Old Testament Introduction

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Old Testament Introduction

The Old Testament begins the story of redemption that is completed by the New Testament. The Hebrew Bible's Old Testament consists of twenty-four books divided into three sections: Law, Prophets, and Writings. The English Bible comprises thirty-nine books in the Old Testament. Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah are each divided into two separate books, while the Minor Prophets are split into twelve individual books. Beginning with the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament in the 3rd century B.C.), it is common to divide the Old Testament into four segments: Law, History, Poets, and Prophets as follows:

Law (Pentateuch)	**History**	**Poets (Wisdom)**	**Prophets**
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Isaiah
Exodus	Judges	Psalms	Jeremiah
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Lamentations
Numbers	1&2 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel
Deuteronomy	1&2 Kings	Song of Songs	Daniel
	1&2 Chronicles		Hosea
	Ezra		Joel
	Nehemiah		Amos
	Esther		Obadiah
			Jonah
			Micah
			Nahum
			Habakkuk
			Zephaniah
			Haggai
			Zechariah
			Malachi

In this guided tour through the Old Testament, we will use this fourfold division. The Law and History segments focus on God’s dealings with the covenant people. The Poets concentrate on one’s personal experience of God and his ways. The Prophets are the preachers of the covenant, warning and exhorting the people to covenant faithfulness and looking forward to the fulfillment of the ages in the First and Second Comings of Messiah.

The Pentateuch

***Introduction*—**The term "Pentateuch" is derived from the Greek words *penta* (five) and *teuchos* (scroll or book). It is the five scrolls or books the Jews traditionally refer to as the Law, the Torah (instruction), or the books of Moses. The Pentateuch is the first of a fourfold division of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament: the five books of the Law (Genesis to Deuteronomy), the twelve History books (Joshua to Esther), the five books of Poetry or Wisdom (Job to the Song of Solomon) and the seventeen books of the Prophets (Isaiah to Malachi).

Authorship and Date:

***Traditional View*—**For nearly two millennia, it was universally agreed that the Pentateuch was the literary product of Moses. There was uncertainty as to whether the text was composed by Moses or dictated by him and there were differences of opinion as to the details of its final compilation, but it was agreed that he was responsible for the writing. It was probably cast into a five-volume book sometime in the days of Joshua and the elders that followed him (see Joshua 24:31). This allows for later editorial activity that modernized archaic terms and geographical place names. It also accounts for passages like Numbers 12:3, where the text describes Moses as the humblest man on the face of the earth, and Deuteronomy 34, where Moses' death is recorded.

The Scripture ascribes the authorship of the Pentateuch to Moses and Christian and Jewish traditions until the time of the Enlightenment are overwhelmingly in accord with Mosaic authorship. The following supports Mosaic authorship:

- Statements in the five books themselves (e.g. Exodus 17:14; 24:4, 7; 34:28; Numbers 33:2; Deuteronomy 31:9, 24). Portions of Exodus are attributed to Moses (17:8-14; 20:1-17; 24:4, 7, 12; 31:18; 34:1-27). In Leviticus, fifty-six times in twenty-seven chapters the text states that God imparted the Levitical regulations to Moses. In Numbers, there are more than eighty instances where the text says "the Lord spoke to Moses" or something very much like that. Deuteronomy includes about forty claims that Moses wrote it.
- In other Old Testament books (Joshua 1:7; Judges 3:4; 1 Kings 2:3; Ezra 3:2; Nehemiah 1:7; Daniel 9:11-13; Malachi 4:4).
- In statements by Jesus himself (compare Mark 7:10 with Exodus 20:12 and Mark 12:26 with Exodus 3:6; John 7:19).
- By other New Testament authors (Luke 16:29; 24:27; Acts 26:22; Romans 10:19 quoting Deuteronomy 32:21).

Moses was the most likely candidate to write the Pentateuch. He was well educated in the court of Pharaoh himself and was in a unique position to assemble the records and traditions on the subjects upon which he wrote.

***Documentary Hypothesis*—**An approach critical of Mosaic authorship arose out of the skeptical milieu of the Enlightenment, which gained general acceptance in scholarly

circles in the late 19th century. This attack on Mosaic authorship typically suggests that the Pentateuch is really the product of a mosaic of unknown authors compiled in the 5th or 6th century B.C. The usual scenario is that Israel's religion evolved through the centuries and was recorded at various times. These various literary strands appear in the later compilation of the Hebrew sacred documents.

Julius Wellhausen gave the classic organization of this documentary hypothesis in 1876. The theory identifies four principal sources for the Pentateuch:

- *J document*, characterized by the predominance of the name Yahweh for God, allegedly compiled in the Southern Kingdom of Judah around 950 B.C.;
- *E document*, characterized using the name Elohim for God, written in the Northern Kingdom of Israel about 850 B.C.;
- *D or Deuteronomist document*, written around 650 B.C. just before the renewal in Judah under King Josiah;
- *P or Priestly document* composed of ancient traditions around 525 B.C. after the people returned from the Babylonian exile.

The upshot of all this is an approach that depicts the Pentateuch as a potpourri of stories, poems, laws, and myths without internal unity or consistency developed by nameless authors of sources dating from the 10th to the 5th centuries B.C. The critics' conclusions follow their presuppositions: Moses did not write the Pentateuch; the exact nature and historicity of the events recorded are difficult or impossible to determine; and the date of the final compilation is late, long removed from the events recorded. Its effect was to discount the historical value and trustworthiness of the Pentateuch and even to create an aura of fraud over the foundational books of the Bible.

***Modern Approach*—**This consensus began to unravel in the 1970s and continues today.

The more recent documentary critics are very skeptical of the E document, but do not continue to posit J, D, and P sources, which were compiled in the 6th and 7th centuries B.C. According to later critics, these sources do not provided historical insight into the rea of the patriarchs so much as to the beliefs of the Jews in the exilic and postexilic periods.

In addition, literary criticism came into vogue in biblical studies. This school focuses on the final form of the biblical text rather than its composition process. It also has a much greater appreciation for the literary techniques of Hebrew authors and other ancient writers, which leads them to reject the criteria used to distinguish sources. For example, the comparable stories of Genesis 12, 20, and 26, which prompt source critics to posit multiple sources, are seen by literary critics as examples of repetition, an important literary device exploited by a single author to underline a point.

However, the state of modern scholarship is much more disjoint than just a disagreement between the older and newer critical scholars. The growth of the documentary hypothesis owed much to its naturalistic and evolutionary presuppositions regarding the development of human society so fashionable in our secular culture. Its anti-supernatural stance drove its "assured findings," and that bias has become increasingly obvious.

Furthermore, the lack of lasting scholarly agreement regarding the precise character and extent of the documents and sources allegedly behind the text of the Pentateuch has revealed the subjective nature of the theory. Many cultural and literary features formerly deemed strange have been discovered to be typical of second millennium B.C. culture and literature. The net result of these and other developments is the fraying of the documentary consensus and a potpourri of opinions regarding the authorship and composition of the Pentateuch.

Historical Background:

***Chronologies*—**Below is a graphic summary of various positions on the chronology of the Pentateuch:

Early Exodus (Long Sojourn)	Early Exodus (Short Sojourn)	Late Exodus	Reconstructionist
Early date for the Exodus and a 430-year sojourn in Egypt per Masoretic reading of Exodus 12:40	Early date for the Exodus and a 215-year sojourn in Egypt per Septuagint reading of Exodus 12:40	Late date for the Exodus and a belief in the historicity of the record of patriarchal events	Late date for the Exodus and reconstruction of biblical history through the use of form criticism
The Patriarchs (2166-1805) Migration to Egypt (1876)	The Patriarchs (1952-1589) Migration to Egypt (1660)	The Patriarchs (1952-1589) Migration to Egypt (1650)	-----
Egyptian Sojourn (1876-1446) Slavery (1730 or 1580)	Egyptian Sojourn (1660-1446) Slavery (1580)	Egyptian Sojourn (1650-1230) Slavery (1580)	The Patriarchs (1500-1300) Gradual migration Egyptian Sojourn (1350-1230)
Wandering (1446-1406) Conquest & Judges (1406-1050)	Wandering (1446-1406) Conquest & Judges (1406-1050)	Conquest & Judges (1230-1025)	Conquest & Judges (1230-1025)
United Kingdom (1050-931)	United Kingdom (1050-931)	United Kingdom (1025-931)	United Kingdom (1025-931)

Historicity:

***Issues*—**There are two principal sets of issues behind these chronological differences. The first is how to interpret biblical numbers (literally or symbolically) and the corresponding role of archaeology in comparative historical study. The second concern is the date of the Hebrew exodus from Egypt, the central event of the Pentateuch.

***Schools of thought*—**There are three schools of thought on the historical reliability of the Pentateuch. First, the traditional approach assumes the supernatural origin of the text and the complete historical accuracy of the biblical record. Second, the historical-archaeological approach presumes that the biblical record is dependable. The Pentateuch preserves historical traditions rather than creates them, but its purpose is fundamentally theological, not historical. Archaeological data serves as an objective control to biblical historical accounts. Third, the historical reconstructionist takes a very skeptical view toward biblical narrative. Other ancient extrabiblical sources are more dependable than the Old Testament narrative. Historical critical scholars use a host of methodologies, including form, source, literary, and tradition history criticism, to reconstruct the history of Israel.

***Milieu of the times*—**The majority of the events recorded in the Pentateuch occur in the period of the Middle to Late Bronze Age in the second millennium B.C. After the primeval prologue (Genesis 1-11) establishes the need for electing and setting apart a special people to worship the one, true God, the story focuses like a laser on Abraham and his descendants.

Abraham received a divine call while residing in Ur of the Chaldees, an ancient city-state that emerged and thrived during the Sumerian/Babylonian period of Mesopotamian civilization. He moved to Canaan and lived there as a nomad, as did his immediate successors, until the clan went down to Egypt to escape the ravages of severe famine. Thus, the Middle and Late Bronze Age cultures in Mesopotamia, Canaan, and Egypt all shed light on the events and milieu of the biblical text.

By the 4th millennium B.C., the Sumerians in Mesopotamia had established city-states. They developed a form of writing, implemented extensive agricultural practices, and engaged in flourishing trade. The later Sumerians and their Babylonian successors developed sophisticated law codes. Most notable of these was that of King Hammurabi in the early part of the second millennium B.C.

By the second millennium B.C., Canaan was a crossroads where a flourishing trade encouraged the growth of city-states. The wealth generated by this trade and the strategic value of its central location in the Middle East also lured the surrounding powers to repeatedly attempt to dominate and control the region. In the latter part of the second millennium, the Hittites of Anatolia (modern Turkey) and the Egyptians were the principal rivals for control of the region.

In the second millennium, treaties increasingly regulated international relations. The Hittites were known for their treaties with subject peoples during their expansion into Syria and Canaan. These "suzerainty treaties" are important for purposes of the background of the Pentateuch.

The Egyptian culture stands as a colossus in the historical milieu of the Pentateuch. Egypt developed along the Nile River valley about the same time the Mesopotamian culture developed in the Tigris/Euphrates area. However, Egypt's geography aided the early development of a highly centralized state centered on an autocratic ruler and its remote location tended to make its culture more insular and static than that of Mesopotamia. In the Early and Middle Kingdom periods, Egypt tended to adopt a live and let live foreign policy, largely because its remoteness made it less susceptible to foreign invasion.

All that changed with the Hyksos invasion in the early part of the second millennium. After that unhappy time, the Egyptians became highly suspicious of foreigners and their foreign policy shifted from a live and let live one to the militaristic one of the 18th and 19th dynasties of the New Kingdom era. The Hebrew presence in Egypt bridges these different eras with tremendous consequence to the welfare of the people. The aggressive pharaohs of the 18th and 19th dynasties were those with whom the Hebrews dealt in the Exodus.

Summary Overview:

Book	Key Concept	God's People	God's Role
Genesis	Origins/promise	Chosen/preserved	Creator
Exodus	Redemption/presence	Delivered	Redeemer
Leviticus	Holiness	Set apart	Sanctifier
Numbers	Wandering/testing	Tested/disciplined	Sustainer
Deuteronomy	Renewed covenant	Retaught/prepared	Rewarder

Genesis

***Introduction*—**Genesis comes from the Greek term meaning origin or beginning. It speaks of the origins of the world and provides the context and sets the stage for the rest of the Bible. It introduces the reader to Yahweh and supplies a unique understanding of humanity made in his image. The world was designed with the needs and aspirations of humanity in mind. The fall and rapid spread of sin causes God to choose the people of Israel through whom He would reclaim a fallen race. The story of the preservation of the patriarchs of the promise is detailed in the pages of the book.

Genesis has eleven sections, each beginning with phrases like "These are the generations…" or "This is the account of…" These units are: introduction to the generations (1:1-2:3) and the accounts of the heavens and the earth (2:4-4:26), of Adam (5:1-6:8), of Noah (6:9-9:29), of the sons of Noah (10:1-11:9), of Shem (11:10-26), of Terah (11:27-25:11), of Ishmael (25:12-18), of Isaac (25:19-35:29), of Esau (36:1-37:1), and of Jacob (37:2-50:26).

These literary units inform us of four major events in the primeval history of the earth and chronicle the stories of four patriarchs of God's covenant people. Chapters 1 to 11 form a primeval prologue for God's election of Abraham and the preservation of his line. These chapters cover creation, humanity's fall, the flood judgment, and the postdiluvian repopulation and rebellion.

Chapters 12 to 50 relate to the election of, and covenant with, Abraham, and the preservation of the patriarch's descendants (Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph). God enters a covenant relationship with Abraham, promises to bless him and his posterity, and to extend that blessing to the entire world through them. Genesis 12 to 50 records how this covenant unfolded through the generations.

***Authorship and Date*—**See treatment under this heading in the summary on the **Pentateuch**.

***Historical and Geographical Background*—**Thousands of years are covered in chapters 1-11. By contrast, chapters 12-50 cover approximately 350 years (spanning either 2150-1800 BC or 1950-1600 BC) and that, very selectively. Genesis is not a universal history and makes no pretense of being one. It is highly thematic, concentrating on the course of God's redemptive plan and work. Geographically, Genesis divides neatly into three settings: (1) Mesopotamia, or the Fertile Crescent (1-11); (2) Canaan (12-36); (3) Egypt (37-50).

Guiding Concepts:

***Covenant*—**The central theme of the Pentateuch is the fulfillment of God's covenantal promises to the patriarchs. Covenant ideas reached all of life in patriarchal times. It was in covenant terms that God spoke to the people concerning their relationship with him.

The five books reference several covenants: Adamic (Gen. 3:15 backdrop), Noahic (Gen. 9:1-17), Mosaic (Ex. 19-24), and Palestinian (Deut. 28-30). Central to all these covenants the Abrahamic Covenant, initiated in Genesis 12:1-3. In that covenant, God promises four things to Abraham:

- A place—he would be given a land;
- A people—he would become a great nation;
- A presence—he would enjoy a special covenantal relationship with God;
- A posterity of spirit—through him all the peoples of the earth would be blessed.

The Abrahamic Covenant is ceremonially established in Genesis 15, renewed in Genesis 17 with circumcision designated as a sign of the covenant, and affirmed in Genesis 22 following Abraham's actions on Mt. Moriah. God renews the promises to Abraham's descendants (Gen 26:2-5, 24; 28:13-15; 35:11-13; 46:2-4).

The two other covenants Genesis explicitly mentions are seminal to the Abrahamic Covenant. The Adamic Covenant relates to God's promise of redemption through the seed of the woman. The Abrahamic and subsequent covenants would flesh out how that redemption would come. The Noahic Covenant relates to God's promise to defer the full judgment of sin because his redemptive purpose (fleshed out in the Abrahamic and subsequent covenants) takes precedence to the immediate judgment of sin.

The later covenants expand upon the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. The Palestinian Covenant elaborates on the promise of land. The Davidic Covenant promises a regal rule as an aspect of God's presence with His people (2 Sam. 7:12-16). The Mosaic Covenant and the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-40) deal with the requirements of living in the presence of a holy God.

***Creation*—**The Genesis account is unique among ancient accounts of the beginning of the earth both in its portrayal of God and of the world he created. Yahweh is a God of absolute power and moral purity. He is the self-existent one, prior to the created order, who calls creation into existence out of nothing. He fashions the world in a purposeful, orderly way as part of a comprehensive plan.

The creation account differs from its modern counterpart as well. It teaches that God, not matter, is eternal; that creation is intelligently designed, not the product of random chance over time; that humanity is creation's pinnacle, bearing the image of the Maker, not the kingpin of the survival game because of the happenstance of a larger cerebral cortex.

As to the relationship between Genesis and modern science, the two are answering different questions. Genesis explains who God is and how He relates to the created world. Science elucidates the God-given laws that explain the natural phenomena.

***Election*—**One is struck with God's elective choice in the very first book: Abraham and his seed from among world, Isaac instead of Ishmael, Jacob instead of Esau, Joseph instead of his brothers, and Ephraim instead of Manasseh.

God's relations with His covenant people involved both promise and responsibility. Obedience would lead to great posterity for Abraham and obedience would result in that posterity's possession of the Promised Land. Disobedience would bring with it the curse, the lack of national cohesion, prosperity, and peace, and finally, disinheritance. The choice is put to them in stark terms!

***Faith*—**Abraham's faith is not only an example of faith. His faith provides us an idea of the kind of faith God approves and desires from us.

***Genealogies*—**Genesis is full of genealogies. They are of historical use, but they speak more to the issue of the importance of individuals in community in God's saving work. The real key to understanding their function in the book is to see them in contrasting lines: one set delineating a line of those who believe God's promise and respond to his grace and the other recording a line of those who do not believe but oppose God and his people.

***Monotheism*—**Genesis declares that there is one God of absolute power and holiness over against the common polytheistic worldview that posited many gods and goddesses of varying, finite power and wisdom. Rejecting the ancient view that humanity was created as an afterthought which the gods regretted and sadistically toyed with, Genesis affirms that humanity was the summit of creation, and that the race's welfare is God's deep and abiding concern.

We have no stories of how the gods plotted, fought, lusted, and cruelly deceived humanity. We have no intrigue as petty potentates plot to extend their earthly fiefdoms or to get even with their rivals, regardless of the consequence to helpless humanity. God is high and holy, all-powerful, and compassionate, just and kind. In the Genesis account, there is one God, the sovereign Creator, to whom all the universe owes its being and its allegiance.

***Sin's Entrance and Progression*—**This major theme recurs throughout the Scripture. Sin and evil did not have to enter this earthly realm. It enters by deliberate human choice in an act of pride, rebellion, and unbelief. This choice not only affects humanity, but the entire creation as well.

From the outset, sin is not a static state, but a progressive one. One can see its progress in the first family in Genesis 3 and 4, in the antediluvian peoples in Genesis 6, in the first post-Flood family in Genesis 9, in sin's rapid spread and savage pride in the post-diluvian earth as recorded in Genesis 11, and in numerous episodes in the patriarchal families in the rest of the book. When you imagine what could have been, you groan deeply in your spirit and long for God's promised redemption.

Summary Outline:

Primeval History				Patriarchal History			
Creation 1:1	Fall 3:1	Flood 6:1	Dispersion At Babel 10:1	Abraham 11:10	Isaac 25:19	Jacob 27:1	Joseph 37:2
Human Race				Hebrew Race			
Mesopotamia				Canaan			Egypt

Key Idea: Origins; Covenant promise
Key Verses: Gen. 3:15; 12:1-3
Key Chapter: Gen. 15

Exodus

***Introduction*—**Exodus is derived from a Greek word meaning “exit, departure, or going out”. It picks up where Genesis left off and records the birth of the Jewish nation. In Egypt, Jacob’s family initially enjoys a favored status and rapidly multiplies. However, due to shifts in the political landscape, Pharaoh perceives the Jewish population as a potential threat (1:9, 10). In God’s time, an infant nation is delivered from Egypt in an extraordinary manner.

The concept of redemption is central to the book. This plays out in three developments: (1) judgment of the Egyptian oppressor; (2) Israel’s deliverance from slavery by God’s mighty acts; and (3) the establishment of the covenant community as God’s “treasured possession” among all the nations. Judgment and deliverance are prominent in chapters 1 through 12. Yahweh’s guidance through the wilderness toward the promised land of Canaan follows in chapters 13 to 18. The Mosaic Covenant is established in chapters 19 to 24, defining Israel’s character as God’s covenant community. The book concludes with the plans for and preparation of a place and pattern for worship in chapters 25 through 40.

Moses is the dominant human personality in the book of Exodus. He is tasked with leading the Israelites to freedom from slavery to the era's greatest power. This epic deliverance occurs in a little over a year, involving momentous calamities, and the movement of large numbers of people through a stark and barren land. The action begins along the Nile River in Egypt and concludes at the base of Mount Sinai in the Arabian Desert.

***Authorship and Date*—**See treatment under this heading in the summary on the Pentateuch.

***Historical and Geographical Background*—**There are two general views as to the date of the Exodus. The early date position identifies Thutmose III (1504-1450 B.C.) as the pharaoh of the oppression and Amenhotep II (1450-1425 B.C.) as the pharaoh of the exodus. The late date view identifies Rameses I (1320-1318 B.C.) and Seti I (1318-1304 B.C.) as pharaohs of the oppression and Rameses II (1304-1237 B.C.) as the pharaoh of the exodus.

***Routes of exodus*—**Northern, middle and southern routes are all hypothesized. On balance, the traditional southern route theory best accommodates known biblical and geographical information.

Guiding Concepts:

***Mosaic Covenant (the Law)*—**The Ten Commandments are central to the Covenant (Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:6-21). The first four commandments govern our relationship with God, while the last six order human relationships within the covenant community. These include:

Commands relating to God—negative	Commands relating to God—positive
1. No other gods (20:3, 4)	1. Trust God only (20:3, 4)
2. No idols made or worshipped (20:5, 6)	2. Worship the true God only (20:5, 6)
3. Do not use God's name in vain (20:7)	3. Respect God's name (20:7)
4. Do not reduce the Sabbath to just any other day (20:8-11)	4. Observe the Sabbath rest in its true spirit (20:8-11)

Commands relating to others—negative	Commands relating to others—positive
5. Do not diss your parents (20:12)	5. Honor your parents (20:12)
6. No murder or manslaughter (20:13)	6. Protect and respect human life (20:13)
7. No adultery (20:14)	7. Be true to your spouse (20:14)
8. No stealing (20:15)	8. Respect other people's property (20:15)
9. No lying (20:16)	9. Deal truthfully with others (20:16)
10. No coveting (20:17)	10. Be content with what you have (20:17)

The Law embraces a whole collection of interwoven regulations intended to regulate the moral, ceremonial, and civil life of the people of Israel. It speaks of the conditions of living with a holy God (see Lev. 17-26; Deut. 12-26). The Tabernacle and its cultic practice graphically symbolize these conditions and Yahweh's active presence with his people.

