?

Repeat what works

- Gideon and his 300 men (Judges 7) God fights our battles

Don't repeat mistakes

- David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11) Lust of the eyes and flesh
- King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Daniel 4:28-31) - Pride of life

Emulate Examples

- David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17:37)
- Esther (Esther 4;14)
- Ruth (Ruth 1:16)
- Positive spies (Numbers 13:30)

Discover what's coming



We Have a Mediator

For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. - Acts 3:22 NIV



The Millennial Kingdom

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. Habakkuk 2:14 NIV

The Eternal State

Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. Daniel 12:3 NIV

No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. Revelation 22:3-5 NIV

Session 11

Understanding the Structure: Poetry & Wisdom Books

Poetic and Wisdom Books

The purpose of wisdom literature in the Bible is to teach rather than to relate a narrative.

- Provides skill in living.
- Provides application of knowledge to daily life.
- Leads us to worship
- Encourages us to talk with God
- The beginning of wisdom is “The fear of the Lord”

Psalms: What do we learn?

The Bible is comprised of inspired words from God to us. The Psalms are inspired words from us to God. So pray them!

The Psalms teach us to praise and worship God and to talk with him.

We can ask God questions

It is fine to ask God questions; Even emotional ones in our pain.

How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? Psalm 13:1 NIV

Why, LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? Psalm 10:1 NIV

God is Sovereign!

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. Psalm 95:1-3 NIV

Types of Psalms

- Worship & Praise (Psalm 95:1-3)

- Lament & Deliverance (Psalm 31:9-10)
- Protection from enemies (Psalm 35:1-3)
- Thanksgiving (Psalm 111:1-3)
- Wisdom (Psalm 19:7-9)

Job: What do we learn?

God gave Satan a cosmic challenge which Job knew nothing about.

Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." - Job 1:8 NIV

Never question God's decisions or character!

"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand.
Job 38:4 NIV

It is fine to ask God questions. Even in our pain! But it is never acceptable to challenge God's decisions or character.

Something to ponder

Job is not a book about pain and suffering. It is a book about faith!

Proverbs: What do we learn?

Proverbs compile numerous short instructions for living an effective life on earth.

Proverbs concerns itself completely with instructing people in the path of wisdom.

How to apply knowledge in our daily lives.

How to make decisions that will lead to a life pleasing to the LORD.

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done.

Proverbs 19:17 NIV

The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.
Proverbs 12:18 NIV

Plans are established by seeking advice; so if you wage war, obtain guidance.

Proverbs 20:18 NIV

Reverent awe of God leads to wisdom!

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:7 NIV

Ecclesiastes: What do we learn?

Purpose of Man!

You can search for meaning in this world and you will not find it.

The Preacher in Ecclesiastes ultimately concludes that true fulfillment and meaning in life come from fearing God and keeping His commandments, as everything else is vanity and chasing after the wind.

I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind. Ecclesiastes 1:14 NIV

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. Ecclesiastes 12:13 NIV

Look to God for meaning in your life!

Song of Solomon: What do we learn?

Interpretation

Slightly more challenging! Options.

Option 1

It represents the love of Christ for His church. Solomon is a type of Christ and the Shulamite woman a type of the church.

Option 2

It is an encouragement to true love and purity within the bonds of matrimony.

Which option is right?

Whichever is true, choose to claim this promise.

God's love and care for his bride!

Let him lead me to the banquet hall, and let his banner over me be love. - Song of Songs 2:4 NIV

Your life and future are secure in God's love!

Approach God with boldness

- Trust God completely
- Gain wisdom for living
- Find meaning in life
- Know you are loved

Session 12

Understanding the Structure: Prophecy Books

Major / Minor Prophets

The prophets are major because of their length, not because they are more important.

Old Testament prophets served key roles within ancient Israel

Messenger of God: Prophets were chosen by God to convey His messages, warnings, and instructions to the people of Israel. They acted as intermediaries between God and His people, delivering divine revelations, prophecies, and moral teachings.

Moral and Spiritual Guidance: Prophets often addressed the moral and spiritual condition of the nation, calling the people to repentance, righteousness, and obedience to God's law. They exposed societal injustices, denounced idolatry, and urged the people to return to the worship of Yahweh.

Foretelling and Forewarning: Prophets frequently delivered prophecies about future events, including judgments, blessings, and the coming of the Messiah. Their predictions often served to warn the people of impending calamities if they did not turn back to God, or to offer hope and encouragement in times of trouble.