The Mosaic Covenant does not set aside the Abrahamic Covenant. It fleshes it out. It speaks to the people of what God required of them. In its sacrificial system, it pointed to the atoning work of Christ as the basis of any true confidence in approaching a holy God.

In its literary form, the Mosaic Covenant parallels that of the Hittite suzerain treaties of the Middle to Late Bronze Age (second millennium B.C.). Specific elements of the treaty form in the Mosaic Covenant as given in Exodus are as follows:

- Preamble (20:2a).
- Historical prologue (20:2b).
- Stipulations (20:3-17; 20:21-23:19).
- Deposit and public reading (24:7).
- List of witnesses (24:1-11).
- Blessings and curses (23:20-33).

The applicability of law today has engendered controversy through the centuries. These notes adopt the view that the law's applicability involves the process of principalizing from the regulation conveyed, applying the principal taught to our concept of God, and then focusing on that concept's application in our modern setting.

***Passover and Exodus*—**This is the great redemptive act of God in the Old Testament. Later generations looked back on this event with thankfulness. The prophets often invoked it to exhort the people to live as they ought. God's miraculous intervention on

behalf of His oppressed people demonstrated His mercy and His sovereignty as nothing else in their history.

The New Testament writers understood the Old Testament Passover typologically as a precursor of Jesus' sacrificial death as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7).

***Sanctuary and Sacred Space*—**God's presence does not dwell in a sanctuary today. Church buildings do not represent sacred space. When Jesus died the temple veil was rent in two (Mt. 27:51; Mk. 15:38; Lk. 23:45) indicating an end to restricted access to God. Ephesians 2:11-22 works through the implications of this. We all have access (2:18); we have become a holy temple (2:21) indwelt by the Spirit (2:22). 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 identifies the corporate body as God's temple and 1 Corinthians 6:19 identifies the believer's physical body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. Peter calls us a royal priesthood (1 Pt. 2:9).

The central concern in Exodus sanctuary plan and construction is underlining a sense of the holy. At least three aspects of this are involved: (1) keeping the space pure, which today focuses on our individual and corporate purity in entering worship; (2) maintaining and environment and routine of worship; and (3) monitoring the status of inhabitants of sacred space—the need for personal and corporate self-examination.

***Ten Plagues*—**These compose the Exodus story, the saga of God's saving acts on behalf of His people over approximately a nine-month period. The are as follows:

7:14-25	Nile water turned to blood	Moses appears before Pharaoh at the river	Pharaoh hardens (7:22)
8:1-15	Frogs cover the land	Moses "comes before Pharaoh"	Pharaoh begs for relief, promises freedom (8:8), but hardens (8:15)
8:16-19	Lice/gnat infestation	Moses uses symbolic gesture	Pharaoh hardens (8:19)
8:20-32	Flies swarm over the land	Moses appears before Pharaoh at the river	Pharaoh bargains (8:28), but hardens (8:32)
9:1-7	Livestock plague	Moses "comes before Pharaoh"	Pharaoh hardens (9:7)
9:8-12	Boils and sores on people and Animals	Moses uses symbolic gesture	Pharaoh hardens (9:12)
9:13-35	Hail destroys crops	Moses appears before Pharaoh at the river	Pharaoh begs for relief, promises freedom, but hardens (9:27, 28, 35)

10:1-20	Locusts swarm over the land	Moses "comes before Pharaoh"	Pharaoh bargains (10:11), begs for relief (10:17), but hardens (10:20)
10:21-29	Darkness for three days	Moses uses symbolic gesture	Pharaoh bargains but hardens (10:24, 27)
11:1-12:30	Death of the Egyptian first-born		

Some Old Testament commentators believe these plagues targeted specific Egyptian gods. They assert that the first plague, where the Nile turns to blood, targets Khnum, Hapi, and Osiris, gods connected to the Nile. This analysis is a tad too neat. It is better to view the plagues collectively as an affront to the entire pantheon of powerless Egyptian gods and a testimony to the Hebrews and the Egyptians of the identity and power of the true God.

Summary Outline:

Deliverance					Mosaic Covenant				Tabernacle Construction				
From Egypt			To Sinai						Plan		Response		
Need/ Prep For Redempt-ion	Plague On Egypt	Exodus	Songs	Trip to Sinai	Prep	10 Comm.	Laws	Confirm	Specs	Priests	Instruct	Gold Calf	Building the Tabernacle
1	7	12	15	16	19	20	21	24	25	27	30	32	35
Sub-jection	Redemption				Revelation and Response								

Key Idea: Redemption
Key Verses: Ex. 3:14; 6:6; 19:5, 6
Key Chapters: Ex. 12-14

Leviticus

Introduction— "Leviticus" comes from the Greek *leutikon*, meaning "related to the Levites". In the Book of Exodus, the nation of Israel is delivered from bondage and designated as a sanctified nation and a kingdom of priests. In Leviticus, Israel is taught how to fulfill this calling, how to maintain this covenantal relationship with Yahweh. It provides an ongoing means for dealing with sin and restoring fellowship with God, a relationship already established by His redemptive activity.

The theme of Leviticus is holiness (11:45; 19:2). The Hebrew root for "holy" (*qodesh*) is used more in this book than any other. The word means "set apart." Holiness is not fundamentally a mindset of pious activity (albeit that should follow), but one of being "set apart to Yahweh" from the mundane. The book teaches that one must approach a holy God based on sacrifice and intercessory mediation and one can only walk with such a God based on a set apart lifestyle based on obedience.

The book unfolds as a manual of priestly regulations and a handbook of instructions for practical holy living for the covenant people of God. The first part of the book outlines the requisite procedures for approaching Yahweh (Lev. 1-16). The second part prescribes how God's covenant people are to translate the idea of holiness into practical daily living (Lev. 17-27).

Authorship and Date—See treatment under this heading in the summary on the Pentateuch.

Historical and Geographical Background—The legislation in Leviticus may either correspond to the 18th dynasty of the New Kingdom era in Egypt, with Thutmose III (1504-1450 B.C.) the pharaoh of the Hebrew oppression and Amenhotep II (1450-1425 B.C.) the pharaoh of the exodus or to the 19th dynasty of the New Kingdom era with Rameses II (1304-1237 B.C.) the likely pharaoh of the exodus. See the early/late date discussion in Historical and Geographical Background under Exodus.

Geographically, the book of Leviticus was given to Israel during their time at Mount Sinai between the time the Tabernacle was built and the people departed from Sinai as recorded in Numbers 10:11. The time span involved was about a month.

Guiding Concepts:

Holiness—The Hebrew root for "holy" (*qodesh*) simply means "set apart". Holiness is a mindset of being "set apart to Yahweh" from the mundane. The book teaches that one must approach a holy God based on sacrifice and intercessory mediation and one can only walk with such a God based on a set apart lifestyle based on obedience.

Jewish Calendar of Sacred Feasts:

Feast	***Month***	***Text***	***Occasion***
Purim	February/March	Esther 9	Failure of Haman's plot against the Jews
Passover (Pesach)	March/April	Exodus 12; Leviticus 23:4-8	Deliverance from Egypt
Unleavened Bread (Hag Hamatzot)	March/April	Exodus 12; Leviticus 23:4-8	Deliverance from Egypt
First Fruits (Yom HaBikkurim)	March/April	Leviticus 23:9-14	Consecrate first fruits of barley harvest
Pentecost (Shavuot)	May/June	Leviticus 23:15-22	Consecrate first fruits of wheat harvest
Tish'ah be'ah	August	**---**	Destruction of the temple
Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)	September/October	Leviticus 23:23-25	Consecrate Sabbatical month
Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	September/October	Leviticus 23:26-32	Annual atonement for national sins
Tabernacles (Sukkot)	September/October	Leviticus 23:33-43	Wilderness wanderings
Dedication (Hanukkah)	November/ December	John 10:22	Cleansing of temple from defilement

Aside from the annual feasts, Israel's communal life was characterized by other sacred events:

Sabbath—Every seventh day was a solemn rest from all work (Ex. 20:8-11; Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:12-15). This reminded Israel that Yahweh was the creator and lent a certain cadence to Israel's worship and a sense of set-apartness to their idea of time.

Sabbath Year—Every seventh year was designated as a "year of release" to allow the land to lie fallow (Ex. 23:10, 11; Lev. 25:1-7). As a practical matter, the poor and socially disadvantaged were to be the beneficiaries of this practice since they were to be free to glean the leftover produce of the fallow land.

Jubilee Year—The fiftieth year following the seventh Sabbath year, was to be a general year of release, proclaiming a general forgiveness of all indebtedness and a return of lands sold to their hereditary owners. Jeremiah will link the neglect of this practice with the Babylonian Captivity (Jer. 25:8-14; 2 Chron. 36:17-21).

New Moon—The first day of the Hebrew month was to be a day of rest, special offerings, the blowing of trumpets (Num. 28:11-15).

***Sacrificial Offerings*—**According to Leviticus 17:11, the principle of life is represented in the blood. Thus, blood on the altar was necessary for the symbolic cleansing of God's presence (see Heb 9:21, 22). Israel's formal, corporate worship includes five basic sacrificial offerings:

- Cereal or grain offering — Offered to God in praise and thanksgiving
- Fellowship or peace offering — "
- Burnt offering — Offerings required by God because of sin
- Sin offering — "
- Guilt or trespass offering — "

There are similarities between the Hebrew sacrificial system and the sacrifices practiced by neighboring nations. However, the Old Testament sacrificial system was specifically prescribed by Yahweh and receives its meaning within the context of the Lord's covenantal relationship with Israel. The differences between Hebrew sacrificial practices and those of the Canaanites that are most significant:

- Idea of direct divine revelation
- Concept of strict monotheism
- Understanding of the origin and impact of human sin
- Highly ethical nature of Hebrew religion in contrast with Canaanite fertility cult practices
- Holy and righteous character of Yahweh in contrast with the capricious bahvior of pagan deities
- Prohibition of human sacrifice

Summary Outline:

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">Sacrificial System</td><td colspan="4">Sanctification Laws</td></tr>
<tr><td>Laws of Offerings</td><td>Priestly Consec-ration</td><td>Clean and Unclean</td><td>National Atonement</td><td>For the People</td><td>For Priests</td><td>For Worship</td><td>Covenantal Context</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>8</td><td>11</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>21</td><td>23</td><td>26</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Acceptable Approach to God</td><td colspan="4">Acceptable Walk With God</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Cultic Worship Practices</td><td colspan="4">Practical Set-Apart Lifestyle</td></tr>
</table>

Key Idea: Holiness
Key Verses: Lev. 17:11; 20:7-8
Key Chapter: Lev. 16

Numbers

***Introduction*—**"Numbers" is a translation of the Greek name for this book *Arithmoi*, reflecting the two census takings of the Hebrew nation in Numbers 1 and 26. The book highlights the wilderness testing and rebellion of God's covenant people.

Numbers is a tale of two generations. It records two vastly different generations (Num. 1-14; 21-27), two numberings (Num. 1; 26), two journeys (Num. 10-14; 21-27), and two sets of instructions to those intending to enter the Promised Land (Num. 5-9; 28-36).

The first generation coming out of Egypt had seen the great deliverance and miracles by God through Moses, had received the Law in an awesome and miraculous manner, had come to the threshold of the Promised Land, and had faltered in their faith. Thirty-eight miserable years of rebellion and wandering in the wilderness follows. During that wandering, the second generation is transformed from a band of ex-slaves to a disciplined and obedient people ready to take possession of their inheritance. The book begins with the story of the failure of the older generation, moves through an account of a tragic transitional period, and ends with the new generation at the threshold of Canaan.

However, the book is more than just a warning against unbelief and rebellion. Throughout the account, the grace and mercy of God is also evident, whether in the pillar of fire and cloud (10:11), or the daily provision of manna, or the dramatic provision of the bronze serpent (21:4-9). All of these prefigure God's grace in Christ (as to manna and Christ, see John 6:31-33; 1 Corinthians 10:4; as to the bronze serpent and Christ, see John 3:14).

***Authorship and Date*—**See treatment under this heading in the summary on the **Pentateuch**.

***Historical and Geographical Background*—**Numbers unfolds in three distinct stages: (1) a short period of about a month at Mt. Sinai (1:1-10:11); a thirty-eight year wilderness wandering due to the first generation's unbelief (10:11-20:13); and (3) a six-month period when the second generation journeys from Kadesh to the plains of Moab as they prepare to enter the Promised Land. For Israel, an eleven-day journey became a forty-year nightmare.

***Guiding Concepts*—**Numbers records how God disciplined and organized a motley crew of former slaves into a unified community of God prepared to fulfill their covenant obligations. The book emphasizes the holiness of God, the sinfulness of humanity, the consequences of obedience and disobedience, and the utter faithfulness of God to His covenant with Israel.

***Census*—**The census had three primary functions: to ascertain manpower available for war; allotment of work assignments either for forced labor or for tabernacle worship; and establishing a basis for taxation. There is controversy over the numbers in Numbers 1 and

26. Supporters of a literal interpretation note that the census figures correspond well with the growing fears of Pharaoh in Exodus 1.

However, critics contend that the Sinai wilderness is simply unable to sustain such large numbers for short periods let alone for forty years. Critics argue that the Hebrew word for "thousand" was mistranslated due to early Hebrew manuscripts lacking vowels and vowel markings. Others have suggested that the census figures in Numbers are misplaced lists from the era of the Davidic kingdom.

***Illustrations of Spiritual Truth*—**Two detailed New Testament passages refer to the wilderness wanderings of Israel as illustrations of spiritual truth. 1 Corinthians 10:11 states their function explicitly: “These things happened to them as examples and written as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.” In 1 Corinthians 10:1-12, Israel’s wanderings serve as a warning against self-indulgence and immorality. In Hebrews 3:7-4:6, they negatively illustrate the theme of entering God’s rest by faith.

***Testing*—**The idea of a probationary period runs throughout the Pentateuch:

- In the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:15-17)
- For angelic hosts (1 Tim 5:21)
- For Abraham (Gen 22:1-14)
- For the loyalty of Joseph’s brothers (Gen 44:1-17)
- Wilderness wanderings as covenantal testing (Deut 8:1-2)

The New Testament is in accord with this understanding. Even Jesus is tested in every respect so that He might be our sympathetic High Priest (Mt. 4:1-11; Heb. 4:14-16). The book of James uses two different words for "testing," aligning with both Old and New Testament teachings. James emphasizes that God tests individuals with a view to approving faith and developing godly character, but does not tempt individuals, goading them on to evil or undermining their faith.

Summary Outline:

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Old Generation Reorganized and Readied</td><td colspan="4">Tragic Transition and Wanderings</td><td>New Generation At the Threshold</td></tr>
<tr><td>Reorganizing

1</td><td>Purifying

8</td><td>To Kadesh
10</td><td>At Kadesh
13</td><td>In Wilderness
15</td><td>Moab Plains
20</td><td>At the Border and Reorganized
26</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">At Mt. Sinai</td><td colspan="4">In the Wilderness</td><td>Plains of Moab</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">About 1 Month</td><td colspan="4">About 38 years</td><td>About 6 Months</td></tr>
</table>

Key idea: Wandering; testing
Key verses: Num. 14:22-23; 20:12
Key chapter: Num. 14

Deuteronomy

***Introduction*—**Deuteronomy comes from Greek terms meaning ``second law''. This book reiterates the law with a focus on preparing the new generation of Israelites for entering the Promised Land, in accordance with God's covenant. Deuteronomy is to the Pentateuch what John is to the Gospels. It fills in missing elements and gives the spiritual significance of the historical events recorded in the other books.

***Authorship and Date*—**See treatment under this heading in the summary on the **Pentateuch**.

***Historical and Geographical Background*—**The book is written or compiled at the end of the wilderness wanderings on the plains of Moab. It takes place (Moses' three sermons) over a one-month period.

Guiding Concepts:

***Covenant renewal*—** Deuteronomy formalizes the Mosaic Covenant. But it more than restates the covenant's terms. It provides a deeper understanding of the covenant and calls for the people to live in obedience to God's laws.

Redemptive history: History is more than a sequence of events assessed by cause and effect. It is God in action, providing confirming evidence of Israel's election. Thus, history and theology merge in ways that make moderns uncomfortable. See ***Documentary hypothesis and Deuteronomistic history***, below.

***Law as revelation*—**In ancient society, law was a tool of governance; in Israel, it was the medium of God's self-revelation. A violation of law for others was primarily an offense against society; for Israel, a violation of the Mosaic Law was an offense against God in the first instance. For others, law was about order in society; in Israel, Law is about right relationships and behavior in the eyes of God.

The New Testament clearly asserts that adherence to the law does not provide a way to salvation because we cannot keep it. However, a healthy perspective towards the law cherishes it not as a means of justification but because it represents God's revelation of himself.

***Suzerain treaties*—**The book introduces the Lord as the suzerain and author of the covenant. It is a covenant renewal document that utilizes the format common in Near East suzerainty treaties in the second millennium BC. Note the following elements:

- Preamble—parties to the treaty 1:1-5
- Historical prologue—benevolent dealings in the past 1:6-4:43
- Stipulations—conditions of the covenant 4:44-26:19
- Ratification—reiteration of blessings and cursings 27-30
- Continuity—provisions for maintaining the covenant 31-34

Deuteronomy chapters 6 to 26 may be optimally organized according to their alignment with the Ten Commandments. The commandments are addressed in four general topics: authority, dignity, commitment, and rights and privileges. The first four commandments address these four categories as they pertain to relationship with God. The last six commandments address these same four issues as they pertain to human relationships.

Covenant and Treaty Format:

Order of Sections	Description	Deuteronomy	Joshua 24
Intro of Speaker	Author's right to proclaim treaty	1:1-5	24:1-2
Historical Prologue	Survey of past relationship	1:6-4:43	24:2-13
Stipulations	Listing of obligations	4:44-26	24:14-25
Document statements	Public reading/storage of document	27:2-3	24:26
Witnesses	Those witnessing the vows	31-32	24:22, 27
Blessings and Cursings	Conditional nature of agreement	28	24:20

Summary Outline:

1:1 -4:43	4:44 -11	12 - 26			27 -30	31 -34
Review of God's acts for Israel	Decalogue Expounded	Ceremonial Laws 12	Civil Laws 16:18	Social Laws 21	Covenant Ratification and Transition: Warnings and Challenges	Succession; Final Blessing; Death of Moses
Sermon 1	Sermon 2	Sermon 2 (continued)			Sermon 3	Continuity; Conclusion
What God has done	What God expected	What God expected (continued)			What God will do	Wrapping up

Key Idea: Covenant renewal
Key verses: Deut. 10:12-13; 30:19-20
Key chapter: Deut. 6

Historical Books

The Historical books comprise the twelve books between Joshua and Esther and relate to four distinct periods of Israel's history:

- Conquest and settlement of the Promised Land
- United monarchy
- Divided monarchy
- Exile and return

Timeline of Major Events/Players—This section is an attempt to provided proximate dates and milieu for age recorded in the history books.

Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 BC)

- Egyptians, Hittites, and the Mitanni are major players
- Stalemate of major powers
- Syro-Palestine area as buffer all seek to control
- Amarna correspondence reflects the times
- Exodus, wandering, and conquest
- Timeline:
  1550-1069 – New Kingdom in Egypt
  1500-1350 – Mitanni civilization
  1479-1445 – Thutmose III (Egypt)
  1375-1325 – Amarna era (Egypt)
  1370-1330 – Shuppilulilma I (Hittites)
  1352-1336 – Akhenaten (Egypt)
  1350-1200 -- Ugarit
  1279-1213 – Ramases II (Egypt)

Early Iron Age (1200-1000 BC)

- Vacuum of major players
- Sea Peoples incursions – Egypt barely repulses them; Hitties fall; Philistines settle eastern Mediterranean coast
- Judges transitions to monarchy
- David's empire rises to fill power vacuum
- Timeline:
  1050-1010 -- Saul
  1010-970 -- David

Later Iron Age (1000 BC - on)

- David & Solomon (1010-930)
- Temple built (960)
- Rise of Arameans (950-850)
- First Assyrian threat & Israel's resurgence (850-750)
- Assyrian hegemony (750-650)

- Transitional period (650-600)
- Babylonian hegemony (600-550)
- Medo-Persian hegemony (550-400)

- Timeline:
  858-824 – Shalmaneser III (Assyria)
  853 – Battle of Qarqar
  841-806 – Hazael (Aram/Syria)
  745-727 – Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul) (Assyria)
  727-722 – Shalmaneser V (Assyria)
  722 – Fall of Samaria (Israel/Northern kingdom)
  721-705 – Sargon II (Assyria)
  710-703 – Merodach-Baladan (Babylon)
  704-681 – Sennacherib (Assyria)
  701 – Siege of Jerusalem (Hezekiah)
  681-669-- Esarhaddon (Assyria)
  669-630 – Ashurbanipal (Assyria)
  626-605 – Nabopolassar (Babylon)
  612 – Fall of Nineveh
  610-595 – Necho (Late Kingdom in Egypt)
  605-562 – Nebuchadnezzar (Babylon)
  605 – Battle of Carchemish – first Babylonian captivity
  597 – Babylonian siege of Jerusalem – second Babylonian captivity
  587-586 – Fall of Jerusalem – final Babylonian captivity
  556-539 -- Nabonidus (Babylon)
  539 -- Fall of Babylon
  539-530 – Cyrus (Persia)
  537 – Return under Zerubbabel
  522-486 – Darius II (Persia)
  490 – Battle of Marathon
  486-464 – Xerxes (Persia)
  480-479 – Battles of Salamis and Plataea
  464-423 – Artaxerxes (Persia)
  458 – Return under Ezra
  445 – Return under Nehemiah

Conquest and Settlement:

***Two Major Dating Systems*—**Archaeological data tentatively supports a date for Joshua's invasion of Palestine around 1250 BC. This would place the Exodus about 40 years earlier under the famous Pharaoh Rameses II. Other data suggests an earlier date, placing Joshua's invasion around 1400 BC. This would mean that the Exodus (often placed at 1446 BC) took place in the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep II (1450-1423 BC) shortly after the death of the great conquering Pharoah Thutmoses III (1500-1450 BC), the so-called Napoleon of Egypt. Thutmoses III was known to have made extensive use of slave labor (Israelites?) in his building projects.

The earlier date fits the biblical numbers better than the later one. 1 Kings 6:1 dates the Exodus 480 years prior to the commencement of the construction of the Temple. The temple construction started in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, probably 967-966 BC. Also, in Judges 11:26, Jephthah indicates that Israel had been in control of certain parts of Canaan for three hundred years. Since Jephthah lived around 1100 BC, this verse fits the early Exodus chronology quite nicely.

Historical and Geographical Background—The period of the Judges lasted from approximately 1380 until 1050 BC or 1220 to 1020 BC, depending on the dating system used. If the earlier date is correct, the period coincided with an era in which Egypt remained strangely introspective under the pharaohs of the Amarna era (Akhenaton, Tutankmun (King Tut), and Ay).

If the later date is correct, the judges period follows on a time in which Egypt renewed her interest in Palestine during the 19th dynasty (1318-1222 BC), the dynasty that followed the Amarna period. Rameses II fought with the Hittites, a people originating in modern-day Turkey, for the control of Palestine, and his successor, Merneptah (1234-1222 BC), recorded a successful campaign in Palestine on a victory stele (column), which listed Israel among the defeated peoples.

In the 12th Century BC, the Middle East experienced a series of invasions by the "Sea Peoples". The Hittite Empire fell before their onslaught and Egypt only succeeded in repulsing them due to the energy and ability of Rameses III (1190-1164 BC). After their defeat in Egypt, these "Sea Peoples" settled along the southwest coast of Palestine, joining the earlier Minoan settlers (a people originating in Crete) in the area. These Philistines, as they became known, were a dominant power in the area in the 12th and 11th Centuries BC and an oppressor of Israel. In addition, with the wane of Egyptian power after Rameses III, smaller nations took turns dominating various parts of Palestine and oppressing the Jewish people.

United Monarchy

Kings	***Dates***
Saul	*1050-1010*
David	*1010-971*
Solomon	*971-931*

Divided Monarchy: Kings of Israel and Judah

Northern Kings	***Dates (Thiele)***	***Southern Kings***	***Dates***
Jeroboam I (1)	931-910	Rehoboam I	931-913
Nadab	910-909	Abijah	913-911
Baasha (2)	909-886	Asa	911-870
E;lah	886-885	Jehoshaphat	872-848

Zimri (3)	885	Jehoram	853-841
Omri (4)	885-874	Ahaziah	841
Ahab	874-853	Athaliah	841-835
Ahaziah	853-852	Joash	835-796
Jehoram	852-841	Amaziah	796-767
Jehu (5)	841-814	Azariah (Uzziah)	792-740
Jehoahaz	814-798	Jotham	750-732
Jehoash	798-782	Ahaz	735-716
Jeroboam II	793-753	Hezekiah	716-687
Zechariah	753-752	Manasseh	697-643
Shallum (6)	752	Amon	643-641
Menahem (7)	752-742	Josiah	641-609
Pekahiah (8)	742-740	Jehoahaz	609
Pekah (9)	752-732	Jehoiakim	609-598
Hoshea (10)	732-722	Jehoichin	598-597
		Zedekiah	597-586

***Exile and Return*—**Israel went into exile in three successive stages (605, 597, and 586 B.C.) and returned in three stages (538, 458, and 445 B.C.). Ezra relates the story of the first two returns from Babylon, the first led by Zerubbabel to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1-6) and the second led by Ezra to re-establish the covenant community (Ezra 7-10).

Nehemiah focuses on the events surrounding the third return from exile led by Nehemiah in 445 or 444 B.C. This book divides into two sections: the reconstruction of the wall around Jerusalem (Neh. 1-7) and the spiritual restoration of the postexilic Jewish community in Jerusalem (Neh. 8-13).

Esther relates a story of God's preservation of his people in exile.

Joshua

***Introduction*—**In the Hebrew canon, Joshua appears in the division of the Old Testament described as "The Prophets". This division includes the historical books (Joshua through 2 Kings, minus Ruth), as well as the writing prophets (Isaiah through Malachi, minus Daniel). Traditional Jewish scholarship distinguishes between the "Former Prophets", the historical books, and the "Latter Prophets", the writing prophets listed above.

The intent of the Former Prophets is to present an interpretative history of God's covenant dealings with the Jewish nation from the time of Moses' death until the Babylonian Captivity in 586 B.C. Joshua begins this endeavor. It is a bridge book and a book of continuity, something akin to Acts in the New Testament. Acts transitions the reader from the gospel accounts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, to the epistles, which deal with the life and faith of the Church. Likewise, Joshua bridges the Pentateuch with the historical and prophetical books; the wilderness wanderings with the conquest and settlement of the land.

***Author and Date*—**Joshua was the principal author of the book that bears his name, but the book was probably not put into its final form until early in the period of the united monarchy. The primary reasons for asserting that Joshua wrote this book are:

- Specific sections of the book explicitly state that Joshua authored them (8:32; 24:26) or indicate that the writings were produced under his directive (18:8, 9).
- The author must have been an eyewitness of the events for which he gives such detailed accounts. Note how he describes himself as one of those who crossed the Jordan River (5:1, 6).
- The author was a contemporary of Rahab (6:25).
- The book appears to have been written before David's era, as it describes Jerusalem as controlled by the Jebusites (15:63; 2 Sam 5:6-10).
- The book was written before the 12th Century B.C. since the Philistines, Israel's archenemy in the time of the Judges and in the early Kingdom period, are present in the land.

Three small portions were added to the book after Joshua's death:

- Othniel's capture of Kiriath-Sepher (15:13-19; Judges 1:11-15).
- Dan's migration to the north (19:47; Judges 18:1-31).
- The account of Joshua's own death and burial (24:29-33).

Some scholars speculate that these details may have been inserted early in the time of the Judges by Eleazar or his son Phinehas (24:33), while others think that Samuel may have had a hand in the final version of the book.

The higher critical view of the authorship of Joshua is that the book represents the work of a Deuteronomistic school which was responsible for the composition of Joshua through 2 Kings. This understanding harkens back to the documentary hypothesis (the JEPD theory) discussed in the Pentateuch notes. According to this view, the two main

sources for Joshua are the J document (composed around 850 B.C.) and the E document (composed around 750 B.C.). These documents were re-edited in the 7th and 6th Centuries B.C. before they took their final form in the middle of the 6th Century B.C.

Historical and Geographical Background:

Two Major Dating Systems—Some archaeological data seem supports a date for Joshua's invasion of Palestine around 1250 B.C. This would place the Exodus about forty years earlier under the famous Pharaoh Rameses II. Other data suggests an earlier date, placing Joshua's invasion around 1400 B.C. This would mean that the Exodus (often dated to 1446 B.C.) took place in the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep II (1450-1423 B.C.) shortly after the death of the great conquering Pharoah Thutmoses III (1500-1450 B.C.), the so-called Napoleon of Egypt. Thutmoses III was known to have made extensive use of slave labor (Israelites?) in his building projects.

The earlier date fits the biblical numbers better than the later one. In 1 Kings 6:1, the Exodus is dated 480 years prior to the commencement of the construction of the Temple in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, 967-966 B.C. Also, in Judges 11:26, Jephthah indicates that Israel had been in control of certain parts of Canaan for three hundred years. Since Jephthah lived around 1100 B.C., this verse fits the early Exodus chronology quite nicely.

Egypt—According to the chronology dictated by the early date for the Exodus (1446 B.C.), Joseph would have rose to power during the time of the 12th Dynasty in the 19th Century B.C. The new king that knew not Joseph, described in Exodus 1:8, would have been one of the Hyksos Pharaohs who dominated the Delta region from 1700-1550 B.C. After the Hyksos were driven out, Egypt went into a period of unparalleled economic and political expansion under the imperialistic 18th Dynasty. Israel's enslavement continued under this Dynasty and reached its low point under Thutmoses III and Amenhotep II until God's great deliverance under Moses. Egypt's sway over Palestine mysteriously weakened in the reigns of Amenhotep III (1410-1372 B.C.) and Amenhotep IV (1380-1362 B.C.), better known to history as Akhenaton. Under these pharaohs, commonly known as the Amarna period in Egyptian history, Egypt's foreign policy reverted to its pre-Hyksos live and let live tone, rather than the aggressive, militaristic tone of the previous pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty. According to the early chronology, it was in this period that Joshua's conquest of Palestine took place.

Palestine—Racially, the land of Palestine was populated by a mixed group, which included the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and the Jebusites. Politically, Egypt dominated the land from the time of Thutmoses III after that Pharaoh's victory at Megiddo in 1479 B.C. Egyptian power held sway through the 15th Century B.C. but waned late in that century, as Egypt mysteriously grew introverted during the "Amarna Age".

Religiously and morally, Palestine was a scene of a thoroughgoing syncretistic idolatry. The pantheon of gods they worshipped included the following:

- El—the supreme deity, a bloody and cruel tyrant of uncontrolled lust;
- Baal—El's son, the god of rain and vegetation, and the dominant deity of Canaanite fertility rites;
- Anath—sister of Baal, one of the female deities of sex and war, and one of the chief goddesses of cult prostitution which also involved child sacrifice;
- Ashtoreth and Asherah—consorts of Baal and also goddesses of sex and war;
- Molech and Milcom—Ammonite fertility gods;
- Chemosh—Moabite fertility god.

These gods were the chief deities of cult practices of the day that involved sexual excess and violence. These cult practices reflected the vices of the people of the land who made deities in their own image and likeness.

The Late Bronze Age (1500-1200 B.C.) in Palestine was marked by the widespread devastation of numerous urban centers. Numerous campaigns by 18th and 19th Dynasty pharaohs, as well as Joshua's campaigns, caused this.

Guiding Concepts—The purpose of the book is to provide an authoritative account of God's faithfulness in leading his people into the Promised Land (12:43-45). The book's dominant theme is the enjoyment of God's blessings through obedient faith. Important subordinate themes include:

- The importance of the written Word of God (1:8; 8:32-36; 23:6-16; 24:26-27);
- The utter failure of human effort apart from divine directive (7:1ff; 9:1ff);
- The holiness of God and His judgment of sin.

Unique Contributions and/or Problems:

Rahab's Lie (2:1ff)—Though this Canaanite woman is portrayed as both a harlot and a liar, the New Testament judges her actions as works of faith (Heb. 11:31; James 2:25).

Jordan Crossing (4:1ff)—This miraculous water crossing confirmed Joshua's leadership (3:7), was a sign to Israel that God was dispossessing the peoples of the land and giving the land to Israel (3:10), and was a unique demonstration of the centrality of the Covenant to the success of the chosen people.

Joshua Meets His Commander (5:13-15)—The battle plan for Jericho was utterly ridiculous. But that was precisely the point. Obedient faith, not might of arms, was Israel's source of hope and power for victory.

Achan's Sin (7:1ff)—Does the severity of this bother you? Does it confirm Yahweh as a vicious, petty Old Testament tyrant? Most assuredly, this lesson was a drastic one, coming, as it did, at the beginning of Israel's conquest and occupation of Canaan. Israel was to remember that the land belonged to the Lord and that they possessed it as his stewards.

Covenant Renewals (8:30-35; 23:6-16; 24:25-28)—Why the big deal?

***The Long Day of Joshua (10:1ff)*—**This is the most unusual of the supernatural interventions in the book. What is the nature of this day?

***Joshua's Campaign of Annihilation (6:1-12:31)*—**The author makes clear that the extermination of the Canaanites was at the Lord's behest (6:2; 8:1-2; 10:8, 40, 42). The hardening of the hearts of the Canaanites (11:20 was by God's sovereign design. The author also points out the resolve of the native population to destroy the invading Israelites (9:1-2; 11:1-5).

How can this mission of slaughter be reconciled with God's redemptive purposes? The standard reply to this question is twofold. First, the sins of the Canaanites were such as to demand exemplary punishment. God judges the peoples of the land for their debased religion and degenerate culture. Second, God's blessing was on Israel because of His covenant promises and the nation's divine commission. What do you think of that reply?

***Canaan as Type*—**Once the spiritual dimension of the conquest and settlement of Canaan is understood, the symbolic and typological significance of the Promised Land can be grasped. In Christian hymnody and devotional literature, Canaan has long typified the rest of heavenly glory.

Typology should be used with caution. The early Church went to extremes in the typological use of the Old Testament. Yet this excess should not prevent us from developing the typological significance of the text when Scripture itself suggests it. The book of Hebrews draws parallels between Joshua and Jesus and between what Joshua accomplished for the nation and what Jesus accomplished for his people (Hebrews 4:8). The common theme is "rest", a rich theological term.

***Sin as Corporate and Personal*—**Joshua graphically illustrates the corporate dimension to sin (see the incident with Achan in Joshua 7 and the incident involving the unauthorized construction of an altar by the east bank tribes in Joshua 22). Moderns understand sin as purely a personal matter. Certainly, it is a personal matter. However, Scripture presents a corporate dimension and consequences that are very sobering. Few books do that as vividly as Joshua.

***Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility*—**There is a rich interaction between these two concepts throughout the book of Joshua. God divinely brings about the conquest, yet the people are hardly passive in its execution. The Canaanites are divinely set for extermination, yet they richly deserve this grisly fate. Interpreters often find specific passages challenging where God's sovereignty and human responsibility intersect.

Summary Outline:

Preparing	Spies	Jordan	Pillars of Stone	Circumcision; Commander	Central: Jericho & Ai	South: Gibeon; Summary	Northern Campaign	Kings List	East Bank	West Bank	Cities of Refuge; Levites	Altar of Witness	Charge to Leaders	Shechem Renewal
1 Invasion 5					6 Conquest 12				13 Distribution 21			22Conditions 24		
Preparing					Subjection				Possession			Covenant Charge		

Key Idea: Covenant Faithfulness
Key Verses: Josh. 21:43-45; 24:14-15
Key Chapter: Josh. 24

Judges

***Title, Author, and Date*—**Judges derives its title from the type of leadership Israel experienced between the days of the elders who ruled after Joshua and the rise of King Saul. The judges served a twofold function: (1) the deliverance of Israel from foreign oppressors; and (2) the maintenance of justice and the settlement of disputes among the people.

The author of the book is anonymous. Jewish tradition contained in the Talmud attributes the book to Samuel. There are reasons for believing that Samuel or one from his prophetic school wrote the book during the latter part of Saul's reign or in the early days of David's rule. First, Judges 18:31 and 20:27 make it clear that the book was written after the Ark of the Covenant left Shiloh (1 Sam. 4:4-11). Second, the repeated phrase "In those days, there was no king in Israel" or the like (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25) indicates that there was a king in Israel at the time of the writing of the book. Third, the Jebusites are still in Jerusalem (1:21), which places the composition of the book prior to David's conquest of the city around 1000 B.C. (2 Sam. 5:5-9). Finally, the fact that the Canaanites still controlled Gerar (1:29) indicates that the book was written before Solomon's reign (1 Ki. 9:16). It is likely that Samuel compiled this book from oral and written sources near the end of his life and during the period of the United Monarchy.

***Historical and Geographical Background*—**The period of the Judges lasted from approximately 1380 until 1050 B.C. During the early part of this period, Egypt remained strangely introspective under the pharaohs of the Amarna era (Akhenaton, Tutankmun (King Tut), and Ay). Egypt renewed her interest in Palestine during the 19th dynasty (1318-1222 B.C.), the dynasty that followed the Amarna period. Rameses II fought with the Hittites, a people originating in modern-day Turkey, for the control of Palestine, and his successor, Merneptah (1234-1222 B.C.), recorded a successful campaign in Palestine on a victory stele (column), which listed Israel among the defeated peoples.

During the 12th century B.C., the Middle East experienced significant upheaval due to a series of invasions by the "Sea Peoples." The Hittite Empire fell before their onslaught and Egypt only succeeded in repulsing them due to the energy and ability of Rameses III (1190-1164 BC). After their defeat in Egypt, these "Sea Peoples" settled along the southwest coast of Palestine, joining the earlier Minoan settlers (a people originating in Crete) in the area. The Philistines, as they became known, were a dominant power in the area in the 12th and 11th centuries B.C. and an oppressor of Israel. In addition, with the wane of Egyptian power after Rameses III, smaller nations took turns dominating various parts of Palestine and oppressing the Jewish people.

Possible chronology:

Text	*Oppressor*	*Dates*	*Deliverer*	*Others*
3:8-11	Mesopotamia	1385-1377	Othniel (Judah)	
		1377-1337		
3:12-30	Moab	1337-1319	Ehud (Benjamin)	
		1319-1239		
3:31	Philistia	Unknown	Shamgar	Ruth
4:1-5:31	Canaanites	1259-1239	Deborah (Ephraim)	
		1239-1199	Barak (Naphtali)	
6:1-8:35	Midian	1199-1192	Gideon (Manasseh)	
		1192-1152		
9:1-57	Civil War (Abimelech)	1152-1149		
10:1-2	Unknown	1149-1126	Tola (Issachar)	
10:3-5	Unknown	1126-1104	Jair	Eli
10:6-12:7	Ammonites	1104-1086	Jephthah	Eli
		1086-1080		
12:8-10	Unknown	1080-1072	Ibzan (Judah)	Eli
12:11-12	Unknown	1072-1062	Elon (Zebulun)	Eli
12:13-15	Unknown	1062-1055	Abdon (Ephraim)	Samuel
13:1-16:31	Philistia	1115-1075	Samson (Dan)	Samuel
		1075-1055		

Guiding Concepts:

Failure through compromise—The historical purpose of Judges is to carry the story of Israel from the death of Joshua to the time of Samuel and the beginning of the United Monarchy. The primary theme of the book is failure through compromise. The book is a sustained commentary on the nature and characteristics of spiritual apostasy.

Covenant faithfulness of Yahweh—Judges contrasts Israel's idolatry, immorality, and violence with Yahweh's covenant faithfulness and gracious deliverance of his people.

Judges cycle—The cycle of apostasy/oppression/repentance or request for deliverance/deliverance/peace forms the basic structure of the middle of the book of Judges (3:7-16:31). Note the particulars:

Text	**Oppressor**	**Length**	**Deliverer**	**Peace**
3:7-11	Mesopotamia	8 years	Othniel	40 years
3:12-20	Moab	18 years	Elud	80 years
3:31	Philistines	Unknown	Shagmar	Unknown
4:1-5:31	Canaanites	20 years	Deborah	40 years
6:1-8:32	Midian	7 years	Gideon	40 years

8:33-10:5	Abilemech	3 years	Tola/Jair	45 years
10:6-12:15	Ammonites	18 years	Jephthah/Ibzan Elon/Abdon	6, 7, 10, and 8 years
13:1-16:31	Philistines	40 years	Samson	20 years

***Judges as the Old Testament age of the Spirit*—**God's Spirit enabled people to accomplish great feats in wars against the powers that threatened the Lord's Kingdom and rule (see 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14; also see 1 Sam 10:6, 10; 11:6; 16:13).

***Judgment*—**As the book of Joshua demonstrates the blessing of the covenant appropriated through faith and obedience, Judges portrays the curse of apostasy and disobedience. Joshua is a study of victory, while Judges is one of defeat.

***Gideon's fleece (6:37-40)*—**What significance should we draw from this episode? Is faith always confirmed by physical manifestations of favor?

***Jephthah's vow (11:29-40)*—**Jephthah is one of four judges (Othniel, Gideon, and Samson are the others) of whom it was said that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. Yet Jephthah makes a foolish vow (11:31) that culminates in the sacrifice of his own daughter as a burnt offering. Did he really do this? How could a Spirit-endowed man do such a thing?

***Samson's carnality*—**Samson was a uniquely gifted judge and a Nazirite (Num. 6:1-21) from birth, whose life was overseen by God for redemptive purposes. Yet his lustful and prideful carnality was hardly in keeping with his divine endowment. How do we explain Samson's failure? More to the point, why did the Lord use such a man?

Summary Outline:

<table>
<tr><td>Failure to Complete Conquest

1</td><td>Judged for Failure

2</td><td>Othniel, Ehud, & Shamgar

3</td><td>Deborah & Barak: Canaan

4</td><td>Gideon: Midian

6</td><td>Abimelech, Tola & Jair

9</td><td>Jephthah: Ammon

10</td><td>Samson: Philistia

13</td><td>Levite Linked to Idolatry
17</td><td>Levite Linked to Civil War
21</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Cause of Cycles</td><td colspan="6">Description of Cycles</td><td colspan="2">Conditions in the Cycles</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Living with Canaanites</td><td colspan="6">War with the Canaanites</td><td colspan="2">Living like the Canaanites</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Deterioration</td><td colspan="6">Deliverance</td><td colspan="2">Depravity</td></tr>
</table>

Key Idea: Compromise
Key Chapter: Judges 2
Key Verse: Judges 21:25

Ruth

***Introduction*—**The book bears Ruth's name, a Moabite modification of the Hebrew word for friendship. Ruth is a story of love, devotion, and redemption set in the backdrop of the faithless age of the judges. Ruth's faithfulness is rewarded. She finds a husband (Boaz), has a son (Obed), and a blessed heritage (the line of David). How did faith survive in such a course environment as the age of the Judges? Ruth suggests that it survived in the decent families of common folk.

***Author and Date*—**The author and date of writing are uncertain. Jewish tradition ascribes the book to Samuel. However, this is unlikely considering the references to David in 4:17, 22, since Samuel died prior to David's coronation. The more likely scenario is that an unknown editor compiled the work during David's reign. While the date of writing is unknown, the time recorded is the latter part of the era of the judges, as late as 1100 B.C.

Guiding Concepts:

***Redemption*—**The concept of redemption is exemplified through practices such as levirate marriage and land redemption laws. Levirate marriage required the nearest relative of a deceased person to marry his widow and raise a family in his stead (Deut. 25:5-10). The offspring of the second marriage carried forth the name and inheritance of the former husband. The land redemption law (Lev. 25:25-28) obligated the next of kin to buy back land sold due to foreclosure or poverty to keep it in the family. Levirate marriage and land laws aimed to maintain the family lineage and livelihood in agrarian societies.