Intercessors: Prophets sometimes acted as intercessors, pleading with God on behalf of the people to avert disaster or to show mercy. They stood in the gap between God and the people, seeking reconciliation and forgiveness for the nation's sins.

Symbolic Actions: Prophets sometimes used symbolic actions or object lessons to convey their messages. These actions were designed to grab the attention of the people and illustrate spiritual truths in a vivid and memorable way.

Overall: Old Testament prophets played a crucial role in the religious, social, and political life of ancient Israel, challenging the people to remain faithful to God's covenant and offering hope for the future fulfillment of His promises. These actions were designed to grab the attention of the people and illustrate spiritual truths in a vivid and memorable way.

The Major Prophets

Isaiah prophesies judgment on Israel for their sins, but also offers comfort and hope for the future restoration and redemption of God's people.

Jeremiah warns of impending judgment on Judah for their idolatry and disobedience, while also emphasizing the possibility of repentance and restoration under the new covenant.

Lamentations mourns the destruction of Jerusalem and the suffering of the people, but also expresses hope in God's faithfulness and mercy.

Ezekiel prophesies to the exiled Jews in Babylon, conveying messages of judgment, restoration, and the glory of God's presence among His people.

Daniel, a wise and faithful servant of God, serves as a prophet in the royal courts of Babylon and Persia, interpreting dreams and visions while also demonstrating unwavering faith in God's sovereignty.

Hosea's marriage to an unfaithful wife symbolizes Israel's spiritual adultery, as he calls the nation to repentance and warns of God's impending judgment.

Joel announces the Day of the Lord, a time of judgment and restoration, and calls the people to repentance and prayer in anticipation of God's mercy.

Amos condemns Israel's social injustice and religious hypocrisy, warning of God's judgment while also holding out the possibility of future restoration.

Obadiah prophesies against the nation of Edom for their pride and violence, declaring their eventual downfall and the vindication of God's people.

Jonah reluctantly prophesies to the city of Nineveh, witnessing their repentance and God's mercy, while also grappling with his own prejudices and shortcomings.

Micah denounces corruption and oppression in Israel and Judah, while also proclaiming the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of God's kingdom.

Nahum announces the downfall of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, as a demonstration of God's justice and vindication of His people.

Habakkuk questions God's justice in the face of evil, receives God's response, and ultimately expresses faith and trust in God's sovereignty.

Zephaniah warns of the Day of the Lord, a time of judgment and restoration, calling the people to repentance and seeking the Lord's righteousness.

Haggai encourages the people to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, promising God's presence and blessing upon their obedience.

Zechariah prophesies about the restoration of Jerusalem, the coming of the Messiah, and the future glory of God's kingdom.

Malachi rebukes the priests and people for their spiritual apathy and unfaithfulness, calling them to repentance and promising the coming of the Messiah.

The Prophets

- Served as God's voice holding the people accountable to God's Law.
- Provided direction and wisdom.
- Reminded the people of their covenantal promises.
- What God will do in the future

What God will do in the future

I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. Isaiah 13:11 NIV

Nature of God

Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Joel 2:13 NIV

Judgment on Israel

Do not rejoice, Israel; do not be jubilant like the other nations. For you have been unfaithful to your God; you love the wages of a prostitute at every threshing floor. Threshing floors and winepresses will not feed the people; the new wine will fail them. Hosea 9:1-2 NIV

Judgment on other nations

Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my wrath! Isaiah 10:5 NIV

Coming King

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9:9 NIV

The Millennial Kingdom

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. Habakkuk 2:14 NIV

The Eternal State

Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. Daniel 12:3 NIV

Session 13

Understanding the Themes: Jesus

Understanding the themes

- **Jesus**
- The covenants
- God

It's all about Jesus! Walking to Emmaus

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. Luke 24:27 NIV

You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, John 5:39 NIV

Jesus came to fulfill the law not to abolish it!

Jesus builds upon the moral principles of the Old Testament law, offering deeper understanding and practical application for daily life. He highlights love, mercy, and justice as crucial aspects of the law.

Do not murder!

Limited View Matthew 5:21 “You have heard that it was said to our ancestors, Do not murder, and whoever murders will be subject to judgment.

Expanded View Mat 5:22 But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Whoever insults his brother or sister, will be subject to the court. Whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be subject to hellfire.

Commanded Response Mat 5:23-24 So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled with your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.

Jesus fulfilled the law!

Perfect obedience

Jesus lived a sinless life and perfectly obeyed the Law of God. In doing so, he serves as the perfect example of obedience to God's commands. His obedience contrasts with the

inability of humanity to fulfill the law on their own.

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. - 2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV

Jesus fulfilled the law!

His purpose was redemption and reconciliation

Jesus' ultimate purpose is to bring redemption and reconciliation between humanity and God. Through his sacrificial death on the cross, Jesus atones for the sins of humanity, fulfilling the requirements of the Law and making possible forgiveness and salvation for all who believe in him.

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Colossians 1:19-20 NIV

The Old Testament is a shadow of things to come

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

Colossians 2:16-17 NIV

Typology

The concept of typology in Christian theology refers to the interpretation of certain figures, events, or institutions in the Old Testament as foreshadowing or prefiguring corresponding figures, events, or institutions in the New Testament.

The Law books are all about Jesus!

- Typology of Sacrifice
- Covenant Fulfillment
- Messianic Prophecies
- Themes of Redemption and Deliverance

Adam

Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 Paul presents Jesus as the "second Adam" or the "last Adam." This typological connection emphasizes Jesus' role in reversing the effects of Adam's sin. Where Adam's disobedience brought sin and death into the world, Jesus' obedience and sacrificial death bring forgiveness and life. Jesus is seen as the new head of humanity, restoring what was lost through Adam's fall.

Moses

Moses is often seen as a type of Jesus in Christian theology due to various parallels and similarities between their lives, actions, and roles within salvation history. Moses brought Israel to the promised land, he served as a mediator between God and man, he was a law giver, and he was their shepherd. Jesus is now all these things for us.

The History books are all about Jesus!

- Messianic Prophecies
- Themes of Redemption and Deliverance
- Covenantal Fulfillment
- Sacrificial System and Atonement

David

Here are some reasons why David is seen as a type of Jesus. David was a shepherd, he was anointed, he was a conquering king, he was a man of prayer and worship, and he came from a royal lineage.

The Wisdom and Poetry books are all about Jesus!

- Our shepherd
- Our bridegroom
- Wisdom of God
- Our shield and defender

The Suffering Righteous One (Psalms)

Many psalms depict a righteous sufferer who experiences persecution, betrayal, and anguish but ultimately finds deliverance and vindication. Christians see these descriptions as foreshadowing the suffering and vindication of Jesus Christ, especially Psalm 22, which contains phrases later echoed in Jesus' crucifixion (e.g., "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

The Victorious King (Psalm 110)

Psalm 110 depicts a messianic figure who is both a king and a priest, ruling with authority and defeating his enemies. Christians interpret this psalm as referring to Jesus Christ, who is described in the New Testament as the exalted King and eternal High Priest (Hebrews 7:17-21).

The Prophecy books are all about Jesus!

- The suffering servant

- The weeping prophet
- The son of man
- The mighty Savior
- The cleansing fountain

The Messianic King (Isaiah)

Isaiah contains numerous prophecies about a coming messianic figure who will be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), be called Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14), and establish a kingdom of justice and righteousness (Isaiah 9:6-7). This person is Jesus Christ!

Jesus completes prophecy

Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. These prophecies promised a Savior who would bring redemption and fulfill God's plans. Through his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus fulfilled these prophecies.

Prophecies about the birth of Jesus

As Jesus walked to Emmaus with his disciples, they discussed prophecies about his birth. These prophecies, ordained by God, show His control over even the smallest details, like Jesus' birthplace and the circumstances around it. Here are some Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in Jesus' birth.

- Genesis 22:18 – All the nations would be blessed through Abraham's offspring
- Numbers 24:17 – Jesus would be from the line of Jacob
- Isaiah 11:1 – Jesus would be from the line of Jesse
- Jeremiah 23:5-6 – Jesus would be from the line of David
- Micah 5:2 – Jesus would be born in Bethlehem
- Isaiah 7:14 – Jesus would be born from a virgin
- Isaiah 9:6-7 – A child would be born and the government would be on his shoulders
- Psalm 72:10 – Jesus would be worshipped and given gifts at his birth
- Jeremiah 31:15 – King Herod would murder children in an attempt to kill Jesus
- Hosea 11:1 – Joseph would be warned to take Jesus to Egypt for a time to protect him.

Prophecies about the life of Jesus

Jesus could have pointed out Scriptures to the disciples on the road to Emmaus that described his life. He might have remembered his actions, words, and the events around him. Here are prophecies fulfilled by Jesus regarding his life and ministry.