The person who did this was the kinsman-redeemer (*go'el*). This person portrays the work of Christ in that he must be related by blood to those he redeems (Deut. 25:5, 7-10), be able to pay the price of redemption (Ruth 2:1), and be willing to redeem (Ruth 3:11). The *go'el* provided how the jeopardized covenant blessings were regained and served as a type of God's grace. Yahweh functioned as Israel's *go'el* and the New Testament applies this concept to the role of Christ.

***Loving-kindness* (*hesed*)—**This little book reveals *hesed* on both human and divine levels. Indeed, Ruth's stirring expression of commitment to Naomi is a definition of *hesed* (see 1:16-17). This loving-kindness and committed loyalty is highlighted in an age where "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

***Providence*—**God's providential care is highlighted as well. The circumstances of this little drama are no accident. This humble, loyal Moabite woman ends up in the ancestral line of Israel's greatest king, David.

Summary Outline:

Ruth Renouncing 1	Ruth Reaping 2	Ruth Requesting 3	Ruth Rejoicing 4
Moab	Bethlehem fields	Threshing floor	Bethlehem village
Ruth's Love Demonstrated		Ruth's Love Rewarded	

Key Idea: Redemption
Key Chapter: Ruth 4
Key Verses: Ruth 1:16; 3:11

1 & 2 Samuel

***Introduction*—**The books of Samuel describe period of transition in Israel from the era of the judges to that of the United Monarchy, from Eli to Samuel to Saul to David. These books begin with the tension surrounding the need and desire for a king and the rule of God over the chosen people, continues with the choice and failure of Saul and the subsequent choice of David and the establishment of a kingship covenant with his line, and concludes with the importance of the human king's fidelity to Yahweh witnessed in the career of David.

1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings were originally one book, the four volumes of the Book of Kingdoms. In the Hebrew text, 1 and 2 Samuel appear together. They were divided when translated into Greek at the time of the production of the Septuagint (circa 270 B.C.). Our English Bible follows the Septuagint in dividing the two books.

***Authorship and Date*—**Jewish tradition claims that Samuel wrote the books that bear his name, and the prophets Gad and Nathan supplemented them with information following Samuel's death, recorded in 1 Samuel 25:1. The text contains no reference to its author. Since Old Testament prophets often served as historians of their times, it is possible that an unknown prophet compiled the books of Samuel from the writings of Samuel, Gad, and Nathan.

Because of references (27:6) which presuppose the division of the kingdom into north and south (circa 931 B.C.) and because there is no reference to the fall of Samaria (circa 722 B.C.), the final composition of these books probably occurred during the period of the Divided Kingdom (931-722 B.C.).

***Historical Background*—**1 Samuel covers a little less than a hundred years, while 2 Samuel details the events of the reign of David, which lasted approximately forty years. These events occurred during the eleventh and tenth centuries B.C., ending with Solomon's succession (circa 970 B.C.).

Guiding Concepts:

***Ark of the Covenant*—**The Ark was the physical object associated with Yahweh's presence. At the end of the era of the judges, Eli's sons handle the Ark much the way pagan priests handled their sacred apparatus in attempting to manipulate their deities. Worshippers used rituals to oblige the deity to act as they wanted. The loss of the Ark to the Philistines effectively marked the end of the period of the judges and the Ark's return and David's installation in his new capital marked the subjection of the human king to the sovereign prerogatives of Yahweh.

***Assessment of Kings*—**The books of Samuel apply a generic format in assessing the kings of the United Monarchy. They relate the appointment of the king, describe his potential and successes, before recounting his failures and the consequences of those

failures. Thus, Saul, while well-intentioned and starting out with promise, ended an abysmal failure. He lost the empowering from God that was essential for a successful king (1 Sam. 16). Even before that, he lacked spiritual sensibility (1 Sam. 14; 15). His visit to a medium to gain spiritual insight (1 Sam. 28) suggests that he never quite "got it". He misunderstood the basic tenets of orthodox Jewish theology.

On the other hand, David is a man after God's own heart. However, his failures abound—his lies cost people their lives (1 Sam. 21); his duplicity lead him to execute people (1 Sam. 27); his lust entangles him in murder (2 Sam. 11); his failure to discipline his children contributes to sexual offense and murder (2 Sam. 13-14); his pride brings pestilence that devastates the land (2 Sam. 24).

Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7)—The Davidic Covenant promised to make David's name great, to provide a place for Israel to flourish, and to make that land secure. These are all parts of the Abrahamic Covenant. The Davidic Covenant advances on the Abrahamic Covenant with the Lord's promise that David's descendants would be established on the throne after him. The hope that someday a Davidic king would come who would satisfy the conditions of faithfulness and bring the full restoration promised by the covenant was the foundation of the messianic theology and hope that so animated the prophets. The New Testament writers recognize Jesus, David's greater son, as the one who would bring the renewal promised by the covenant with David.

Transition to Kingship—A key theme is the tension surrounding the need and desire for a king. Judges highlights the need for a stronger central authority, while 1 Samuel cautions on the downside of kingship—trusting their own resources instead of God and the king's usurpation of God's authority.

The people's fault was not in requesting a king; indeed Deuteronomy 17:14-20 anticipates a kingship in Israel. Their fault lay in their expectation that a human king could succeed where Yahweh had failed. The people thought their oppression was because they lacked someone to fight their battles for them. Their sin was the cause. Kingship of itself would not cure this problem; indeed, it exacerbated it.

Summary Outlines:

1 Samuel:

Birth of Samuel	From Eli to Samuel	Defeat; Ark Captured	Ark's Return; Victory over Philistines	Request for King	Choice of Saul	Intrusive Sacrifice	Foolish Vow	Disobedience	Anointing of David	Saul Tries to Kill David	Goliath and Aftermath	Priests of Nob	Hunted in the Wilderness	To Philistines	Saul's Final Defeat
First Transition: Eli to Samuel 1 4		Samuel As Judge 5 7		Second Transition: Samuel to Saul 8 12		Early Reign and Rejection of Saul			Third Transition: Waning of Saul and Rise of David 16 31						
Eli		Samuel		Saul					David						
Decline of Judges				Rise of Monarchy											

Key Ideas: Leadership Transitions; Monarchy and Theocracy
Key Chapters: 1 Sam. 15-16
Key Verses: 1 Sam. 15:22; 16:7

2 Samuel:

Reign in Hebron; Civil War	Anointed; in Jerusalem	Ark in Jerusalem	Davidic Covenant	Military Triumphs	Bathsheba and Uriah	Nathan Confronts	Incest and Murder in the Household	Absalom's Rebellion	Restoration	Final Days: Famine, War, and Plague
1 4	5 10				11 24					
David's Rise to Power	David's Successes				David's Transgressions and Failures					
David Consol-idates His Rule	David Expands His Kingdom; Davidic Covenant				David's Kingdom and Covenantal Promise in Jeopardy					

Key Ideas: Kingship in Theocracy
Key Verses: 2 Sam. 7:12-16
Key Chapters: 2 Sam. 7; 11

1 & 2 Kings

***Introduction*—**The two books of Kings are a selective history from the close of David's reign to the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., documenting the heyday of the United Monarchy to the nadir of captivity. 1 Kings covers 120 years, beginning with Solomon's reign around 970 B.C., and concluding with that of Ahaziah around 850 B.C. The book records Israel's ascendancy under Solomon, the tragic division of the kingdom in 931 B.C., and the early history of the divided kingdoms.

2 Kings continues where 1 Kings leaves off. It traces the downward spiral of the divided kingdoms to their captivities, the northern kingdom by Assyria in 722 B.C. (2 Ki 17) and then the southern kingdom by Babylon in 586 B.C. (2 Ki 25). The northern region consistently exhibited a grim pattern, governed by nineteen malevolent kings. Things are better in the south, where good kings interrupt the sorry, faithless trend. However, the decline accelerates nevertheless and ends in destruction.

The books document both Israel's and Judah's covenant failure. Primarily, 1 & 2 Kings are covenant history written to explain to the Jewish exiles the reasons for the fall of the kingdoms. They expose rebellion and disobedience in the form of both idolatry and social injustice.

1 and 2 Kings are one book in the Hebrew Bible located in the portion designated "Former Prophets". The early Greek manuscripts classify 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings as volumes of "Basileia" (reigns, kingdoms). The division of Kings into two books occurred at the time of the production of the Septuagint (circa 270 B.C.) and was a matter of convenience due to length. Our English Bible follows the Septuagint in dividing the two books.

***Authorship and Date*—**The author is unknown and unstated. There are three sources explicitly mentioned, "the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah" (1 Ki. 14:19; 15:7) and "the book of the acts of Solomon" (1 Ki. 11:41). The book is attributed to Jeremiah in the 6th century B.C. Many Bible students believe that an anonymous writer compiled the books from various records sometime between the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., and Cyrus's decree authorizing the Jewish return to the Holy Land in 539 B.C.

Critical scholars think these books were products of the Deuteronomistic school whose work began in the 8th and 7th centuries B.C. in the southern kingdom. They assert that there were two redactions: a pre-exilic stage of writing in the time of Josiah (circa 600 B.C.) and an exilic compilation (circa 550 B.C.) the Babylonian kings released Jehoiachin.

***Historical Background*—**Enemies abound but three are primary: the Aramean kingdom in the 9th and 8th century B.C., Assyria in the 8th and 7th, and Babylon in the 7th and 6th centuries. The Arameans are enemies of Israel from the time of David and Solomon until

their defeat at the hands of the Assyrians in 732 B.C. They were Israel's primary threat from 850-750 B.C. Assyria looms menacingly for centuries and finally takes Samaria and carries the Northern kingdom away in exile in 722 B.C. Babylon subdues Assyria and then the entire region, taking Jerusalem, leveling the temple, and carrying Judah into captivity in 586 B.C.

The great religious threat to the covenant people is the import of Baalism into the country during the dynasty of Omri, specifically by Jezebel and her husband Ahab, Omri's son and successor. God raises up the prophets, beginning with Elijah and Elisha, to combat this. However, Israel continues to devolve along a syncretistic line, allowing their political and cultural mixing to corrupt their worship. The result was an idolatrous infidelity to the covenant that brought upon them the very calamity they sought to avoid.

As for the events recorded, three factors making dating difficult: (1) the co-regency system, whereby a son officially began his reign during the lifetime of his father or ancestor and both counted the overlap year in the total years of their reigns; (2) the use of both ascension year system (whereby the year of ascension is not counted as the first year of the reign) and the non-ascension system (whereby the remainder of the year of ascension is counted as the first year); and (3) the use of both the sacred year calendar (beginning with Nissan, the first month) and the civil year calendar (beginning with Tishri, the seventh month).

Guiding Concepts:

Covenant faithfulness—These books are not biographies of the kings. The typical format is to introduce the king by name, provide biographical detail and a moral assessment, summarize key events in his reign, and cite additional sources. This format makes for a highly selective report. The lives of the kings are used to teach that faithfulness to God's covenant is rewarded with blessing and unfaithfulness punished with the removal of blessing and, eventually, with the removal of the people from the Promised Land itself.

Elijah and Elisha—Kings places great stress on the ministries of the non-writing prophets, Elijah and Elisha. They are the major combatants in the early struggle between Yahwehism and Baalism. Elijah's name means "Yahweh is my God" and aptly summarizes the essence of his ministry. He leads the fight against syncretism and outright betrayal of the covenant.

Both men work miracles, and both are involved in the politics of the era. However, Elijah lived apart from the people and stressed the law, judgment, and repentance. Elisha lived with the people and emphasized grace and hope. One ministry style emphasizes the need for people connection; the other, the need to "get into the soak" with God.

Centrality of Proper Worship—Proper worship is primary in connecting the two great commandments which leads to the health and prosperity of the people of God. Loving the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength (worshipping the Lord God and no other) is the foundation for loving your neighbor.

Summary Outlines:

1Kings:

David Appoints Solomon	David's Dying Counsel; Solomon's Reign Solidified	Wisdom Given and Demonstrated	Temple and Palace Built; Temple Dedicated	Covenant Promise and Warning	Solomon's Reign Described	Solomon's Apostasy	Division of the Kingdom' Jeroboam's Idolatry	Early Kingdoms in Conflict	Ahab; Elijah & Conflict of Yahwehism vs Baalism	War with Aram	Murder of Naboth	Death of Ahab; Reigns of Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah
1	2	3	5	9	10	11	12	14	17	20	21	22
Consolidation		Ascendancy		Decline					Elijah's ministry: Yahwehism vs Baalism			
Solomon's Glory							Divided Kingdoms					
United Monarchy							Kings of Israel & Judah					
Kingdom at Peace							Kingdoms in Turmoil					

Key Ideas: Covenant Infidelity
Key Verses: 1 Ki. 11:11
Key Chapter: 1 Ki. 12

2 Kings:

Judgment on Ahaziah	Elijah's Translation	Joram and Moabite Rebellion	Elisha's Ministry to Poor and oppressed	Deliverance from Aram	Jehu Extinguishes Ahab's House	Athaliah; Joash and Successors	Jeroboam II & Uzziah	Fall of Samaria	Hezekiah & Deliverance of Jerusalem	Mamsseh & Successor	Josiah's Reforms	Fall of Judah
1	2	3	4	6	9	11	14	17	18	21	23	25
Transition From Elijah			Elisha's Ministry									
Ahaziah to Hoshea									Hezekiah to Zedekiah			
Israel Exiled by Assyria									Judah Exiled by Babylon			
853-722 BC									715-586 BC			

Key Idea: Covenant Infidelity
Key Chapter: 2 Ki. 17
Key Verses: 2 Ki. 17:18-23

1& 2 Chronicles

***Introduction*—**1 and 2 Chronicles were originally one book and were not divided until the original Hebrew was translated into Greek around 270 B.C. The Hebrew title is literally "the words of the days," or "the events" of the monarchies. The English title "Chronicles" dates to Jerome (the church father in the 5th century who translated the Bible into Latin). He suggested that the books be called "a chronicle of the whole divine history." That was shortened to the book's current title.

***Authorship and Date*—**The similarities of Chronicles with Ezra and Nehemiah suggest that the same person wrote all four books. Ezra is credited with these writings. Recent studies have tended to question this, suggesting that the author is an unknown chronicler of Levite ancestry.

Chronicles dates anywhere from the time of the reforms of Haggai and Zechariah (circa 515 B.C.) to a period well within the Hellenistic Greek age (dates ranging from 300 to 160 B.C.). Given the widely acknowledged associations between Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles, a date near 450-400 B.C. seems reasonable.

***Historical Background*—**The genealogies in 1 Chronicles 1-9 trace the heritage of covenant faith from Adam to David, with attention given to the Hebrew patriarchs and the twelve sons of Jacob. It connects the Davidic line to the ongoing saga of God's dealings with his people. The actual history addressed in Chronicles (1 Chron. 10 to 2 Chron. 36) spans the end of Saul's reign to the Babylonian Captivity of Judah (1050-586 B.C.). The author focuses on the kingships of David and Solomon and on the events and people associated with the cultic worship and the construction of the Temple.

The historical accuracy of Chronicles has been scrutinized more frequently than other Old Testament books, except for Genesis. The critics have focused on the chronicler's omission of material relating to the kings of the northern kingdom, on turning a blind eye to the sins of David and the apostasy of Solomon, on overemphasizing the favorable character traits and deeds of the Hebrew kings of the southern kingdom, and on tending to modify history as recorded in Kings and Samuel in order to moralize or theologize. In reply, the writer is selecting excerpts of Israel's past that have direct bearing on the religious life of the current Israelite community with the intention of inspiring hope and inculcating covenant loyalty. The writer is not involved in any deliberate deception or trying to undermine the record left in Samuel and Kings. His purpose in writing is different.

***Purpose*—**Chronicles is retelling the past to inspire hope in the present. The author's exilic audience needed encouragement in rebuilding their heritage. Chronicles provides perspective on the historical events from the time of David to the decrees of Cyrus allowing the Jews to return to their homeland. All is not lost, although the glory has departed, and they are under Gentile domination. God has a future for them and the Jewish people are called to covenant fidelity. The focus of the books will be God's

blessing in the glorious reigns of David and Solomon, the centrality of Temple worship, and the necessity of spiritual reforms and the validation of the priests and Levites as community leaders.

Summary Outlines:

1 Chronicles:

Genealogy	Saul's Death	David's Accession	Ark Returned	David's Conquests	Kingdom's Organization	Preparation for Temple Construction	David's Farewell and Death
1 9	*10*	*11-12*	*13-17*	*18-20*	*21-27*	*28-29:9*	*29:10-30*
David's Line	David's Reign						
Genealogy	History						
Thousands of Years	33 Years						

Key Idea: Covenant Faithfulness
Key Chapter: 1 Chron. 17
Key Verse(s): 1 Chron. 17:11-14; 29:11-13

2 Chronicles:

Kingship Describd	Temple Constructed	Temple Dedicated	Solomon's Other Activities	Rehoboam & Abijah	Asa	Jehoshaphat	Jehoram to Joash	Amaziah to Ahaz	Hezekiah	Manasseh & Amon	Josiah	Jehoahaz to Zedekiah
1	2-4	5-7	8-9	10-13	14-16	17-20	21-24	25-28	29-32	33	34-35	36
Solomon's Reign				History of Kings of Judah								
Splendor				Descent to Disaster								
40 Years				Circa 350 Years								

Key Idea: Covenant Faithfulness
Key Chapter: ---
Key Verse(s): 2 Chron. 7:14; 16:9

Ezra-Nehemiah

***Introduction*—**Ezra and Nehemiah are a single book in the Hebrew Old Testament and in the Greek Septuagint. The Latin Vulgate separated the two and that separation continues in the various English translations. Israel was exiled in three successive stages (605, 597, and 586 B.C.) and returned in three stages (538, 458, and 445 B.C.). Ezra relates the story of the first two returns from Babylon, the first led by Zerubbabel to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1-6) and the second led by Ezra to re-establish the covenant community (Ezra 7-10). Ezra is one of two Old Testament books containing portions written in Aramaic (see 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Dan 2:4-7:28).

Nehemiah focuses on the events surrounding the third return from exile led by Nehemiah in 445 or 444 B.C. This book divides into two sections: the reconstruction of the wall around Jerusalem (Neh. 1-7) and the spiritual restoration of the postexilic Jewish community in Jerusalem (Neh. 8-13). Ezra is the priest, primarily concerned with religious restoration. Nehemiah is the political administrator concerned with Judah's political and societal renewal.

***Author and Date*—**Ezra is not named as author but tradition from the time of the Babylonian Talmud attributes these books to him. The priestly emphasis accords well with his authorship and the first person address from Ezra's point of view (see Ezra 7:28-9:15) supports this view. Most contemporary scholars attribute these books to a postexilic compiler working somewhere in Palestine and dates the resultant work sometime around 400 B.C.

***Historical and Geographical Background*—**Both Ezra and Nehemiah were members in good standing in Persian royal circles. Ezra may well have been counsel to the king for Jewish affairs (Ezra 7:1-6) and Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer (Neh. 1:11; 2:1-2). Both men led returns in the reign of Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C.). Esther was Artaxerxes' stepmother, and this may explain the Persian king's favor to the Jews. During this period of history, Buddha lived in India (560-480 B.C.), Confucius in China (551-479 B.C.), and Socrates in Greece (469-399 B.C.).

Guiding Concepts:

***Covenant restoration and renewal*—**The dominant theme in these two books is covenant restoration and renewal in the postexilic community. This involves restoration of the temple and the cultic rituals (Ezra 1-6), restoration of the covenant community's identity (Ezra 7-10), restoration of the political integrity of Jerusalem in rebuilding the wall (Neh. 1-7), and the restoration of the covenant itself (Neh. 8-13). There is a call to both spiritual renewal and social justice.

While Persia was tolerant of various faiths, it was not partial to religious exclusivism. Rebuilding the temple purified the syncretistic forces that influenced worship and Ezra's

revival purified the people from the influence of intermarriage and the cultural syncretism that resulted from it.

***Providence*—**God's providential rule for the benefit of His people is apparent throughout.

***Ethnic identity*—**In addition to covenant renewal and purity, the text is concerned for the preservation of the ethnic identity of the Jewish people. The drive for this preservation causes religious purity and social exclusivity to dovetail. Hebrew exclusivity led to unhealthy separation and non-Jews being treated as outcasts.

***Teaching*—**Ezra becomes a model for a class of religious professionals whose sole task was the study and exposition of the Scriptures (7:10). Note that zeal for the Mosaic law as the governor of community life in all its aspects gave way to Pharasaic legalism. The Mosaic code became fenced in by the oral traditions of the elders (see Matt. 15:1-9). Teaching became divorced from ritual. The priestly class performed the rituals precisely but did not teach. Instead, they vested in political and economic control games, to preserve their own privileged position.

Summary Outlines:

Ezra:

Cyrus' Decree	Return under Zerubbabel	Family Lists	Rebuilding Temple	Opposition	Delay	Completion of Temple	Celebration of Passover	Artaxerxes' Letter	Return under Ezra	Family Lists	Intermarriage Issue	Confession and
1			3				6	7				10
Return under Zerubbabel								Return under Ezra				
Temple Rebuilt								People Reformed				
20 + Years								1 Year				

Key Idea: Return and Renewal
Key Chapters: Ezra 1, 10
Key Verse: Ezra 1:2-3

Nehemiah:

Nehemiah's Return	Inspection of the Walls	Building Begins	Opposition	Completion of the Walls	Resettlement	Reading the Law	Covenant Renewal	Resettlement	Dedicating the Wall	Renewal Among the People
1	2	3	4	6	7	8				13
Reconstruction of the Wall						Renewal Among the People				
Political Renewal						Spiritual Renewal				

Key Idea: Rebuilding Wall/Community
Key Chapters: Neh. 1, 13
Key Verses: Neh. 6:15-16

Esther

***Introduction*—**While God's name does not appear in this book, His fingerprints are all over the recorded story. Haman's plot to destroy the Jews puts the covenant promise in grave jeopardy and God brings a great deliverance through the courage of Esther and the wise counsel of Mordecai.

***Author and Date*—**The author is unknown. The writer's knowledge of Persian customs, the palace at Susa, and the details of Xerxes' reign suggests that the author lived during the period. Ezra and Nehemiah are possible authors but the writing in Esther differs markedly in style from either the book of Ezra or that of Nehemiah. The events occur between 483 and 473 B.C. The author speaks of Xerxes in the past tense (1:1), so the book might have been written in the reign of Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C.).

Guiding Concepts:

***Providence*—**The purpose of Esther is to show that God can accomplish his purposes as easily through "coincidences" as he can through grand miracles of deliverance. While God is not mentioned in the book, his providential care is seen throughout. Esther "happens" to be chosen queen; Mordecai "happens" to foil an assassination plot; the king "happens" to have insomnia and "happens" to open the pages of a dry administrative record to the account of how Mordecai uncovered the plot; this "happens" to occur just as Haman shows up to seek his revenge on the Jews; Haman's pride "happens" to play into Mordecai's honor, etc. etc. God is firmly in control of the tide of time and is determined to keep his covenant promises to his people.

***Purim*—**The Feast of Purim marks the deliverance recorded in Esther. The feast celebrates the rest of the Jews from the oppression of their enemies, not the destruction of their enemies.

Summary Outline:

Vashti Deposed Esther Elevated Mordsecai Uncovers Plot	Haman's Plot to Destroy the Jews Mordecai Persuades Esther to Help	Esther's First Banquet Mordecai Honored Esther's Second Banquet: Haman Exposed & Hung	Xerxes' Edict in Favor of the Jews Jews Triumph Over Their Enemies Feat of Purim Mordecai's Greatness
1 2	3 4	5 6 7	8 9 10
Esther as Queen	Haman's Plot	Esther's Foil	Jewish Triumph
Threat to the Jews		Deliverance of the Jews	

Key Idea: Providential Deliverance
Key Chapter: Esther 7
Key Verse: Esther 4:14

Poetical Books (Wisdom)

Wisdom (*hokma*) originally denoted technical skill, aptitude, or ability and superior mental agility. It came to signify the combination of powers of observation, intellectual capacity, and the application of knowledge and experience to daily life. Old Testament wisdom aimed at "skill in living." It sought to teach moral principles for behavior and to give youth a heads-up for getting ahead in the world. Its goal is a worldview integration that results in order (getting into God's stride) in one's personal relationships, in one's work and leisure, in matters of governance and authority, in issues relating to the cosmos and to nature, and on and on.

There are many similarities between Hebrew and Near Eastern wisdom literature. They are not coincidental. The search for meaning in life, the mystery of life and death, the reality of suffering and pain, and the relationship of God to the problem of evil are questions common to the human condition. However, the feature that distinguishes Hebrew wisdom is the concept of the fear of God. This idea encompassed an awe and reverence for God's person, faith and trust in His good plan, the avoidance of evil and all that displeases God, and the adherence to the path of disciplined instruction.

While the fear of the Lord is the governing attitude of Hebrew wisdom, its methodology is more akin to the natural theology of the medieval theologian than the exegetical theology of our modern evangelical thought. It does not spend time unpacking the mysteries of the covenant or the precepts of the law, as it does in carefully observing the way of things in the cosmos, in nature, and in the dynamics of human interaction. The rationale for this may lie in wisdom's pursuit of order and skill in living and the reality that creation posits the initial establishment of that order. Whatever the reason for the manner of inquiry, its methodology accords well with our secular age and lends it an interested ear among those who do not consider themselves "religious."

Old Testament wisdom is of two types: (1) didactic or practical wisdom, as displayed in Proverbs and (2) speculative or philosophical wisdom, illustrated by Ecclesiastes and Job. Five books are typical denoted as "wisdom", Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon or Song of Songs.

Job

***Introduction*—**Job offers a biblical perspective on the problem of evil and suffering, providing insight into the moral structure of the universe. The book begins with a heavenly exchange between God and Satan, moves through three cycles of earthly debates and speeches between Job and his friends, and concludes with a divine perspective on the situation. The book places the justice of God on trial, First, Satan challenges God's policy of blessing the righteous and punishing the wicked (the retribution principle), alleging that people only act righteous to get the blessing. Second, Job questions God's policy of allowing the righteous to suffer and of not always punishing the unrighteous. Satan challenges the retribution principle itself, alleging that it creates a reward system that hinders true righteousness, while Job complains of the inconsistent application of the principle.

The message of Job is that God is not under obligation to backstop the retribution principle. The world is more complex than that. God's justice is to be inferred by carefully observing his wisdom.

***Author and Date*—**The text does not identify the author. The author was obviously well-educated and familiar with wisdom motifs, nature, and foreign cultures.

Suggestions for the date of writing range from patriarchal times to the postexilic period. Those arguing for a date in the second millennia B.C., point to the patriarchal setting of the book. There is a lack of reference to Israelite history and to the Law. Job's own long life accords well to the longevity of people in the early patriarchal times. Job's practice of performing priestly duties for his family and the description of his wealth in terms of livestock suggest an early date. However, other scholars point to stylistic concerns they say indicate a later date and place the time of writing anywhere between the era of Solomon to the postexilic period.

Guiding Concepts:

***Sovereignty*—**Why do the righteous suffer if God is really both loving and omnipotent? Suffering is the entrée to an examination of the nature of God's sovereignty. This examination proceeds along three lines: (1) God is just; (2) Job is righteous; and (3) the retribution principle is always true (if you are righteous, you are blessed; if you are unrighteous, you are not).

Job's friends make a direct correlation between righteous conduct and blessing and prosperity. They also stoutly maintain God's justice. Therefore, if you are going through tough times, it is simple logic. It is time to confess.

Job agrees with the typical application of the retribution principle, but his case leaves him nonplused. He does not know what he did wrong. Thus begins his probing.

He maintains his righteousness but does not give up on God. He will not curse God and die, as his wife suggests (2:9). Had Job followed his wife's suggestions, the accuser's slander (righteous people are just in it for the blessing; remove the blessing and they will curse God to his face), would have been proved. But he will not admit to unrighteousness that he does not understand placating an arbitrary deity (which is the net effect of his friends' advice).

Elihu expands our understanding of the retribution principle. It is not limited to reward for righteousness and punishment for wrongdoing. He suggests that God uses suffering to purify the righteous. Thus, things are more subtle than Job's friends are suggesting.

Out of the whirlwind, God does not provide answers, but instead questions Job. God is in control of all things, including suffering. God's presence and obvious wisdom in creation provides assurance to Job of his just rule and backstops (without explaining) the experience of pain and suffering in a broken world.

Reality and power of evil—Satan is real, his purposes are destructive, his motives are malicious, his ways are cunning and deceptive.

Suffering is real and meant for good in our lives—However, that good purpose is not always obvious or explainable. Suffering righteously is meant to move us to trust God more deeply.

Retribution principle—This is a basic theme of wisdom literature. The principle held that the righteous are blessed and prosper and the wicked are not be blessed and suffer. The inference is that those prospering must be righteous and those suffering must be wicked. This assumes that God's justice is reflected in the world in which he is the causative agent and over which he rules. This principle came to have arm-busting, axiomatic overtones since the Israelites had no revelation concerning reward or judgment in the afterlife and, consequently, assumed God's justice was carried out here and now.

Note Jesus' perspective in Luke 13:1-5 and John 9:1-5. In Luke 13, the Lord denies that the incident cited is a simple cause-effect issue and yet affirms that sinners should fear God's judgment. God's commitment to justice is declared, but the execution of justice is not always evident and immediate.

John 9 emphasizes that regardless of identifying cause or assigning guilt, God's purpose must be considered. God allows things to happen and works his purpose out through muddled circumstances or much worse (Rom. 8:28). Note that Job's dilemma remains unresolved. He never learns the "cause" of his tragedy.

Application -- When things go wrong:

- Acknowledge that we live in a broken world;
- Look for God's purpose rather than labor over the cause of sorrow;
- Expect God to bring good out of misfortune (Gen. 50:20; Rom. 8:28);
- Seek to serve God and grow through suffering;

- Adopt a grace perspective and appreciate your blessings;
- Remember Christ's sufferings and our call to endure hardship as those who participate in his sufferings (1 Pt. 4:12-13);
- Weigh your hardship against the general misery of humanity and as a backdrop of our future glory (1 Pt. 3:7);
- Trust God's wisdom and purpose.

Summary Outline:

Heavenly Challenge	Job's Lament	First Debate Cycle	Second Debate Cycle	Third Dialogue Cycle	Hymn to Wisdom	Job's Final Argument	Elihu's Argument	Yahweh Speaks:Job Quizzed and Rendered Speechless	Resolution
1 2	3	4	15	22	28	29	32 37	38 41	42
Dilemma	Debate cycles							Deity Shows Up	Deliverance
Wager	Wrangling							Whirlwind	Wrap-Up

Key Idea: Righteous Suffering
Key Chapter: Job 1, 42
Key Verses: Job 28:20-28

Psalms

Introduction— The Book of Psalms is often referred to as the hymnal of Israel and the prayer manual for Christians. The book is composed of poetic compositions written over a thousand-year period. These compositions were compiled into smaller collections over time and subsequently organized in phases to form a larger work, with an underlying theological intent. It came to be known as the Sepher Tehillim (Book of Praises). The Septuagint used ``Psalmoi'' as the title, meaning poems sung to the accompaniment of stringed instruments.

The book covers the gamut of experience and emotion. The psalmist is often confused by his circumstances, seeking God for help, encouragement, deliverance, and vindication. His hope is in God. The psalmist praises God when things go well and trusts him when life seems to be falling apart.

Author and Date—There are many authors of psalms. The following is a partial list:

- *David*—Seventy-three psalms are directly ascribed to him. He may have written Pss. 1, 2, 96, and 105.
- *Asaph* – Author of Pss. 50, 73-83. A descendant of Gershom, son of Levi (1 Chron. 6:39), he was the leader of the choral worship groups organized by David (1 Chron. 16:4-5).
- *Korah* – Grandson of Kohath, son of Levi, and ancestor to a group of sacred musicians, to whom Pss. 42, 44-49, 84, 85, and 87 are ascribed.
- *Hezekiah* – King of Judah (715-686 B.C.). Author of Pss. 120, 121, 123, 125, 126, 128-130, 132.
- *Solomon* – King of Israel (971-931 B.C.). Author of Pss. 72 and 127.
- *Moses* – The great patriarch and lawgiver of Israel. Author of Ps. 90.
- *Ethan* – A wise man in the time of Solomon (1 Ki. 4:31). Author of Ps. 89.
- *Heman* -- A wise man in the time of Solomon (1 Ki. 4:31; 2 Chron. 2:6). Author of Ps. 88.
- *Anonymous* – Approximately 36 of the psalms are anonymous.

Dates of composition vary. Psalm 90, written by Moses, is the earliest. The latest was written in Ezra's time, almost a thousand years later. The book was compiled and organized in either Ezra's era or in the times of Maccabees (after 200 B.C.)

Structure—The Psalms is really five books in one (Pss. 1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, and 107-150), each book ending with a doxology (see Pss, 41:13; 72:18-19; 89:52; 106:48; 150:6). The outstanding characteristic of this collection of Hebrew poetry is parallelism. Four types are common:

- Synonymous parallelism—the second line of the couplet repeats the first one (3:1; 24:1);
- Antithetical parallelism—the thought of the second line contrasts with that of the first (1:6; 90:6);

- Synthetic parallelism—the second line is a further development of the first (1:1; 19:7);
- Embelmatic parallelism—the second line illustrates the first (42:1).

The psalms have been characterized in different ways:

- Devotional psalms—(Pss. 4, 9, 12-14, 16-19, 22-24, 27, 30, 31, 34, 35, 37, 40, 42, 43, 46, 50, 55, 56, 61-63, 66, 68, 69, 71, 73, 75-77, 80, 81, 84, 85, 88, 90, 91, 94, 95, 100, 103, 106, 107, 111, 115, 116, 118-120, 122, 123, 126, 133, 136, 138, 139, 141, 142, 144, 147-150);
- Enthronement psalms—psalms describing God's sovereignty (Pss. 47, 93, 96-99);
- Imprecatory psalms—psalms invoking God's judgment on one's enemies (Pss. 7, 35, 40, 55, 58, 59, 69, 79, 109, 137, 139, 144);
- Lament psalms—prayers for deliverance (Pss. 3-7, 12, 13, 22, 25-28, 35, 38-40, 42-44, 51, 54-57, 59-61, 63, 64, 69-71, 74, 79, 80, 83, 85, 86, 88, 90, 102, 109, 120, 123, 130, 140-143);
- Messianic psalms—those anticipating the life and ministry of Jesus (Pss. 2, 22, 110);
- Pilgrimage psalms—psalms sung traveling to Jewish festivals (Pss. 43, 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 120-134);
- Royal psalms—portraits of earthly reigns, as well as the heavenly reign, of the King of Israel (Pss. 2, 18, 20, 21, 25, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, 144);
- Thanksgiving psalms—psalms praising God for his graciousness (Pss. 8, 18, 19, 29, 30, 32-34, 36, 40, 41, 66, 103-106, 111, 113, 116, 117, 124, 129, 135, 136, 138, 139, 146-148, 150);
- Wisdom psalms—psalms instructing in wisdom (Pss. 1, 37, 119).

Guiding Concepts:

Devotion—Psalms focus on the believer's personal relationship with God.

Messiah—The Psalms develop a picture of a divine figure who rules, bringing forth justice and judgment (Pss. 2, 110).

Nature and creation—God is both creator and sustainer (Ps. 104). Nature reveals His glory (Ps. 19). Human beings are stewards of this creative work (Ps. 8) and the focus of nature is on being instruments of His power and blessing.

Sovereignty and providence of God—God is everywhere understood to be in control of all things.

Worship—The psalms show us how God is to be worshipped.

Summary Outline:

Psalms	Book 1 (1-41)	Book 2 (42-72)	Book 3 (73-89)	Book 4 (90-106)	Book 5 (107-150)
Doxology	41:13	72:18-19	89:52	106:48	150:6
Authors	Mainly David	Mainly David and Korah	Mainly Asaph	Mainly Anonymous	Mainly David
Stage of Collection	Original group by David	Added during reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah	Added during reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah	Miscellaneous collections compiled in Ezra's time	Miscellaneous collections compiled in Ezra's time

Key Idea: Worship and praise of God

Cantata About Davidic Covenant			
Intro:	Ps 1: Vindication of the righteous Ps 2: God's choice and defense of Israel's king		
Book	*Seam*	*Theme*	*Comment*
Book 1	41	David's Conflict with Saul	Many lament psalms
Book 2	72	David's kingship	Key psalms = 45, 48, 51, 54-64
Book 3	89	Assyrian crisis	Asaph and sons of Korah psalms Key psalm = 78
Book 4	106	Temple destroyed; exile	Praise collection Key = 90, 103-105, 107, 110, 119 Halleluyah psalms: 111-117 Ascent psalms: 120-134 Davidic reprise: 138-145
Book 5	145	Praise upon returns	
Conclusion 146-150		Climactic praise to God	

Proverbs

***Introduction*—**Proverbs is a collection of pithy sayings conveying practical truth that seeks to instruct people in "right behavior." These proverbs are generalizations, not guarantees or promises. They are statements of reality that are usually true. Most proverbs consist of two lines, employing a type of parallelism of thought and sound.

The purpose of the book is to impart moral discernment (1:3-5) and develop mental perception (1:2, 6). Its goal is wisdom, demonstrated in skillful living. This is not shrewdness and get-ahead smarts so much as it is practical righteousness and moral acumen in everyday life. The reverential respect and fear of Yahweh (1:7) is the beginning of wisdom.

***Author and Date*—**Solomon's name appears at the beginning of three sections of the book (1-9; 10-22; 25-29). He did not write everything in these sections, but he edited or directed the editing of that which he did not write. These portions were written prior to Solomon's death in 931 B.C.

It is difficult to date the other portions of the book. Solomon's second set of proverbs in 25-29 may have been edited in the time of Hezekiah (715-686 B.C.). The book may not have been completed until the 5th century, in the time of Ezra.

***Structure*—**The book is a collection of collections of proverbs: a father's call to wisdom (1-9), two sets of proverbs by Solomon (10-22:16; 25-29), two sets of additional sayings of the wise (22-24), the words of Agur (30), those of Lemuel (31:1-9), and an ode to a virtuous wife (31:10-31). There are three major divisions in the book: (1) discourse material (1-9); collections of proverbs (10-29); and the appendices of 30-31.

Guiding Concepts:

***God as Wisdom*—**Wisdom is personified in the book not merely as a teaching tool but because God relates his wisdom personally to people. This fatherly advice guides God's children towards proper living.

***Fear of the Lord*—**Human wisdom is born in the fear of Yahweh and expresses itself in skillful living. The fear of the Lord encompasses respect and awe of Yahweh and knowledge of him based on revelation and not on our own speculation. Wisdom (*hokma*) involves an element of inscrutability. God cannot be confined to predictable box. Wisdom is not merely grasping true information; it is the insightful application of this to daily life.

Summary Outline:

Purpose 1:1-7	Proverbs to Youth 1:8 9	Proverbs of Solomon (I) 10	Sayings of the Wise 22	Proverbs of Solomon (II) 25	Words of Agur and Lemuel; Ode to a Virtuous Wife 30
Theme	Father's Exhortation	Solomon: First Collection	Additional Sayings	Solomon: Second Collection	Concluding Sayings
Commend-ation	Counsel				Comparison

Key Idea: Wisdom
Key Chapter: Prov. 1
Key Verse(s): Prov. 1:7; 3:5-6

Ecclesiastes

***Introduction*—**Ecclesiastes comes the Greek term translating the Hebrew *Qoheleth*, often rendered "preacher" or "teacher" in English. The book records an intense search for meaning and satisfaction in life, especially considering the injustice and apparent absurdities that surround us. It is a species of quest literature, a philosophical discussion of the emptiness of life without God. The author investigates wisdom, wealth, pleasure, power, and legacy, concluding that all are unworthy, unachievable, and unsatisfying. The upshot is that self-fulfillment cannot bring meaning to life. The book offers perspective on our expectations of life and suggests that meaning and purpose flow from a God-centered life.

***Author and Date*—**The book is traditionally credited to Solomon in his old age (mid to late 10th century). Its pessimistic tone accords well with his reputed spiritual state at that time (1 Ki. 11). If Solomon did not compose the book, alternate date suggestions have ranged from the 8th or 7th centuries to the time of Ezra (circa 450 B.C.).

Guiding Concepts:

***Meaninglessness of life without God*—**The main theme of Ecclesiastes is the futility of life under the sun. "Life under the sun" is understanding life without faith or any reference to God. A godless perspective is a futile one:

- Godless learning leads to cynicism (1:7-8).
- Godless greatness leads to sorrow (1:16-18);
- Godless pleasure leads to disenchantment (2:1-2);
- Godless labor leads to bitterness (2:17);
- Godless philosophy leads to emptiness (3:1-9);
- Godless eternity leads to a forlorn sense of being lost (3:11);
- Godless living often leads to depression (4:2-3);
- Godless religion engenders dread (5:7);
- Godless wealth brings envy and trouble (5:12);
- Godless existence brings frustration (6:12);
- Godless wisdom brings despair (11:1-8).

***Inscrutableness of life*—**The book is something of a contrast to Proverbs, which assumes that our own choices frame our lives, that wise choices produce good results, and that foolish ones produce bad alternatives. Ecclesiastes recognizes that that is not always the case. There are inexplicable mysteries to life that defy easy answers. At the end of the day, it is still best to fear God, to keep his commandments, and to enjoy the life God has given.

***Enjoyment of life*—**The message of Ecclesiastes is "enjoy life and fear God", not simply "enjoy life". Normal living includes both prosperity and adversity and both shape us in significant ways. We live in a broken world with death as the only certainty. Life is not

under our control. The Teacher suggests that we lower our expectations and thus increase our contentment and enjoyment of the good gifts God has given to us.

***Experience vs. revelation*—**The Teacher relies on experience, not revelation, partly to reach a wider audience. However, this method displays the limits of human wisdom. Our experience, apart from God, shows us the futility and emptiness of all things under the sun.

***Freedom*—**The honesty of Ecclesiastes demonstrates God's desire for candor. He is not into faking a believing life. God is gracious and that frees us up to "fail and flail" before him.

***Self-fulfillment*—**We have moralized it (a right not just to the pursuit of happiness, but happiness itself), Americanized it (patriotism through commercialism on the ground that that strengthens the economy and thus the country), and Christianized it (God wants you to prosper and enlarge your borders). The Teacher says that self-fulfillment is vaporous and ultimately futile.

Summary Outline:

1:1-11 All Is Vanity	1:12-18 Wisdom 2:1-11 Pleasure & Achievement 2:12-26 Earthly Toil & Success 3:1-22 Time & Eternity	4:1 Hardship & Companions 5:1-7 Awe of God 5:8-6:12 Wealth & Poverty 7:1-29 Death, Temperance, & Depravity 8:1-17 Authority, Injustice, & Inscrutablenss of Life 9:1-12 Death, the Common Destiny	11:1-8 Order Life Wisely 11:9-12:8 Counsel to Youth 12:9-14 Epilogue: Final Word
Thesis Stated	Thesis Developed	Thesis Illustrated	Thesis Concluded
Meaninglessness of Life Under the Sun	Failure of All Attempts to Give Meaning to Life Under the Sun	Thesis Illustrated: Proverbs Concerning Life Under the Sun	Order Life with A View To Eternity

Key Idea: Meaninglessness of Life Under the Sun
Key Chapter: Eccl. 12
Key Verses: Eccl. 12:9-14

Song of Songs

***Introduction*—**Song of Songs (SOS) is the Bible's version of a love ballad. SOS is erotic love poetry about sexual desire and its relationship to married love. It speaks of love quite candidly and emphasizes the necessity that desire be under control—the passion, the longing, and the anticipation. SOS portrays love's power. A wise person is aware of that power and recognizes its faces and dangers. Love and sex wield incredible power, and wisdom demands that they be harnessed and disciplined.

***Author and Date*—**The book is traditionally attributed to Solomon and written in the mid-10th century, B.C. This is due to the book's title verse (1:1). However, the title may mean that Solomon was the author, or it may mean that the book was dedicated to him or that he was a primary character in the action. Those rejecting Solomonic authorship regard it as an anonymous composition and date the book to the post-exilic period.