- Psalm 40:6-8 – Jesus would be the perfect sacrifice

- Psalm 78:1-2 – Jesus would teach using parables
- 1 Samuel 2:35 – God would raise up a faithful priest
- 2 Samuel 7:12-13 – Jesus' Kingdom would be eternal
- Isaiah 6:9-10 – Those who heard Jesus' parables would not understand
- Isaiah 9:1-2 – The ministry of Jesus would begin in Galilee
- Isaiah 40:3-4 – Jesus' ministry would be preceded by a voice calling in the desert
- Isaiah 42:1-4 – Jesus' message of salvation would also extend to the Gentiles
- Isaiah 53:3 – Jesus would be despised and rejected
- Isaiah 61:1 – Jesus would be the anointed one to proclaim good news to the poor
- Zechariah 9:9 – The King would come riding on a donkey
- Zechariah 11:13 – Jesus would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver

Prophecies about the death and resurrection of Jesus

The death and resurrection of Jesus are crucial to the gospel, validated by prophecies. He might have talked about these prophecies with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, recalling his suffering, crucifixion, and the promise of resurrection. Here are some prophecies fulfilled by Jesus regarding his death and resurrection.

- Exodus 12:21-23 – Jesus would be the Passover Lamb
- Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12 – None of Jesus' bones would be broken
- Leviticus 17:11 – Jesus would die and pour out his blood for the atonement of sins
- Numbers 21:9 – Jesus would be lifted up
- Psalm 16:10 – Jesus would not be abandoned to the dead
- Psalm 22:1 – Jesus would be forsaken
- Psalm 22:8 – Jesus would be mocked
- Psalm 22:15 – Jesus' mouth would be dry
- Psalm 22:16 – Jesus' hands and feet would be pierced
- Psalm 22:18 – Lots would be cast for Jesus' clothes
- Psalm 31:5 – Jesus would commit his spirit to God
- Psalm 68:18 – Jesus would ascend to heaven
- Psalm 69:21 – Jesus would be given vinegar for his thirst

Jesus fulfilled numerous prophecies about his birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection, which only God could accomplish through him. These fulfilled prophecies bring trust, hope, security, assurance, faith, encouragement, and joy to believers. May they inspire hope and strength as you trust in Jesus.

Claim the promises

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so

through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. 2 Corinthians 1:20 NIV

Jesus will swallow up death and wipe away tears

He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.

Isaiah 25:8 NIV

Jesus will reign

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever."Revelation 11:15 NIV

Jesus will have total authority

It is written: " 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God.' "

Romans 14:11 NIV

Session 14

Understanding the Themes: Covenants

Understanding the themes

- Jesus and redemption
- **The covenants**
- God

What is a Covenant

A legal contract or agreement, usually formal, between two or more persons to do or not do something specified.

Throughout history, God has established covenants with his people.

- He could have left us guessing
- Out of love, he made it clear

Royal Grant Covenants

- The king rewards subjects by blessing them in some way. Such covenants are referred to as covenants of promise or unconditional covenants.
- No strings attached!

Suzerain Covenants

- The suzerain (king) documents events in which they did a favor that benefitted the vassal (subjects) to show that the suzerain was merciful and giving. Therefore, the vassal should obey the stipulations that are presented in the treaty. Such covenants are referred to as conditional covenants.
- Strings attached!

Covenants of the Bible

Noah

Type <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Royal Grant• One-way• Unconditional• Everlasting	Purpose Never destroy the world again with a flood.	Sign Rainbow
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Abraham

Type <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Royal Grant• One-way• Unconditional• Everlasting	Purpose To bless the entire world through his seed (Jesus).	Sign Circumcision
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Moses

Type <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suzerain• Two-way• Conditional• Changed & Everlasting	Purpose To teach righteous standards Expose sin Draw people to Jesus	Sign The Sabbath
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David

Type <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Royal Grant• One-way• Unconditional• Everlasting	Purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Son of David will sit on the throne as sovereign and eternal King. This king is Jesus.	Sign None
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Jesus

Type <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Royal Grant• One-way• Unconditional• Everlasting	Purpose Secures salvation, a new heart and forgiveness for all of God's people.	Sign The Bread and Cup
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Are the covenants still in force today?

The answer is YES!

Noah - The promise to not destroy the people of the earth is still in force.

Abraham - God is blessing the world through Abraham's seed (Jesus).

Moses - The law is still doing what it has always done. It convicts us of our sin and leads us to Jesus to be forgiven.

David - God did provide a king to rule forever. KING JESUS!

Jesus - God still offers salvation for all who put their faith in Jesus.

Jesus New Covenant - A new way of living

Noah - Security

Abraham - Hope

Moses - Conviction and Obedience

David - Promise

Jesus - Eternal Life

A New Heart

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. Ezekiel 36:26 (NIV)

Free from the Law now under Grace

For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace. Romans 6:14 (NIV)

This freedom does not mean a license to sin. Rather, it implies a responsibility to live in obedience to God's will and teachings.

Session 15

Understanding the Themes: God

Understanding the Themes

- Jesus and redemption
- The covenants
- **God**

Attributes of God

Faithful	Numbers 23:19	Compassionate	Psalms 116:5
Perfect	Psalms 18:30	Present	Joshua 1:9
Forgiving	Micah 7:18-19	Provides security	2 Samuel 22:32-34
Infinite wisdom	Jeremiah 39:19	Only true God	Isaiah 44:6
Everlasting	Psalms 90:2	Patient	Nahum 1:3
Loving & Kind	Lamentations 3:22	Never weary	Isaiah 40:28

God's Sovereignty

Rules kingdoms	2 Chronicles 20:6	Do all things	Job 42:2
Controls nature	Psalms 135:6-7	Commands all	Lamentations 3:37-39
Does what he pleases	Psalms 115:3 Daniel 4:34-35	Plans to happen	Isaiah 14:24
Directs man	1 Samuel 2:6-7	Establishes steps	Proverbs 16:9

What God has done

Created the world	Genesis 1:1
Parted the Red Sea	Exodus 14:21
Provided food & water	Exodus 16:15
Defeated enemies (Gideon)	Judges 7:7,18,22
Brought down walls	Joshua 6:16-17

What God will do

Directs the future	Genesis 12:2
Provide hope and future	Jeremiah 29:11
Send to reign on earth	Zechariah 9:9-10
Live among us	Zechariah 2:10-11
Saints inherit kingdom	Daniel 7:18

Worship and Praise

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. Psalms 95:1-3 (NIV)

Session 16

Conclusion and Review



**Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.
John 6:35 NIV**

How to Join God's Family

- Acknowledge your need for salvation
- You are saved through faith in what Jesus Christ did for you on the cross. He paid the penalty for your sins.
- You have eternal life because God raised Jesus from the dead.
- Receive the free gift of salvation
- Commit following Jesus in obedience.
- Read the Bible daily and join a Bible believing church.

The gift of forgiveness and eternal life is available to all. Do not put off this important decision!!

Resources

www.blueletterbible.org

www.biblehub.com

www.gotquestions.org

www.biblesummary.info

www.enduringword.com

A Summary of the Old Testament Books

The first five books were originally one collection, called the Torah (or “teaching”) of Moses. These books served as Israel’s constitution, laying out the history of its founding fathers and describing the nation’s laws, values, and mission in the world.

Genesis – The book of beginnings. Chapters 1-11 tell the story of the creation of the world and the fall of humanity in the far distant past. The rest of the Bible is all about how God will fix the problem of human sin and rebellion and restore blessing to the world he made. Chapters 12-50 then tell the history of Abraham and his family line, from around 2200-1800 BC. This is the story of Israel’s earliest ancestors and the promises God made to them, as well as how they ended up in Egypt. Genesis also highlights God’s role as the Creator and Judge of all.

Exodus – The account of how God raised up Moses to deliver Israel from slavery in Egypt in 1446 BC, and of the special covenant relationship he made with the nation at Mount Sinai that same year. Exodus reveals how God acts powerfully to redeem his people from bondage, and how he desires to dwell with us. It also introduces Moses, who is the key figure in the *Torah*.

Leviticus – Relates the laws God gave the nation of Israel through Moses so that, by following them, they could be his holy nation to bless the world. Leviticus also contains the rules for making proper sacrifices so that Israel could have a relationship with God despite their sins. Because God is holy, his people are to be holy as well.

Numbers – Tells of Israel’s wanderings in the wilderness for 40 years after they rebelled against God and failed to enter the promised land (1446-1406 BC). Numbers stresses the importance of persevering in faith, and warns of the danger of falling back into

unbelief.