Interpretation: Various interpretations of SOS have emerged through the centuries:

- As a dramatic play.
- Typological—The book's historicity is affirmed, but it is read as pointing to God's covenant love for Israel (Jewish) or to Christ's relationship to the church (Christian).
- Cultic—This is a Hebrew adaptation of a Mesopotamian fertility cult liturgy.
- Wedding literature—It is a collection of nuptial poetry.
- Didactic—The book presents the purity and wonder of sexual love, promotes ideals of simplicity, faithfulness, chastity, and instructs virtues of human affection and the holiness of marriage.
- Allegorical—This is the typological approach without the belief in the book's historicity. Thus 1:13 "My lover is to me a sachet of myrrh resting between my breasts" becomes the presence of Yahweh between the cherubim above the Ark of the Covenant (Jewish) or Christ between the Old Testament and the New Testament (Christian).
- Literal—Love poetry that is what it appears to be, the sensual, even erotic, expression of emotion and passion as lovers express their desire for one another. For these interpreters, the issue is whether there are two or three characters and a chorus. Some interpreters see two characters—Solomon and the Shulamite and others see three—shepherd lover, Solomon (royal wooer), and the Shulamite. In the latter scenario, Solomon is the sensualist, and the shepherd lover is the trueheart.

Guiding Concepts:

***Godly sexuality*—**SOS depicts the joys and heartaches of committed sexual love. The book affirms that sex is good. It is given for mutual joy and pleasure and has more than just a reproductive purpose. Pure physical love contrasts with a crude, sensual, multi-partner approach.

Men are more subject to desire premature sexual expression. Women are more vulnerable, prone to fears of abandonment and of the loss of her object of affection. Human sexuality is a blend of emotion/relation/physical expression. The quality of the relationship and the focus on the other partner is central to healthy sex.

***Power of sex*—**SOS intends to make us aware of the power of sex. It has economic power (sex sells) and interpersonal power (stimulating lust exerts control over others). We are reminded of the abuses of sexual power in our society's current events (predatory crimes, Internet porn, and an endless list of exploited victims). Our society tries to play with fire without getting burned. It wants the freedom to indulge without the consequences. If we draw short of crime, abuse, unwanted pregnancy, and disease, it is all OK.

Solomon is an example of one who did fall prey to the power of love and sex. That power has not diminished today:

- Dating relationships plagued by sexual confusion and expectations;
- Parents and teens devastated by teen pregnancy;
- Moods and perspectives corrupted by porn;
- Children and families devastated by infidelity;
- Churches and other organizations traumatized by leadership failures.

Summary Outline:

Falling in Love		United in Love		Struggle in Love		Growing in Love	
1:1	3:5	3:6	5:1	5:2	7:10	7:11	8:14
Courtship		Wedding		Problems		Progress	
Beginning of Love				Deepening of Love			

OR

Shulamite in Solomon's Harem		Solomon Woos Shulamite		Shulamote Rejects Solomon		Shulamite & Shepherd Lover United	
1:1	3:5	3:6	5:1	5:2	8:4	8:5	8;14

Key Idea: Love and Sex
Key Chapter:
Key Verses: SOS 8:6-7

Prophetical Books

***Introduction*—**The prophets were spokespersons for God. They spoke for Yahweh to a particular group in a particular situation. Their parallel in modern politics would be an executive's press secretary or a nation's ambassador.

The most frequent word translated ``prophet'' is *nabi*. The term underlines that God called the prophets. Seer is also a term used for the prophetic office, and while that term emphasized the prophet's inclination to receive revelatory visions, the prophets were not primarily predictors of the future. Their primary function was to call Israel and/or Judah to obedience and dependence upon God. God's covenant with his people and the historical circumstances confronting them shaped the prophetic messages.

The ministry of the biblical prophets tended to cluster around times of crisis. Four such times were primary:

- the religious crisis posed by the official sponsorship of Ball worship in the time of Elijah;
- the Assyrian and Babylonian threats which resulted in the respective captivities of Samaria in the north and Judah in the south; and
- the identity crisis of the post-exilic community.

Moses is the first and the greatest of the Hebrew prophets (Num. 12:6-8). His experience is something of a paradigm for later prophets. In addition to the sixteen writing prophets, Moses, Deborah, Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, Elisha, and Micaiah are also considered prophets. See the chart below for a summary:

Period	Function	Audience	Message	Examples
Pre-monarchy	Mouthpiece; leader	People	Spiritual overseer; guidance; justice	Moses; Deborah; Samuel
Pre-classical	Mouthpiece; adviser	Kings; ruling elite	Military advice; rebuke and blessing	Nathan; Elijah; Elisha; Micaiah
Classical	Mouthpiece; social/spiritual counselor	People	Rebuke; warning of judgment; promise of restoration; call for repentance and justice	Writing prophets

The messages of the prophets frequently read like criminal proceedings, including parts corresponding to the indictment and arraignment, the pronouncement of sentence, the description of coming judgment, and a promise of restoration. Common grounds for the formal accusation include covenant unfaithfulness to Yahweh, oppression of the downtrodden, devaluing, depreciating, degrading, demeaning deity, misplaced reliance, and confused priorities (the people valued their comfort over their commitment to Yahweh). See the chart below for a summary:

Type of Pronouncement	Description	Pre-Exilic Emphasis	Post-Exilic Emphasis
Indictment	Offense stated	Usually idolatry, barren ritualism, social injustice	Usually not giving proper honor to God
Judgment	Punishment coming	Usually political and near term	Interprets recent crisis as one of judgment
Instruction	Expected response	Generally, return to God and repent	More then just repent and return; addresses particular situation
Aftermath/hope	Future hope/deliverance	Understood as coming after period of judgment	Understood as long-term

The prophets frequently framed their messages in the style of Hebrew poetry. A reason for this may be the power of poetry to speak to the will and the emotions. In addition, poetic symbolism is often better suited to convey a message focused on God's character and person and can speak powerfully into the future without having to describe the details literally.

Writing Prophets:

There are sixteen writing prophets in the Old Testament. See below for a summary of their identity, time, message, and context:

Isaiah	740-680	Pre-exilic: Judah	Assyria	Salvation is from the Lord; God's trustworthiness demonstrated
Jeremiah	627-580	Pre-exilic: Judah	Assyria; Babylon	Warning of impending doom; Call to faithful dependence
Ezekiel	593-570	Exilic: Jews in Babylon	Babylon	Glory of the Lord; Future destruction of Jerusalem
Daniel	605-535	Exilic: Jews in Babylon	Babylon; Persia	God as Sovereign over all Visions of the future
Hosea	755-715	Pre-exilic: Israel	Assyria	God's love pictured in prophet's marriage
Joel	835-800 580s on	Pre-exilic: Judah Post-exilic: Jews in Palestine	Assyria; Persia	Day of the Lord (DOL)
Amos	760-750	Pre-exilic: Israel	Assyria	Judgment for idolatry and injustice
Obadiah	840s 580s on	Pre-exilic: Edom Post-exilic: Edom	---	Judgment on Edom
Jonah	760s	Pre-exilic: Assyria	Assyria	Gentile salvation; God's compassion
Micah	735-700	Pre-exilic: Judah	Assyria	Israel's corruption & God's justice
Nahum	650s on	Pre-exilic: Assyria	Assyria	Nineveh's destruction

Habakkuk	610-605	Pre-exilic: Judah	Babylon	Just shall live by faith; God's justice in dealing with the nations
Zephaniah	630-620	Pre-exilic: Judah	Assyria; Babylon	Day of the Lord (DOL)
Haggai	520	Post-exilic: Jews in Jerusalem	Persia	Rebuilding the temple
Zechariah	520	Post-exilic: Jews in Jerusalem	Persia	Future blessing on Israel
Malachi	480 or later	Post-exilic: Jews in Jerusalem	Persia	Backsliders to return to God

Nations in Prophecy:

The prophets emphatically declared the sovereignty of God over Israel and all the nations. Below is a summary of their prophecies concerning the nations surrounding Israel and Judah:

Ammon	Isaiah 49:1-6		Ezekiel 25:1-7	Amos 1:13-15	
Babylon	Isaiah 13-14	Jeremiah 50-51			Habakkuk 2
Damascus	Isaiah 17:1-3	Jeremiah 49:23-27		Amos 1:3-5	
Edom	Isaiah 21:11-12	Jeremiah 49:7-22	Ezekiel 25:12-14	Amos 1:11-12	
Egypt	Isaiah 19	Jeremiah 46:1-26	Ezekiel 29-32		
Moab	Isaiah 15-16	Jeremiah 48	Ezekiel 25:18-21	Amos 2:1-3	
Nineveh					
Philistia	Isaiah 14:29-32	Jeremiah 47	Ezekiel 25:15-17	Amos 1:6-8	
Tyre	Isaiah 23		Ezekiel 26-28	Amos 1:9-10	

Post-exilic Issues and Possible Responses:

The writing prophets deal with issues that concerned the Jews in exile and the post-exilic community. The primary issues and the people's possible responses were as follows:

Issues:	Monotheism
	Leadership of priests and Levites in political vacuum
	Intermarriage
	Retribution principle made painfully plain
Possible responses:	Yahweh forsook them
	Yahweh bested by other gods
	Sin & infidelity brought judgment

Prophets by Crises:

The writing prophets can be segmented by the crisis which they addressed. See below.

	Israel	***Judah***	***Others***
Assyrian crisis	Amos Hosea Joel (?) Obadiah (?)	Isaiah Micah	Jonah
Babylonian crisis		Habakkuk Zephaniah Nahum Jeremiah	
Babylonian Exile		Daniel Ezekiel	
Persian era		Joel (?) Obadiah (?) Zechariah Haggai Malachi	

Isaiah

***Introduction*—**Isaiah wrote the book that bears his name as he ministered during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah during the latter half of the eighth century B.C. (circa 740-700 or 680). He was from a distinguished Jewish family, maintaining close contact with the royal court and the Temple priesthood. Tradition has it that his father was a brother of King Amariah of Judah. His wife was a prophetess, with whom he fathered two sons (7:3; 8:3). He spent most of his ministry in Jerusalem. According to tradition, it is believed that he was sawed in half during the reign of Manasseh (see Heb. 11:37).

Isaiah ministered at the end of Israel's second great period of prosperity during the end of Jeroboam II's reign (782-753 B.C.). Two major events serve as the focus of Isaiah 1-39—the invasion of Israel by Tiglath-Pileser (Isa. 7-12) and the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib (Isa. 36-37). His ministry witnessed the rise of Assyria on the world stage, the fall of Samaria, and the deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrian menace in the days of Hezekiah. After Samaria's fall, Isaiah warns Judah of judgment, not at the hands of the then dominant Assyrians, but at the hands of Babylonians.

Isaiah is called the "prince of prophets" because of the majestic sweep of his book and the powerful way he depicts God's justice and redemption, culminating in great prophecies of Messiah and the messianic age. The theme of the book is found in the meaning of Isaiah's name—salvation is of the Lord. His purpose is to demonstrate the trustworthiness of Yahweh in the vicissitudes of national and personal trials.

***Author and Date*—**Modern scholars have challenged the unity of Isaiah. These scholars attribute Isaiah 1-39 to the prophet but ascribe Isaiah 40-55 (so-called Deutero-Isaiah) to an unknown prophet in the time of the exile to Babylon, and 56-66 (so-called Trito-Isaiah) to another unknown prophet in Palestine in the time of the Jewish returns from exile. Isaiah could not Various arguments have been presented on this matter, all based on the fundamental assumption that predictive prophecy is impossible. Isiah could not have predicted the Babylonian exile (therefore the need for a Deutero-Isaiah) nor the returns after the exile (ergo, Trito-Isaiah). Isaiah's identification of Cyrus the Persian (44:28; 45:1) by name riles the critics to no end.

In addition, there is a dramatic shift in the book beginning with Isaiah 40. The style is more poetic, the message is more conciliatory, and the historical situation seems to have changed. Modern scholars assert that this second part of the book was composed 150 years after Isaiah's time.

It is interesting to note that the New Testament identifies many post-chapter 40 passages with Isaiah (see Mt 3:3; 12:17; Lk 3:4; Jn 12:38-41; Acts 8:28; Rom 10:16). The critics build their case from the impossibility of predictive prophecy, while Isaiah builds his arguments from the Lord's ability to do just that (see especially, Isaiah 40-48). In

addition, the books of Kings, completed by the middle of the exile, use the entirety of Isaiah as a source, which argues for a pre-exilic date for Isaiah's composition.

Guiding Concepts:

God's character—Isaiah emphasizes God's holiness, repeatedly using the term "the Holy One of Israel." Holiness involves God's moral purity and perfection, and Isaiah will repeatedly stress God's righteousness and justice. However, Isaiah also surrounds this with God's redemptive mercy and His kind compassion. God is Israel's husband in Isaiah 54 and as the nation's father in Isaiah 63 and 64.

Coming Messiah—Only the Psalms contains a larger number of Messianic prophecies than Isaiah. Isaiah set forth every aspect of the glory and ministry of Christ: his incarnation (7:14; 9:6), his youth (7:15; 11:1; 53:2); his mild demeanor (42:2); his obedience (50:5); his message (61:1-2); his miracles (35:5-6); his suffering and death (50:6; 53:1-12); and his exaltation (52:13).

The Servant Songs (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12) occupy a principal place in Isaiah's consolation section (40-66). The last of the Songs provides a vivid picture of the Servant's work: (1) his humiliation and exaltation (52:13-15); his experience of rejection (53:1-3); his vicarious suffering (53:4-6); his sacrificial death (53:7-9); and reconciling atonement (53:10-12).

Some texts from Isaiah that are regarded as Messianic by Bible scholars (along with their New Testament counterparts) are listed below:

• Isa 7:14	Mt 1:22-23	Isa 50:6	Mt 26:67; 27:26, 30
• Isa 9:1-2	Mt 4:12-16	Isa 52:14	Phil 2:7-8
• Isa 9:6	Lk 2:11	Isa 53:4	Rom 5:6, 8
• Isa 11:2	Lk 3:22	Isa 53:7	Mt 27:12-14
• Isa 28:16	1 Pt 2:4-6	Isa 53:9	Mt 27:57-60
• Isa 40:3	Mt 3:1-3	Isa 53:12	Mk 15:28
• Isa 42:1-4	Mt 12:17-21	Isa 61:1	Lk 4:18-19
• Isa 42:6	Lk 2:29-32		

Redemption—The theme of redemption runs throughout the book. One of Isaiah's favorite names for God is the Redeemer of Israel and all these references appear in the consolation section (40-66). Isaiah repeatedly speaks to a faithful remnant in Israel and hints at the inclusion of the nations in God's gracious covenant and plan of eternal redemption. The idea of the remnant of Israel coupled with inclusion from Gentile nations anticipates the reality described in the New Testament.

Kingdom eschatology—There is an emphasis on a future kingdom of Israel. Isaiah brings a sense of hope and expectation to God's people at the time that the earthly kingdom of Israel teetered on the brink of extinction.

Summary Outline:

Introductory Oracles	Isaiah's Call	Ahaz's Failure; Syro-Ephraim Coalition	Oracles Against the Nations	DOL: Deliverance of Israel & Destruction of Enemies	Woe Oracles & Yahweh's Judgment of Enemies	Hezekiah's Salvation, Sickness, and Sin: End of Assyrian Crisis & Transition to Babylonian Crisis	Israel's Deliverance	Israel's Deliverer	Israel's Future Glory
1-5	6	7	13	24	28	36-39	40	49	58
Prophecies of Condemnation						Historical Parenthesis	Prophecies of Comfort		
Prophetic						Historic	Messianic		
Judgment						Transition	Hope		

Key Idea: Salvation from the Lord
Key Chapter: Isa. 53
Key Verse(s): Isa. 55:6-7

Jeremiah & Lamentations

***Introduction*—**Jeremiah was a broken-hearted prophet with a heart-breaking message. He labored for more than forty years proclaiming a message of doom. His career was in three stages: (1) 627-605 B.C. when he prophesied while Judah was threatened by Assyria and Egypt; (2) 605-586 B.C. when he prophesied while Judah was threatened and besieged by Babylon; and (3) 586 -580B.C. when he ministered to the people in Jerusalem and in Egypt after Judah's downfall.

Jeremiah's prophetic call was amid a world swirling with change. The Assyrian Empire was disintegrating, and Egypt and Babylon were rising to challenge for world supremacy. The last great Assyrian king died in the year Jeremiah began his ministry (627 B.C.). Babylon quickly broke away from Assyrian control (626 B.C.), Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, fell (612 B.C.), and Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon crushed Assyria and Egypt at the battle of Carchemish (605 B.C.). Judah succumbed in stages (605, 597, 586B.C.) as the fickle Judean kings insisted on foolish policies born of infidelity and rebellion.

***Author and Date*—**Jeremiah first dictated his prophecies to his secretary, Baruch, around 605 B.C. He was following God's instruction to write the prophecy down (36:1-4). This may have been the text destroyed by King Jehoiakim (36:32). Baruch then produced another scroll, Jeremiah 1-25. Two other collections of Jeremiah's sayings are collected in Jeremiah 30-31 and 46-51. Interspersed among these are biographical interludes (26-29 and 32-45) that focus on the latter part of Jeremiah's life. Chapter 52 is an historical appendix as indicated by the statement in 51:64: "The words of Jeremiah end here". However, Jeremiah may have written Jeremiah 52 since he is the author of the books of Kings and Jeremiah 52 is almost identical to 2 Kings 24:18-25:30, which deals with the account of the fall of Jerusalem.

***Purpose and Theme*—**The purpose of the book is summarized in 1:10: "See, today I appoint you over the nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant." The book records the prophecies of Jeremiah and gives us a glimpse of the man as he struggles with the people because of his message and with the Lord because of the personal implications of his message. Like other prophets, his purpose was to call Judah back to faithful dependence on Yahweh. But Jeremiah was the nation's last chance, and he bore the weight of that realization.

Guiding Concepts:

***Four categories of oracles*—**Jeremiah's message can be summarized by the content of four categories of oracles: indictment, judgment, instruction, and aftermath. Indictment oracles are mostly in Book 1 (Jeremiah 1-25) and are concentrated in Jeremiah 5-9. The people had forsaken the Lord for idols, had grown stubborn and unjust, and had been guilty of the improper use of both temple and cultic practice (sacrificial system). The judgment oracles are by far the largest of the categories and are national in scope and political in nature. Instruction oracles are few and call for the people to repent and return

to the Lord, deal with Yahweh's supremacy over all gods and all circumstances, and with devotion to him, particularly Sabbath concerns. The aftermath oracles are consolatory. Their purpose is summarized in 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.'"

***New Covenant*—**God's remedy for the perennial problem of covenant infidelity. An inside, heart-related ministry was necessary (31:31-33).

***Dealing With the Nations*—**Jeremiah's sermon in the potter's house (18:7-11) details God's policy toward the nations. It is a scales of justice approach so unlike God's message on individual salvation. Indeed, it is not about redemption, individually or nationally, at all and makes no inference of some kind of salvation by works program. It merely expresses the Sovereign Lord's working through the political communities.

***False Prophets*—**Jeremiah's message of doom was delivered at a time when many prophets, claiming to speak for Yahweh, published glad tidings of deliverance, peace, and prosperity (14:11-16; 23:9-40; 28:1-17).

Summary Outlines:

Jeremiah:

Jeremiah's Call	Oracles of Judgment on Judah	Temple Oracles	Signs of Warning	Messages to Leaders	Trials of Jeremiah -- Opposition	Restoration of Jerusalem – Consolation	Toward Fall of Jerusalem	Prophecies of Gentile Nations	Historical Conclusion
1	2	7	13	20	26	30	34	46	52
Call	Ministry								Retro
Call	Prophecies to Judah							Prophecies to Gentiles	Fall

Key Idea: Judgment Coming
Key Chapter:
Key Verse(s): Jer. 31:31-33

Lamentations:

1	2	3	4	5
Mourning the City	Broken People	Suffering Prophet	Ruined Kingdom	Prayer for Restoration
Destruction of Jerusalem	Anger of Yahweh	Prayer for Mercy	Siege of the Capital	Prayer for Restoration
Grief	Cause	Hope	Repentance	Request for Restoration

Key Idea God's Faithfulness
Key Chapter: Lam. 3
Key Verse(s): Lam. 3:22-23

Ezekiel

***Introduction*—**Ezekiel was a priest called to be a prophet of Yahweh to the Jewish people in exile. His book reveals a priestly emphasis in his concern for the temple, the priesthood, the sacrifices, and the Lord's shekinah glory. Ezekiel means "God strengthens", an apt moniker for his strengthening and encouraging ministry among the exiles. He uses prophecies, parables, object lessons, signs and symbols to dramatize God's message to his exiled people.

Ezekiel was one of thousands of Hebrews taken captive by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 597 B.C. (see 2 Ki. 24:10-17). The Babylonians method of captivity focused on the deportation of the leadership of the conquered people as well as the gifted and talented people destined for leadership. Ezekiel survived the trek to Mesopotamia and settled near the River Kebar in Babylonia. Ezekiel was twenty-five when he went into exile and thirty when he was called to his ministry. He was from a priestly family (1:3), knew Daniel (14:14, 20; 28:3), and was married (24:15-16). Little is known of his life prior to his prophetic call.

***Historical background*—**The reign of King Josiah (640-609 B.C.) was Judah's last gasp before God's judgment fell in the form of a series of invasions by the Babylonians. Josiah died fighting the incursions of the Egyptians under Pharoah Neco in 609 B.C. Neco installed Josiah's sons Jehoahaz (deposed three months later) and Eliakim (Jehoiakim) as Egyptian vassals. Jehoiakim's tenure in office was a reign of evil characterized by idolatry, social injustice, murder, and covenant rejection (see Jer. 22:1-17). Nebuchadnezzar defeated Neco at Carchemish in 605 B.C. Although appointed by Neco, Jehoiakim remained as a vassal king until he foolishly and unsuccessfully rebelled in 598-597 B.C. Jehoiakim died prior to the Babylonian reprisal, but his son, Jehoichin was removed and carried into exile in 597 B.C. Ezekiel was numbered among those carried into exile with him.

***Author and Date*—**Ezekiel wrote this book as he ministered to the people from 593 B.C. on. The prophet's last dated oracle occurs around 571 B.C. and relates to Egypt. He does not relate the release of King Jehoiachin in 562 B.C., so the actual date of composition occurred between 571 B.C. and 562 B.C. The unity and autobiographical style of the book accords well with Ezekiel's authorship.