Deuteronomy – Records the final speech given by Moses just before his death, as the Israelites are about to enter the promised land of Canaan. Moses calls the people to renew their covenant relationship with the Lord, reiterates the laws they are to follow in the land, and tells a prophecy of God's faithfulness despite their sure future rebellion. This book calls everyone to be devoted to the Lord with all their heart.

The next seven books tell the history of Israel from the time they entered the land of Canaan, through their growth into a mighty kingdom and subsequent spiritual decline, and down to the time of their exile from the land (1406 BC all the way to 586 BC).

Joshua – Moses' successor, Joshua, leads the Israelites into the land and defeats the Canaanite armies (1406 BC). The second half of the book records the settlement of the tribes of Israel in the land. The main theme is God's faithfulness in keeping his end of the covenant.

Judges – Covers roughly the next 300 years, when the people are living in the land as a league of tribes (1400-1100 BC). The Israelites continually abandon God and get conquered by foreign nations, but God sends champions called judges to save them. The book emphasizes how dangerous it is for people to abandon God's truth and seek to follow whatever seems right to them.

Ruth – Takes place during the time of the judges. Tells the story of a foreign widow named Ruth who, because of her faith, found a place in Israel and ended up becoming the ancestor of David, the future king of Israel! In addition to revealing more about David's lineage, Ruth also illustrates the importance of showing kindness and loyalty to others.

1 Samuel – Covers the transition period from the time of the judges to when Israel became a monarchy (1100-1010 BC). Under the ministry of the prophet Samuel, Saul is anointed the first king of Israel. But after Saul exhibits repeated failures of faith, God raises up a new champion: David. A key theme of the book is that while people judge by outward appearances, God judges based on what's in the heart.

2 Samuel – Covers the reign of King David (1010-970 BC). Tells of David's victories (like establishing Jerusalem as the capital) as well as his failures (including adultery and civil war). Also records God's promise that David's royal lineage will continue forever – an important promise concerning the Messiah.

1 Kings – The first half covers the reign of David's son, Solomon, who ushered in a

golden age of prosperity, built the Jerusalem Temple, and promoted wisdom & education in Israel (970-931 BC). But after Solomon later turns to pagan gods, God takes half the kingdom away from Solomon's heir, and Israel is split into northern and southern kingdoms. The second half of the book covers the early part of the divided kingdom and the ministry of the prophet Elijah (930-852 BC).

2 Kings – Covers the rest of the divided kingdom's history until the time of the Babylonian exile (852-586 BC.). Israel and Judah's kings are evaluated by whether or not they remain loyal to God's covenant as established in the *Torah* of Moses, and most of them are wicked. Many prophets minister during this time, warning the people to repent of their idolatry and sins before it's too late – but to no avail. Judgment arrives when the Babylonians conquer Jerusalem in 586 BC and take its people into exile.

The next five historical books continue to tell Israel's history from the perspective of the exile.

1 Chronicles – Originally one book, 1 & 2 Chronicles retells the entire story of Israel with a special focus on David's family line as the heirs of God's promises. After giving the lineages of the nation, 1 Chronicles covers the reign of David in particular.

2 Chronicles – Retells the history of David's heirs, from Solomon to the exile. Focuses especially on the Jerusalem Temple and on the successes of David's line. Chronicles was meant as an encouragement to the Jewish people living after the exile that God's promises to David would endure.

Ezra – Covers the Jewish people's return from exile under the Persian king Cyrus in 538 BC, down through the time when Ezra the scribe begins to lead the returnees in Judah in 458 BC. Ezra promotes spiritual reform among the people, who needed to rededicate themselves to their covenant relationship with God.

Nehemiah – Tells of the courageous leadership of Nehemiah, who led the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem after the return from exile (444-432 BC). Once the city is secure again, Nehemiah and Ezra lead the people in a covenant-renewal ceremony.

Esther – Tells of the experience of Jews who remained dispersed outside the land of Judah when the Persian Empire was at its height (486-485 BC). A Jewish girl named Esther is chosen to be the wife of the Persian King Xerxes and leads a daring rescue of her people from an attempted genocide. Even though God is never directly mentioned in the book, it still shows his faithfulness behind-the-scenes as the Jewish people are preserved.

Next come the poetic & wisdom books. These are writings that thoughtfully reflect on key themes from Israel's history and on God's relationship with his people and the world.

Job – Set during the time of Israel's ancient patriarchs, but tells a timeless drama about a righteous man who suffers unjustly. Job explores two very complex and ever-relevant questions: How can God be just when there is undeserved suffering in the world, and is he worthy of worship even if he doesn't bless us? These ideas are pondered in the form of a poetic debate between Job and his friends as they wrestle with why Job is suffering.

Psalms – A collection of songs and prayers from throughout Israel's history, composed by various poets (especially King David, but also numerous others) and collected after the exile. The book of Psalms serves to instruct God's people on how to pray and praise God as they look forward to the coming of the ultimate heir of David, the Messiah.

Proverbs – A collection of wise sayings, most of which were written by King Solomon (970-930 BC). Other proverbs and teachings on wisdom were added later, and the final book was likely published during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah (715-686 BC). Proverbs explains what godly wisdom is and how God's people can prosper by it. It teaches us that there are really only two kinds of people in life: wise people who revere the Lord, and are ultimately blessed; or foolish people who ignore God, and will ultimately suffer for it.

Ecclesiastes – A philosophical reflection associated with Solomon's later life (around 940-930 BC). Contemplates the difficulty of finding any satisfying meaning in our fallen world, and examines the many absurdities of life to test the limits of human wisdom. Pessimistic in parts, but ultimately concludes on a hopeful note: While meaning is hard to find by human effort alone, life can be significant when lived in right relationship with God.

Song of Solomon – A love song (or collection of love songs) that celebrate the joys of the marriage covenant and human sexuality as reflections of God's wisdom in creation.

Next up are the "major" prophets (major not in terms of importance, but because their books are longer, more developed literary works). Each of these books is a collection of the sermons that each prophet preached to the people of Israel.

Isaiah – Preached to the southern kingdom of Judah in 740-690 BC. Isaiah warns the people that they are guilty of breaking the Torah, worshiping idols, and mistreating the poor and needy. He predicts the coming of exile in Babylon, but also foretells how the

Lord will afterward restore Jerusalem in a future “new exodus.” Not only that, but God will bring blessing to Israel *and* the nations through his Servant-King, the Messiah, the heir of David. Isaiah is famous for his prophecies of the Messiah’s future birth (7:14; 9:1-7) and sacrificial death (52:13-53:12).

Jeremiah – Preached to the southern kingdom of Judah just before and during the Babylonian invasion (627-580 BC). Jeremiah has traditionally been called “the weeping prophet” – the people strongly opposed his message, often locking him in prison, and he tells of his emotional struggles with the pressure of his prophetic calling. Even so, he bravely denounced the Jewish leaders for taking God for granted. Jeremiah is famous for foretelling that after God judged his people, he would one day make a new covenant with them and put his law in their hearts (31:31-34).

Lamentations – A bit of an interlude in the major prophets, this short poem is a funeral song lamenting the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 586 BC. It was probably composed by Jeremiah, which is why it is placed here in the biblical canon. Lamentations is a beautifully-arranged work of Hebrew poetry that gives voice to the anguish of God’s people over their sin and judgment, while also reminding readers that God will remain faithful to his covenant promises in spite of our great failures – “for his mercies never end; they are new every morning” (3:22-23).

Ezekiel – This prophet ministered from Babylon shortly before the fall of Jerusalem and then during the exile (593-571 BC). He received powerful visions of the Lord’s glory leaving the Temple and tried to warn the people that judgment for their sins was imminent. Other memorable scenes in the book include his visions of the cherubim and the Lord’s glory (1-2); of the valley of dry bones coming back to life, symbolizing Israel’s restoration and the pouring-out of God’s Holy Spirit (36-37); and of a future, restored Temple (40-48).

Daniel – Tells the life story of a Jewish youth named Daniel who was taken to Babylon, where he rose to prominence because of his godly wisdom (605-530 BC). Chapters 1-6 recount the life-story of Daniel and his friends as they navigate the difficulties of life in exile in a pagan land, while chapters 7-12 tell of visions Daniel received late in his life concerning God’s future plans for Israel. These last chapters are very crucial for the entire story of the Bible, since they lay out the timeline counting down to Israel’s restoration.

The Old Testament concludes with the twelve “minor prophets.” This was originally one collection in Hebrew, called “The Book of the Twelve.”

Hosea – One of the earliest of the writing prophets, along with Amos. Preached to the

northern kingdom of Israel (750s to 720s BC). This prophet is famous for being commanded by God to marry an unfaithful wife (who became a prostitute) as a living metaphor for Israel's own unfaithfulness to God. Contains one of Jesus' favorite verses to quote: Hosea 6:6 – "For I desire faithful love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings."