Modern critics suggest that the book of Ezekiel was composed in four stages with such cleverness that it is impossible (except for their astute eyes) to distinguish the literary strands. These stages are (1) an oral stage when the prophet's original words were handed down by his disciples and members of the prophetic school, (2) a literary stage when the oral tradition was put into writing, (3) an editorial stage when the written materials were arranged and organized, and (4) a final shaping of the text when editors refined and polished it. According to this theory, the first two stages were completed before the exiles returned to the Promised Land and the final two later.

***Structure*—**The book is really a three-part theodicy (an interpretation of God's judgment of Judah and the nation's resultant destruction). Chapters 1-24 predate the fall of Jerusalem and are directed to the rebellious house of Judah. Ezekiel was acting as a security guard, informing his fellow citizens about impending judgment. Chapters 25-32 relate Ezekiel's prophecies of judgment upon the surrounding nations who had been active participants or gleeful onlookers of Judah's travail. Finally, chapters 33-48 record a hopeful message of restoration among the captive Hebrew remnant. The concluding section of the book promises covenant renewal and the restoration of the Davidic kingship over Israel.

Thirteen of Ezekiel's prophecies are introduced by a date formula as follows:

• Chariot vision	1:1-3	June, 593
• Call	3:16	June, 593
• Temple vision	8:1	August/September, 592
• Discourse with elders	20:1	August, 591
• Second siege of Jerusalem	24:1	January, 588
• Judgment on Tyre	26:1	March/April, 587/586
• Judgment on Egypt	29:1	January, 587
• Judgment on Egypt	29:17	April, 571
• Lament over Pharaoh	32:1	March, 585
• Lament over Egypt	32:17	April, 586
• Fall of Jerusalem	33:21	December/January, 586/585
• New temple vision	40:1	April, 573

Guiding Concepts:

***God's sovereignty*—**Ezekiel's structure contributes to the purpose of the book—to point to God's sovereignty over Judah and the nations. Judah must pay the price for covenant faithlessness (1-24). The sovereignty of Yahweh is further emphasized in the judgments pronounced on the neighboring nations in chapters 25-32. Neither the infidelity of the people nor the wickedness of the nations defeats God's overriding purpose of restoration as shown in chapters 33-48.

***Son of Man*—**Ezekiel is called the "son of man" approximately ninety times in the book. The only other time this phrase appears in the Old Testament is in Daniel 8:17. This title was Jesus' favorite self-designation and, as so used, was clearly a messianic title. However, Ezekiel uses this term differently. Here, it designates Ezekiel as merely human, emphasizing the humanity of the messenger in contrast to the divine origin and authority of the message.

***Glory of the Lord*—**God's glory is his beauty, splendor, and greatness. It emphasizes His transcendence and holiness. Ezekiel is concerned with the God's glory, as one might expect from one of priestly descent. Ezekiel's book has temple visions at the beginning and the end. The first one in Ezekiel 8-10 and describes the sad removal of God's shekinah glory from the existing temple in Jerusalem prior to its destruction., There is another vision at the end of the book in chapters 40-48, where Ezekiel describes a

glorious, restored temple. The great hope of the book is the return of God's glory to be with his people. The book's last verse aptly states the concluding vision's point: "the Lord is there" (48:35).

***New Covenant*—**This is God's work on the inside of those who are his people. He will create in his people a new heart and a new spirit, turning cold, stony hearts into warm hearts of flesh (11:19; 18:31; 36:24-27; 37:14). This will occur as God puts his Spirit within the believer. His presence will bring obedience.

***Apocalyptic literature*—**Ezekiel belongs to the genre of literature described as "apocalyptic". Its characteristics include frequent use of symbolism, visions, allegories, and symbolic actions. By employing strange visions and unusual symbols in combination with eschatological themes of judgment, divine intervention in history, and God's ultimate victory over the enemies of His people, Ezekiel points to later apocalyptic writings.

***Parables*—**Parables abound in Ezekiel, as they did in our Lord's public ministry. Note the following:

- Wood and vine (15:1-8)—Symbolizes that Judah had become useless to Yahweh and of no other use than to be burned up in judgment.
- Foundling child (16) —Illustrates the nation's betrayal of God's care and compassion.
- Eagles and cedar (17) —Illustrates the foolishness of Zedekiah's rebellion against Babylon.
- Fiery furnace (22:17-22) —Explains how God would purify His people.
- Two harlots (23) —Symbolizes the spiritual adultery of Israel and Judah.
- Cooking pot (24:1-14) —Symbolizes how God was going to "turn up the heat" of judgment.
- Shipwreck (27)—Illustrates judgment on Tyre.
- Irresponsible shepherds (34) —Symbolizes Jerusalem's worthless leaders and how God would deal with them.
- Dry bones (37)—Symbolizes the spiritual renewal of the nation.

***Individual responsibility*—**Ezekiel emphasizes individual responsibility in Ezekiel 18. The people had deflected responsibility for their exile by blaming previous generations. They were focusing on a false understanding of the Mosaic teaching of inherited guilt (Ex. 20:5; 34:7). Ezekiel sought to counterbalance this by integrating corporate and individual responsibility.

Summary Outline:

Vision of Glory Ezekiel's Call	Coming Judgment Departing Glory Signs and Parables of Judgment	Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia Tyre & Sidon Egypt	Ezekiel as Watchman Shepherds of Israel New Covenant Blessing Destruction of Godless Nations Vision of Restored Temple
Ezekiel's Call	Judgment on Judah	Judgment on Surrounding Nations	Temple Vision: Return to the Lord/ Restoration
Judah's Fall		Judah's Foes	Judah's Future

Key Idea: Sovereignty & Holiness of God
Key Chapters:
Key Verse(s): Ezek. 36:22-23

Daniel

***Author, date, and background*—**Daniel was a young man from a noble Jewish family taken to Babylon in the first deportation sometime after 605 B.C. The book that bears his name was written in the backdrop of the fall of Jerusalem and the deportation and exile of the Jews to Babylon, to people suffering through the same circumstances as Daniel himself. Daniel serves through the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors and into the early part of the reign of Cyrus of Persia after the fall of Babylon, a ministry that spanned from around 600 B.C. to the mid-530s B.C.

Although Daniel's events are set in the 6th century, critical scholars argue that the book was written during the Maccabean era (160s B.C.). Porphyry, a Neo-Platonist opponent of the faith, developed this theory in the third century of our era. The argument is that the book is a pious fraud, a piece of resistance literature perpetuated by zealous Maccabeans to encourage a spirit of heroism among those fighting the encroachments of the Seleucid king, Antiochus IV. Their reasons for asserting this include:

- The remarkably accurate predictions of Daniel 11, charting the course of Near Eastern history from Alexander to Antiochus, are not supernatural revelations of the future, but historical interpretations of the past. Daniel is a book of edifying legends and dramatic visions meant to inspire a generation of resistance fighters. The ability of clearly fictional material, assumed supernatural predictions included, to inspire real-life self-sacrifice remains unexplained. Genuine acts of heroism, rather than exaggerated claims, are needed to provide this kind of inspiration.
- The deliverances and events of Chapters 3, 5, and 6 are reminiscent of the sensational nature of the inter-testamentary literature.
- Some events (Nebuchadnezzar's seven-year insanity) and the existence of Darius the Mede are still unconfirmed from extra-biblical sources.
- Critics claim that Daniel 2-7, written in Aramaic, is late Aramaic.

Reply to the criticism of the critics:

- The book clearly addresses and point to a 6th century timeframe.
- If the book is so obviously fictional, why no hint of people catching on to these until an unbelieving Neo-Platonist opens our eyes? Why the early Jewish consensus that the book dates to the 6th century?
- The New Testament authors, as well as Jesus Himself, viewed Daniel as historical.
- How does a fictional account (and one that is obviously so, according to the critics) inspire faithful resistance to the end? Hooey is hooey, no matter how nice it sounds.

Guiding Concepts:

***Sovereignty of God*—**God rules in human affairs is the central theme of the book. Daniel is known as the Apocalypse of the Old Testament. Daniel's visions and experiences

eloquently proclaim God's sovereign control of world history, events, and powers. Kingdoms of the world rise and fall, but God patiently builds His kingdom in their midst. The secular kingdoms are temporary, and exercise limited dominion, but there will be a day when God sets all to rights and rules forever.

***Correction of wrong expectations among the Jewish community*—**The Messianic kingdom was not coming immediately upon the Jewish return from the Babylonian exile.

***Emphasis on living a life of faith in an increasingly hostile world*—**As they wait for the promise, they are to trust God for protection, guidance, and deliverance in a strange and hostile scene. The world will always be a foreign place to God's people (Phil. 3:20a). God's people are aliens and strangers (1 Pt. 1:17) surrounded by enemies. Yet it is possible to live in a way that brings praise and honor to Yahweh.

Pride, rebellion, and the downfall of kings pervades the book: Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3-4; Belshazzar in Daniel 5; the fourth king in Daniel 7; the little horn in Daniel 8; the prince to come in Daniel 9; the king of the South in Daniel 11.

***Power of persistent prayer*—** The political impotence of the Jewish people presented a unique reminder of and invitation to invoke almighty God in prevailing prayer.

God's grace in purging, sustaining, reviving, preserving, and causing His people to return in and through the tragedy of the exile.

***Application*—**Much of the application of the book grows out of the post-exilic issues that confronted the Jewish people. Three different mindsets grappled with what to make of the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile to Babylon:

- Yahweh has forsaken us and wants nothing to do with us;
- The more powerful god of the Babylonians bested Yahweh; or
- Judgment was not God's problem, but that of the Jewish people. Sin and covenantal unfaithfulness had brought it. Repentance and return to Yahweh was the remedy. The prophets hammer the third perspective home. Faithfulness to Yahweh brings favor and blessing; disobedience and apostasy brings judgment and punishment. God was not kidding back there in Deuteronomy!
- Monotheism must be embraced and its implications worked out for worship and behavior. Note Daniel 3 and 6 in this regard.
- Coping with a-political status—Priests and Levites must lead with no king on the scene.
- Concern for assimilation—Intermarriage, and other social and commercial practices, threaten the identity of the Jewish people. Both idolatry (Dan. 3 & 6) and cultural compromise (Dan. 1) pose threats.

Summary Outline:

Training in Babylon	N' s Dream & D' s Interpretation	N' s Gold Image	N' s Pride Punished	B' s Presumption Punished	Daniel in the Lion' s Den	Four Beasts	Goat and Ram	70 Weeks	Culminating Vision & Explanation		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Daniel's Court Experiences						Daniel's Visions of Future					
Nebuchadnezzar				Bel-shaz-zar	Dar-ius	Various – Persian Era					

Key Idea: God's Sovereignty
Key Chapter: Dan. 9
Key Verse: Dan. 4:25b

Hosea

***Introduction*—**Hosea heads the collection of briefer prophetic writings called "the Twelve" or the "Minor Prophets." These books appear in roughly chronological order. Hosea, Amos, Jonah, and Micah belong to the period of the Assyrian ascendancy (750 B.C. on), Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Obadiah relate to the time of Babylon's greatness (circa 600 B.C.), and Joel, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi belong to the Persian era (500 B.C. on).

Hosea's ministry spanned the last kings of Israel, from Jeroboam II (782-753 B.C.) to Hoshea (732 to 722 B.C.). His ministry began in a period where Israel enjoyed a temporary time of political and economic ascendancy, which rapidly crumbled after Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 B.C.) came to the Assyrian throne. Four of Israel's last six kings were murdered, and one was exiled. Confusion, decline, and denial characterized the last days of the Northern Kingdom.

Hosea is the death-bed prophet of Israel, writing to the Northern Kingdom, which was unknowingly on the brink of disaster. He is the last writing prophet to address the North before the Assyrian onslaught. Hosea is instructed to marry an adulterous woman, making his own marriage a vivid illustration of Israel's covenant infidelity to Yahweh. The prophet's personal suffering gives him insight into God's grief over Israel's sin as well as compassion for his people.

The so-called golden era under Jeroboam II was full of selfishness, pride, greed, social injustice, and self-indulgence which corrupted Israel. Complete social and moral decay was setting in.

***Author and Date*—** The details of Hosea's life are largely unknown, aside from his troubled marriage and his calling to prophesy in the Northern Kingdom, where he likely resided. He ministered in the later part of the 8th century, beginning in approximately 755 B.C. He may have reduced his message to writing sometime between the date of Menahem's payment of tribute to Tiglath-Pileser (circa 740 B.C.) and the fall of Samaria (722 B.C.).

Guiding Concepts:

***Covenant unfaithfulness*—**Hosea draws direct parallel between the physical unfaithfulness of his wife, Gomer, to the covenant infidelity of Israel. His message condemns the terrible fascination of Israel with Baal worship, a fertility cult involving ritual prostitution.

***Steadfast loving-kindness*—**Hosea provides eloquent expression of God's covenantal *hesed*. *Hesed* is a Hebrew word variously rendered as "mercy," "lovingkindness," or "steadfast love." It involved loving loyalty to covenant commitments.

Summary Outline:

Prophet's Marriage	Gomer/Israel Parallel	Restoration of Gomer	Case Against Israel & Call to Repentance	Case Against Leaders & Against Self-Reliance	Case Against Covenant People – Fruitless & Unfulfilled	Call to Repentance; Restoration
1	2	3	4	7	9	12
Hosea's Marriage			Hosea's Message			
Adulterous Wife and Faithful Husband			Idolatrous Israel and Faithful Lord			
Personal Crisis			National Crisis			

Key Idea: Covenant Infidelity
Key Chapter: Hos. 2
Key Verses: Hos. 10:1-2

Joel

***Introduction*—**Joel means "Yahweh is God." This book describes a locust plague that symbolizes the forthcoming Day of the Lord. The Spirit will be poured out as a prelude to judgment. Peter uses this text from Joel (2:28-32) as the text for his message on Pentecost (see Acts 2:17-21).

***Author and Date*—**Traditionally, this book dates to 835 B.C., among the earliest of the prophets. The book addresses the elders rather than the king, a circumstance explained by dating the book to a period during the minority of King Joash. Other evidence for an early date includes Joel's placement in the Book of Twelve (as second) and that neither Assyria nor Babylon are mentioned (taken as meaning these powers are not on the scene yet).

However, others think this is a postexilic book written in the 6th or even the 5th centuries (during the reigns of Darius the Great and his son, Xerxes). The evidence invoked for this later date includes:

- Scattering of Israel is treated as an event of the past;
- Assyria and Babylon are not mentioned because they had passed from the scene;
- Joel's prophecy is a prime example of classical prophecy which did not get its start until the 7th century BC.

Joel's use of Amos, Isaiah, and Ezekiel are especially evident:

- 1:15 Isa 13:6
- 2:3 Isa 51:3; Ezek 36:35
- 2:10 Isa 13:10
- 3:10 Isa 2:4; Mic 4:3
- 3:16 Amos 1:2; Isa 13:13
- 3:17 Ezek 36:11; Isa 52:1
- 3:18 Amos 9:13

Pre-exilic supporters argue that the borrowing is vice versa.

Guiding Concepts:

***Day of the Lord (DOL)*—**The Day of the Lord is the dominant theme of Joel's prophecy. It is the common denominator between his contemporary oracle concerning the locust plague (1:2-2:27) and the eschatological oracle (2:28-3:20).

***Pentecost sermon*—**Peter used Joel's prophecy to explain the Pentecost event to the gathering crowd (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17-21). But how does the endowment of the Spirit have to do with the eschatological aspects of the Day of the Lord prophesied by Joel 2:28ff? One need not press this too far. Two things are parallel:

- General giving of the Spirit;
- Need for people to call on the Lord to be saved.

Summary Outline:

Locust Plague / Drought	Imminent DOL / Ultimate DOL
1	2 3
A Day of the Lord	The Day of the Lord
Historic Occasion	Prophetic Vision

Key Idea: The Day of the Lord
Key Text: Joel 2:28-32 (see Acts 2:17-21)

Amos

***Introduction*—**The early 8th century was a period of great prosperity for both Israel and Judah. The kingdoms under Jeroboam II and Uzziah expanded nearly to the boundaries set by David and Solomon. However, Amos looks past the façade of the so-called "golden age" of his time to examine the dry rot of spiritual, social, and moral decay apparent in both Israel and Judah.

Amos attacks the religious apostasy and hypocrisy, the moral and social collapse, and the political corruption of his day. He confronts both the political and social authorities and the religious establishment by calling individuals to covenant obedience. Amos condemns the luxury, self-indulgence, and oppression which characterized the period. Religious devotion and faithfulness have a clear connection to social justice. If people love and obey Yahweh, not only is their worship more than empty formalism, but their community life also flows out in kindness and equity to the poor and oppressed.

The prophet's message of doom seemed incongruous against the backdrop of an era of prosperity, military success, and internal stability. Conditions seemed ideal. Assyria, Babylon, Aram (Syria), and Egypt were all either relatively weak or docile. Yet, within little more than a generation, all would be in ruins.

***Author and Date*—**Amos was a shepherd from Tekoa, near Bethlehem, in Judah. He was an untrained lay prophet who ministered during the reigns of Uzziah in Judah and Jeroboam II in Israel. Though he lived in the South, he primarily prophesied to the North. The probable date of writing is sometime in the last decade of Jeroboam II's reign.

***Guiding Concepts*—**Amos consists of eight prophecies (1-2), three oracles (3-6), five visions (7-9), and five promises of restoration (9:11-15). His message is one of judgment, stressing the righteousness and justice of God.

***Corruption of Israel's worship*—**Mere formalism devoid of true devotion is one of the prophet's targets.

***Social justice*—**This is a concern for all the prophets but a main theme in the prophecies of Amos (2:6-8; 5:10-12; 8:4-6) and Micah (2:1-2; 3:1-3; 6:10-12)

Summary Outline:

Judgment Against Surrounding Nations	Judgment Against Israel & Judah	First Oracle	Second Oracle	Third Oracle	Locust Swarm	Consuming Fire	Plumb Line	Summer Fruit	Lord at the Altar	Restoration Promises
1	2	3	4	5	7			8	9	9:11-15
Eight Prophecies Against Nations		Three Oracles Re Israel's Sin			Five Visions of Future Judgment					Five Promises for Israel's Restoration
Pronouncement		Provocation			Prophetic Perception of Future					Promise

Key Idea: Looming Judgment & Call to Return
Key Chapter:
Key Verses: Amos 5:14-15

Obadiah

***Introduction*—**This is the shortest book in the Old Testament and is devoted to the theme of God's judgment of Edom. Edom (also "Hor," Seir," and "Esau") and Israel were kin descending from the patriarchs Esau and Jacob, respectively. Edom was located on the southeast edge of the Dead Sea, stretching from the Brook Zered in the north to the Gulf of Araba in the south.

Until the time of Saul and David, Edom and Israel lived on peaceful terms. David conquered Edom, which remained under Judah's control until Jehoram's reign. During Jehoram's rule, Edom revolted and gained independence (see 1 Ki 11:14-25; 22:47; 2 Ki 8:20-22). Later invasions by the Judean kings Amaziah (2 Ki 17:7) and Uzziah (2 Ki 14:22) were localized attacks and resulted in only temporary control of portions of Edomite territory. At the end of the kingdom period, Edom not only assisted Babylon in the sack of Jerusalem but also occupied Judean villages well into the Persian period.

***Author and Date*—**We know little about Obadiah's background. Several individuals named Obadiah are mentioned in the Old Testament. The identification of the prophet with one of the more prominent of these people (King Ahab's God-fearing servant in the Elijah narrative) remains unsubstantiated speculation.

Obadiah's oracle has been variously dated from as early as 850 B.C. to as late as 400 B.C. The choice of date usually coincides with an assumption concerning the events referenced in Obadiah 11-14. One of the following two episodes is the most likely backdrop to these verses:

- An attack on Jerusalem by the Arabs and Philistines sometime in the 840s B.C. during the reign of Jehoram (see 2 Ki. 8:16-20; 2 Chron. 21:16-17);
- The destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587-586 B.C. Psalm 137:7 describes the way the Edomites rejoiced and gloated over Israel's fall and travail.

Thus, the dates most often suggested for Obadiah are in the mid-800s B.C. or sometime after 586 B.C. Since Obadiah 11 describes the total conquest of the city (something that did not happen in the 9th century B.C.), the second date is more likely.

***Purpose/Message*—**Obadiah condemns the pride and cruelty of Edom and reassures the godly remnant of Yahweh's ultimate triumph in the Day of the Lord (DOL) and the restoration of the people of God.

Guiding Concepts:

Edom's pride carried with it the seeds of its own destruction. God will bring low all who boast in conceit and insolence.

***Retribution principle*—**Punishment rendered will be commensurate with the offense.

Day of the Lord (DOL)—Behind this message is Yahweh's universal dominion over all the nations. This involves universal judgment as well as the restoration of the righteous. This brings a pronouncement of doom for Edom (15-16) and an announcement of blessing and restoration for the covenant people (17-21).

Summary Outline:

Edom's Pride and Fall	Reasons for Judgment	Restoration of God's People
1 9	10 16	17 21
Judgment of Edom		Restoration of Israel

Key Idea: Judgment of Edom
Key Verse(s): Obad. 15

Jonah

***Introduction*—**Concern for the Gentiles is not a truth only disclosed in the New Testament. The story and message of the prophet Jonah is one of the clearest demonstrations of God's love and mercy towards all people.

Jonah ministered in the time of Jeroboam II of Israel (782-753 B.C.), after Elisha and before the time of Amos and Hosea. Israel was enjoying a resurgence of prosperity and territorial expansion. 2 Kings 14:25 identified Jonah as the prophet who predicted the expansion of the borders of the two kingdoms that would rival the size of the nation in the golden era of David and Solomon. This was a heyday of national pride and fervor.

Assyria was an oppressive world power but was in mild decline during this time. This was the calm before the storm. Within a generation, the hated Assyrians would ravage Israel, carry the nation away into exile, and become the first in a series of world empires to dominant the Middle East. Jonah's assignment to preach to the people of Nineveh went against everything Jewish in the prophet. Jewish nationalism had blinded him and the nation to God's worldwide purposes. Assyria's reputation for endless cruelty made the prospect of their repentance a most bitter pill to swallow.

***Author and Date*—**Though the author of the book is never stated, tradition ascribes it to Jonah, a prophet to the Northern Kingdom in the 8th century. Jonah was a resident of Gath Hepher, a town in Zebulun's territory, approximately two miles from Nazareth.

Quite a few people, finding the story of Jonah being swallowed and regurgitated by a whale to be incredible, have viewed the book as an example of midrash (a story intended to convey religious truth by elaborating and embellishing an event in an historical setting), allegory (narrative characters and events are purely symbolic), or as an Old Testament parable (a story with a moral behind it). However, the prose is straightforward, the Scripture represents it as historical, and Christ Himself draws parallels to Jonah's experience in the whale and His resurrection from the tomb (Mt 12:39-41).

Guiding Concepts:

***God's gracious extension of mercy to the Gentile nations*—**The book challenges the nationalistic pride of Israel and their failure to understand the nature of her missionary task attendant to the covenant promise (Gen 12:1-3).

Sovereignty of God over life, nature, and circumstances as described in Jonah's descriptions of the storm (1:4), the great fish (1:17), the plant (4:6), and the worm (4:7); 3. Jonah's three-day experience in the belly of a whale serves as a type of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Mt 12:39-41).

Summary Outline:

Disobedience to First Call Judgment on Jonah Prayer of Jonah in the Fish Deliverance of Jonah from the Fish	Obedience to Second Call Judgment on Nineveh Averted Despairing Prayer of Jonah Rebuke of the Prophet
1-Jonah Pays 2 -Jonah Prays	3-Jonah Preaches 4-Jonah Pouts
First Commission	Second Commission
God's Mercy on Jonah	God's Mercy on Nineveh
Rescue from the Great Sea	Rescue of the Great City

Key Idea: God's Sovereign Mercy
Key Chapter: Jonah 4
Key Verse(s): Jonah 3:10; 4:12

Micah

***Introduction*—**Micah's name means "who is like the Lord". He was a man of the country who burned with indignation over how the ruling class and the urban merchant class oppressed the peasants. He rebukes anyone who would use social status or political power for unjust personal or corporate gain. His writing rings with a call to social justice as a necessary component of faithful living before Yahweh.

The early 8th century was a period of great prosperity for both Israel and Judah. Under Jeroboam II and Uzziah, the divided kingdoms nearly matched the territory held during David and Solomon's reign. It was a period of great expansion and prosperity. However, with this came exploitation, greed, injustice, and economic dislocation. Idolatry was rampant and religiosity had but a thin veneer. Micah condemns both religious pretense and social injustice and warns that the time to pay the piper was near at hand.

Micah ministered during the great Assyrian crisis in the latter part of the 8th century. He observed the fall of Samaria and the near fall of Jerusalem. His message comes to Judah amid political crisis. That message is twofold: judgment and reasons for it and hope for God's merciful redemption.

***Author and Date*—**Micah ministered during the reigns of Jotham (739-731 B.C.), Ahaz (731-715 B.C.), and Hezekiah (715-686 B.C.). While Micah does address the North, his ministry is primarily to the southern kingdom of Judah. His denunciation of idolatry and immorality suggest that the bulk of his ministry predated the reforms of Hezekiah.

The prophet was from Moresheth, a town near Gath in Philistia. . His prophecies span from 735 to 710 BC. His book is divided into three sections: a prediction of judgment (1-3); a prediction of restoration (4-5); and a prophetic plea for repentance (7-9)

The only sections of Micah that critical scholars identify as later additions are the oracles of hope (2:12-13; 4:1-5:9; and 7:8-20). They argued that these could not be connected with the judgment oracles because they weaken them. But if covenant faithfulness is the issue, those two sets of oracles necessarily go together.

Guiding Concepts:

***Judgment*—**Samaria's doom was sure and Judah's was not far behind. The corruption of the rulers and the oppression of the poor are highlighted. Judgment is overdue.

***Social justice*—**This is a concern for all the prophets but a main theme in the prophecies of Amos (2:6-8; 5:10-12; 8:4-6) and Micah (2:1-2; 3:1-3; 6:10-12)

***Messiah*—**Micah 5:2 predicts that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. In addition, Micah 2:12, 13, 4:1-8, and 5:4-5 present vivid descriptions of the righteous reign of Messiah over the earth.

Summary Outline:

People Indicted & Judged	Hope	Leadership Indicted & Judged	Coming Kingdom	Coming Captivity	Coming King	First Plea	Second Plea	Final Salvation
1		3	4:1	4:6	5:2	6:1	6:10	7:7
Prediction of Judgment			Promise of Restoration			Plea for Repentance		
Punishment			Promise			Pardon		

Key Idea: Looming Judgment
Key Chapter:
Key Verse(s): Mic. 3:8; 6:8

Nahum

***Introduction*—**Nahum proclaims the downfall of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire. He is a counterpoint to the ministry of Jonah. He preaches judgment on Nineveh, which was well-deserved, while Jonah's book illustrates the compassionate mercy of God in preaching and witnessing the city's repentance more than a century earlier. Nahum ministered during the reigns of Manasseh (695-642 B.C.) and Josiah (640-609 B.C.) of Judah.

Assyria holds the chief place of infamy in the pantheon of Old Testament bad guys. They were notorious for their savage brutality. They transplanted and terrorized conquered people throughout the Middle East. The announcement of their doom would have stirred little by way of pity.

Assyria reached her pinnacle in the mid-7th century with the conquest of Egypt and thereafter quickly declined. By the time of Ashurbanipal's death in 627, the empire was disintegrating. Assyria was exhausted by the many revolts against her rule. The key turning points were when Egypt broke free in the 640s B.C., and when Babylon arose in 626 B.C.. Within fifteen years of the latter event, Assyria fell to the combined forces of the Babylonians and the Medes.

The poetry of Nahum is regarded as among the most exemplary in the Old Testament. The prophet owed a great debt to Isaiah. Parallels are seen in their vocabulary, phrasing, and motifs.

***Author and Date*—**Nahum's name means "comfort" or "consolation" and his message of doom for Nineveh was doubtless a source of comfort to Judah who had endured such cruelty at the hands of the Assyrians. He was from Elkosh, a town in southern Judah between Jerusalem and Gaza.

The book was written sometime between 663 and 612 B.C. Nineveh was destroyed in 612 B.C. Nahum 3:8 indicates that the Assyrians had destroyed Thebes, the capital of Egypt, at the time of the writing. That event occurred in 663 B.C. Thus, this was written sometime in the 650s B.C., when Assyria was at the height of its power.

Guiding Concepts:

***Judgment on Nineveh*—**This is the key point of the book.

***Sovereignty of God*—**This is central to the prophet's message. Yahweh announced the judgment of the great city; Yahweh would accomplish it.

Summary Outline:

Principles of Judgment Judgment on Nineveh Announced	Call to Battle Destruction of the City Described	Reasons for Judgment Inevitability of Destruction
1	2	3
Verdict	Vision	Vindication
Destruction Decreed	Destruction Described	Destruction Deserved
What God Will Do	How God Will Do It	Why God Will Do It

Key Idea: Judgment on Nineveh
Key Chapter: Nah. 3
Key Verse: Nah. 1:15

Habakkuk

***Author, date, and background*—**Habakkuk's name means "embrace". He is called to a prophetic ministry (1:1, 3:1) and he may have been a member of the professional prophetic guild in Israel (*nabi*). The musical notation and form of the third chapter of the book suggests that he may also have been a Levite.

Sections of the dialogue in the book are representative of Habakkuk's spiritual struggle over a long period of time, possible beginning as early as 630 B.C. and continuing down to 590 B.C., close to the fall of Jerusalem. Conditions had gone from looking up in the reforms of Josiah to the deplorable situation under Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. Idolatry was rampant. There was increasing lawlessness, injustice, and violence. Taxation was heavy, corruption was rampant, and Judah was looking for help in all the wrong places and making all the wrong choices.

***Theme*—**Like Job, Habakkuk is a form of literature called "theodicy", an explanation of why evil happens and is part of our experience. However, there is a decided difference between the two books. Job asks God why the innocent suffer; Habakkuk asks why the guilty are not punished.

Habakkuk is unique among the prophets in that he does not speak for God to the people, but to God about the people. The book turns on a single issue, God's justice in dealing with the nations. Habakkuk asks two questions:

- Why does God delay in judging the injustice and wickedness rampant in Judah in Habakkuk's day (1:1-4)? God supplies an unexpected answer. He is going to judge them; the Babylonians are on their way (1:5-11).
- How can God use a more wicked people than we are to judge us (1:12-2:1)?

God does not fully explain. The Babylonians will be judged for their wickedness in God's appointed time and then he "shows up" for Habakkuk (2:2-22), much like he did for Job in Job 38-41. Habakkuk is content to believe and trust God in the situation.

The key response is not understanding but faith—"the just shall live by faith" (2:4) is the key verse in the book. This verse is quoted in Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38. However, in Habakkuk's context, the text is not about justification by faith but trusting God in the perplexities of life.

***Application*—**Questioning God is not sinful per se. Tough times can produce honest doubt and perplexity and God does not condemn his people for expressing doubts. God's answers may be delayed, or cause consternation, or even be an enigma for the present time. The key response in these times of doubt and consternation is that we hold onto God, his promises, and his ways.

Guiding Concepts:

Righteousness of God—Why does God delay on delivering justice? Why does he use the instruments (Assyria, Babylon) that he uses? Does he care? Is he good? Is he even there?

Centrality of faith—God assures Habakkuk that he will deal fairly with the nations and then he shows up. Habakkuk's questions remain unanswered, yet he believes. And that is the right response.

Summary Outline:

First Complaint Concerning Judah	God's Reply: Babylon to Invade Judah	Second Complaint Concerning God's Justice	God's Reply: Responsibility of the Righteous	God's Reply: Judgment on Babylon	Plea for Mercy	God's Power to be Merciful	Prophet's Trust in God
1:1-4	1:5-11	1:12-17	2:1-5	2:6-20	3:1-2	3:3-15	3:16-19
Prophet's Problems					Prophet's Praise		
What Is God Doing?					Who God Is		
Faith Puzzling					Faith Progressing		

Key Idea: Living by Faith
Key Chapter: Hab. 3
Key Verse(s): Hab. 2:4b; 3:16-19

Zephaniah

Author, date, and background—Zephaniah's name means "Yahweh has hidden or protected". He was a descendant of King Hezekiah, the only prophet of royal lineage. Zephaniah was a contemporary of Jeremiah. These two prophets signaled the beginning of God's witness to Judah during the turbulent period of Babylon's rise and Assyria's demise that resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple.

Zephaniah dates his prophecy to the reign of Josiah (640-609 B.C.). Of greater pertinence is the question of whether his prophecy came before or after the religious reforms of Josiah (628 B.C. and 622 B.C.). Given the content, many date the book before these reforms, approximately 630 B.C. This date fits the events of the political arena as well. Assyria's power began to wane around 650 B.C. First, Egypt breaks away. Then revolts and internal divisions grind down the Assyrian strength. Babylon declares its independence in 626 B.C., allies itself with the Medes, and eventually conquers Nineveh itself in 612 B.C. Thus, the behemoth of the east, which Jewish kings had attempted to placate for a century, is on its way out.

Zephaniah's prophecy addresses issues common in the early part of Josiah's reign. The apostasy of Manasseh (697-642 B.C.) had taken a heavy toll. Idolatry, injustice, corruption, and violence were rampant. Josiah's reforms were the most austere ever attempted by a Jewish king and, while they succeeded in ridding Judah's worship of foreign elements, they did not touch the straying hearts of the people. Zephaniah prophecy predated Josiah's reforms and sought to initiate change in Judah by pronouncing Yahweh's judgment on wickedness.

Theme—The focal point of Zephaniah's prophecy is the Day of the Lord (DOL). He uses the term twenty-three times, more than any other prophet. The DOL indicates a time when the current status quo would be replaced by the Lord's intended order of things. On this day, justice is served with due diligence. When you look at prophecy in general, it becomes clear that there will be many "days of the Lord" leading up to the great Day of the Lord. In these times, inequities are tackled, idolatry challenged, wickedness judged, and the oppressed freed. But they only point to a far greater day that will inaugurate a new order that will never again be usurped.

Summary Outline:

The DOL will be a day of doom and judgment but also one of hope and deliverance. The two aspects of the DOL correspond to the major divisions of Zephaniah's book.

Judah	Surrounding Nations	Jerusalem	Whole earth	Restoration	Conversion
1:1	1:4	2:4	3:1	3:9	3:14
Judgment in DOL				Salvation in DOL	
Day of Wrath				Day of Joy	

Key Idea: Day of the Lord
Key Chapter: Zeph. 3
Key Verse(s): Zeph. 3:11-13

Haggai

***Introduction*—**Haggai delivers four messages concerning the necessity to rebuild the temple and live faithful to God's covenant demands. Work on the temple had started after the return in 537 B.C. but had ceased when significant opposition arose. The people had become complacent and were now more interested in their own home projects than in the building of the sanctuary. Because of their misplaced priorities, God was not going to bless their self-absorption.

Haggai returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel around 522 B.C. and lived in Jerusalem or its vicinity. Haggai 2:3 may indicate that Haggai himself could remember what the first temple looked like. That means that he was born in Judah and was an old man (about 75 years old) at the time of his return to Palestine and his ministry. However, others think he was born in Babylon and was a good deal younger (albeit older than his ministerial cohort, Zechariah).

Haggai ministered to a discouraged and apathetic people who thought nothing they did made a difference. As a result, the returning Jews saw little reason for careful attention to Torah or to be overly concerned about the restoration of the temple and its cultic practice. The Persians saw all religions on the same level, tolerated them all, provided there were no problems. The Jews were assimilating into this "no problema" mentality.

***Author and date*—**Haggai's messages are precisely dated to 520 B.C. His book was written sometime before the completion of the temple in 516-515 B.C.

***Purpose and Theme*—**The main theme of the book is the rebuilding of the temple. The temple symbolized God's presence among the people and served as a tangible reminder of Yahweh's covenant with Israel. In Jeremiah's time, the temple had come to be regarded as Judah's "lucky charm," an attitude Jeremiah upbraided (see Jer. 7). Ezekiel had seen God's glory depart from the temple, expressing God's anger at Israel's covenant infidelity (Ezek. 8-10). Now, Haggai called for covenant renewal and the restoration of the temple as a symbol and cultic center for that renewal.

Guiding Concepts:

***Holiness and sin*—**Work on the temple did not make them holy. Holiness and cleansing came from God through sacrifice. The temple project was related to this since it was the focus of the sacrificial system which made provision for sin.

***Eschatological hope*—**The temple represented the presence of God with His people. However, there is a grander arrangement promised when God's presence will be grander in scale and intensity. Note some temples through the ages:

- Wilderness sanctuary
- Solomon's temple
- Zerubbabel's temple
- Herod's temple

- Present temple—in the hearts (individual and corporate) of his people (1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16-18)
- Ezekiel's temple vision (Ezek. 40-48)
- Eternal temple of His presence (Rev. 21:22)

Summary Outline:

Haggai's Challenge to Covenant Renewal	Promise of Restoration: Glory Remembered	Call to Holiness: Blessings of Obedience	Davidic Servant and Signet
1	2:1-9	2:10-19	2:20-23
First Rebuke	First Encouragement	Second Rebuke	Second Encouragement
Sept. 520	Oct. 520	Dec. 520	Dec. 520

Key Idea: Rebuilding the Temple (Covenant Renewal)
Key Verse: Hag. 1:8

Zechariah

Introduction—The Persian king Cyrus allowed the Jewish exiles to return to Palestine and gave official authorization for the temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem. In the group of returning exiles were Zerubbabel and Joshua along with many priests (see Ezra 3; Neh. 7). They began on reconstructing the temple but significant opposition from among the surrounding peoples (Ezra 4-5) put the project on hold. Haggai and Zechariah are called to encourage the people and spur on the work.

The Temple's reconstruction marked the beginning of the "Second Commonwealth" period, which included a focus on Messianic expectations, temple worship, and the importance of Torah. However, there was little evidence of covenant restoration and spiritual vitality. The people were self-absorbed, and the general mood of the time was gloomy and dismal. The walls lay in ruins, the temple's reconstruction was long delayed, and drought and blight ravaged the land. Judah remained a Persian vassal state, and the surrounding peoples continued to harass them and thwart efforts to improve the well-being of the covenant community. There was a sense of spiritual apathy, despair, and hopelessness.

Author and Date—Zechariah was the younger contemporary of Haggai, whose ministries were linked in encouraging the exiles who returned to Palestine to rebuild the temple and renew their devotion to Yahweh. While Haggai called on the people to rebuild the temple, Zechariah summoned them to repentance and spiritual renewal.

Zechariah's name means "Yahweh has remembered." Nehemiah lists Zechariah as the head of the priestly family of Iddo (12:16). Thus, Zechariah came from one of the priestly families from the tribe of Levi. He may have been born in Babylon and brought to Palestine by his grandfather when the Jewish exiles returned under Zerubbabel.

The backdrop to Zechariah 1-8 is the same as Haggai's book and is assigned to the period of 520 to 518 B.C. Specific dates for Zechariah's pronouncements are as follows:

- 1:1-6—October/November 520
- 1:7-6:8—February 15, 519
- 7:1-8:23—December 7, 518

Zechariah 1-8 does not mention the temple and it is likely that this part of the book was written before the temple was completed in 516-515 BC.

Conservatives argue that Zechariah 9-14 was written about 40 years later, likely during Xerxes's reign (486-465 BC) when Esther was queen. Critics usually assign Zechariah 9-11 to second Zechariah and Zechariah 12-14 to third Zechariah, compiled by two unknown editors. They assert that the book did not take its final form until the Maccabean period around 160 B.C.

Zechariah 9-14 anticipates Israel's coming Messiah. The temple must be rebuilt not only for the people's call to covenant renewal and fidelity but also for the coming day when the glory of Messiah will inhabit the structure.

Structure and Genre—Zechariah is proto-apocalyptic literature. Zechariah's revelation is given in a series of visions as follows:

- Man and horses in the myrtle trees (1:8);
- Four horns and four craftsmen (1:18-20);
- Cleansing of Joshua (the current High Priest) (3:4);
- Golden lampstand and olive trees (4:2-3);
- Flying scroll (5:1);
- Woman in the basket (5:6-7);
- Four chariots (6:1).

In addition, there is the presence of a divine messenger who interprets the visions, a rich use of symbolism, and themes of judgment for the nations and the ultimate triumph of God in human history.

Guiding Concepts:

Messiah—Zechariah has more to say about Messiah than any other Old Testament book except Isaiah. Consider the following:

• Zech. 9:9; 13:7	Mt. 21:5; 26:31, 56
• Zech. 9:11	Mk. 14:24
• Zech. 10:2	Mt. 9:36; 26:15; 27:9-10
• Zech. 12:10; 13:7	Mt. 24:30; 26:31, 56; Jn 19:37
• Zech. 14:1-6	Mt. 25:31
• Zech. 9:9-10; 14:9, 16	Rev. 11:15; 19:6
• Zech. 14:6-19	Rev. 21:25; 22:1, 5

End Times hope based on God's sovereignty—Note the End Times themes:

- Deliverance by a shepherd-king who will first be rejected and struck down (11:4-17);
- His ministry will be one of peace, reconciliation, and cleansing by the Holy Spirit (9:9-10);
- Israel will be re-gathered and restored (10:9-12) after the nations wage war against Jerusalem and are vanquished by the Lord (12:1-9; 14:1-5);
- Israel will mourn over her rejected Messiah and will repent and renew the covenant (12:10-13:9);
- Restoration will culminate in the establishment of a new created order (14:6-15);
- The restored kingdom will be peaceful, righteous, and holy (14:16-21).

Summary Outline:

Call to Repentance	Report of World at Rest 4 Horns; 4 Craftsmen Measuring Jerusalem Investiture of Joshua Lampstand and Olive Tree Flying Scroll Woman in Basket 4 Chariots of Judgment Crowning of Joshua	Justice & Mercy or Fasting Restoration of Jerusalem	Messiah's Rule Israel's Redemption Messiah's Rejection Israel's Enemies Destroyed Israel Cleansed Shepherd and the Sheep Day of the Lord
1	2 3 4 5 6	7	9 10 11 12 13 14
Call	Night Visions	Messages	End Times Oracles
	Pictures	Problems	Predictions

Key Idea: Covenant Renewal
Key Text: Zech 1:14-17

Malachi

***Introduction*—**Disillusioned, doubting, and discouraged, the Jewish people questioned God's covenant promises and wondered if it was worth serving God. The apathy and disillusionment that delayed the restoration of the temple, continued after its reconstruction. The ministries of the postexilic prophets had little impact on the people (see Ezra 9:1-4; Neh. 5:1-8, 11:1-3). These attitudes manifested themselves in empty ritual, cheating on tithes and offerings, and indifference to the moral and ceremonial law. Using a question-and-answer approach, Malachi probes the people for hypocrisy, infidelity, mixed marriages, divorce, false worship, and arrogance.

***Author and Date*—**Malachi may have been a member, with Haggai and Zechariah, of a council of scribes and religious leaders who helped to reorganize Israel's religious life and culture after the exile. Malachi's name means "my messenger." Malachi had strong convictions against idolatry (2:10-12), easy divorce (2:13-16), and social injustice (3:5). He also had courage, as seen in his taking on of the social elites of his day (1:1-4; 2:1-4; 3:2-4).

Malachi lived and ministered in the times of Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Dates of composition range throughout the 5th century B.C. Common options are around 475 B.C. and the period of 432 to 425 B.C.

Guiding Concepts:

***Marriage and Divorce*—**Connections between covenant keeping with Yahweh and with your spouse are made. In addition, intermarriage with foreign people is condemned.

***Elijah, the forerunner*—**Elijah is portrayed as returning to be the forerunner of Messiah. Jesus clearly understood this role as a reference to the ministry of John the Baptist (see Mt. 11:7-15).

***Day of the Lord*—**The coming Day of the Lord (DOL) will affect both the righteous and the unrighteous.

***Tithing*—**Malachi 3 is a famous stewardship passage.

Summary Outline:

God's Covenant Love	Worship & Unfaithful Priests	Worship & faithless Offerings	God's Justice and Judgment	Returning to God & Tithing	Returning to God & Obeying
1:1	1:6	2:10	2:17	3:7	3:13
How have you loved us?	How have we shown you contempt?	Why not accept our offerings?	Where is the God of justice?	How have we robbed you?	How have we spoken against you?
Privilege	Pollution				Promise

Key Idea: Purification
Key Verse(s): Mal. 3:1-3

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