Joel – No one knows for sure when Joel ministered, but his message is fiery and powerful nonetheless! He warned God's people that a day of judgment was coming – the "Day of the Lord" – and he symbolized the coming judgment as being like a frightening plague of locusts. Joel also prophesied that after judgment God would "pour out his Spirit on all people" so that they all may prophesy; this was later fulfilled in the birth of the Christian church at Pentecost (see Acts 2).

Amos – One of the earliest of the writing prophets, along with Hosea. Preached to the northern kingdom of Israel around 760 BC. Amos was a shepherd from Judah who went north to preach against the idolatry and injustices in Israel, and to warn of imminent judgment in the form of the Assyrian army. Famous for his rebuke of social injustices, since the wealthy were abusing the poor and powerless. A key verse is Amos 5:24 – "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

Obadiah – A prophecy against the nation of Edom, Judah's southern neighbor. God is judging Edom for their pride and for being opportunists during the siege of Jerusalem (586 BC). Obadiah promises that one day God will restore Judah and judge her oppressors. A key lesson is that God hates when people take advantage of others' misfortune.

Jonah – Tells the story of a reluctant prophet named Jonah, sent by God to preach to Israel's hated enemy, the Assyrians, in their capital city of Nineveh (760s-750s BC). Includes the memorable story of the prophet's attempt to flee God's call, only to end up carried by a huge fish to Assyria anyway. Jonah reveals that God's mercy can extend even to Israel's enemies, and (ironically) shows that pagans could sometimes repent eagerly – the very thing Israel failed to do!

Micah – Micah preached around the same time as Isaiah (750-700 BC), calling Israel and Judah to account for their sins. He especially targets the injustice and corruption among the leaders, priests, and false prophets of the time, but also promises that God will preserve a faithful remnant and bring restoration through the Davidic Messiah. Micah is famous for predicting that Messiah will come from Bethlehem (5:2), and for calling all people to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God" (6:8).

Nahum – A prophecy of the coming destruction of Nineveh, preached by Nahum

sometime between 663-612 BC. The message of Nahum (whose name means “comfort”) was a comforting one to the kingdom of Judah: with the downfall of Nineveh, their cruel enemy the Assyrians would be no more. Then, as now, God will repay unjust nations for their cruelty.

Habakkuk – Records a back-and-forth conversation between God and the prophet Habakkuk, shortly before the Babylonian invasion of Judah (640-605 BC). In this unique book, instead of God speaking to the people through a prophet, here the prophet Habakkuk speaks to God on behalf of the people! God reassures the questioning prophet that he will indeed judge the wicked, but in his own way and his own timing. God also reminds Habakkuk (and us) that the “righteous shall live by faith” (2:4).

Zephaniah – The great-great-grandson of good king Hezekiah, Zephaniah ministered around the same time as Jeremiah (620s BC). He announced the certainty of coming judgment. Everyone, from individuals to entire nations, will be judged on the Day of the Lord. God will sweep clean the whole world with the righteous fire of his anger, leaving only the righteous remnant.

Haggai – Ministered after the initial return from exile, in 520 BC (see Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14). Haggai scolds the people for rebuilding their own houses but leaving God’s house (the Temple) in ruins. After having suffered the exile, the people actually listen to the prophet this time! Even though the new temple is far less grand than Solomon’s old one, God promises to bless it with his presence. Haggai reminds us not to let physical comforts get in the way of spiritual priorities.

Zechariah – Preached during the same time as Haggai (520-518 BC) about the restoration of Jerusalem after the exile. His message is that God’s remnant should trust and obey him because he is working behind-the-scenes on Israel’s behalf. God promises to finish restoring Israel and to judge their enemies in the future, through the coming Messiah. Chapters 1-8 are spiritual visions about God’s restoring work in Zechariah’s time, and chapters 9-14 are prophecies of the future days of the Messiah.

Malachi – The last of the three postexilic prophets (432-425 BC), Malachi deals with the continued spiritual failure of the Israelites. The priests were ignoring God’s laws, the men were divorcing their wives to marry pagan women, and the people were neglecting the tithe. In response, God reminds them that they are supposed to be his chosen people, calls them to repentance, and once again announces that the “Day of the Lord” will come, when sinners will be judged and the righteous remnant will be rewarded. God also promises that he himself will come down to rule in Israel, with his messenger “Elijah” preparing the way ahead of him.