

# OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

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## I. Facts about the Old Testament

- 39 Books
- 3 Major Sections: 17 Historical Books, 5 Poetical/Wisdom Books, 17 Prophetical Books
- The 17 historical books are in chronological order, but the poetical and prophetical books are not
- First 5 books are called the Pentateuch, the books of Moses or the Torah
- The Jewish name for the Old Testament is the Tanakh
- Referred to in the New Testament as the “law and the prophets” or “Scripture” or “writings”
- Prophetical books are divided into major and minor groups (simply based on size and major ones come first)
- Describes God's dealings with His chosen people, the Israelites
- Written in Hebrew with some parts in Aramaic

## II. Old Testament Timeline

- 4000 BC – Creation
- 2300 BC – Flood
- 2000 BC – Abraham (Abram)
- 1860 BC – Isaac
- 1820 BC – Jacob
- 1700 BC – Joseph
- 1446 BC – Exodus (10 plagues/Passover instituted)
- 1000 BC – Kings (Saul, David, Solomon)
- 900 BC – Divided Kingdom
- 700 BC – Assyria destroys Israel
- 606 BC – Babylonian captivity of Judah (70 years)
- 536 BC – Jews return to Jerusalem; Ezra rebuilds temple; Nehemiah rebuilds wall
- 336 BC – Alexander the Great
- 160 BC – Maccabean Revolt and Rule
- 63 BC – Roman Rule

## III. Old Testament Survey

### Genesis (book of generations or origins)

- Author: Moses

- Contents: Creation of the world (Col 1:16), entrance of sin and death into it, the invention of arts, the rise of nations, first prophecy of Christ (Gen 3:15)
- Events: Creation, Flood, Tower of Babel, Sodom and Gomorrah
- People: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph
- Covers 2315 years of history

### **Exodus (going out; departure)**

- Author: Moses
- Contents: Redemption, Law (Ex 20), Promises to Abraham fulfilled
- Events: Bondage in Egypt (Ex 1:15-22), Exodus (Passover Ex 12:3; John 1:29,36; 1 Cor 5:7; Isa 53:7), Red Sea, Wilderness Wanderings, Christ the Rock (Ex 17:6; 1 Cor 10:4), Christ the Bread of Life (John 6; Ex 16:15)
- People: Moses, Israel a new nation (Ex 1:1-7)
- Covers 216 years of history

### **Leviticus (levitical priesthood)**

- Author: Moses
- Contents: No Historical details, but full details of the law (offerings, feasts, warnings, worship and service)
- Events: The Tabernacle established, laws and ceremony separated them from other nations and foreshadowed things to come (veil, mercy seat, bread)
- People: Moses, Aaron, Israel

### **Numbers (enumeration of Israel)**

- Author: Moses
- Contents: Picks up the story from Exodus -- wilderness wanderings, the 12 tribes (Num 1-4)
- Events: the brazen serpent (Num 21:9; John 3:14), Israel was tested in the wilderness and utterly failed (40 year judgment), Judgment against Moses (Num 20:12), Conquest of Midian (2 tribes settle—Gad and Reuben)
- People: Moses, Israel
- Covers 39 years of history

### **Deuteronomy (second law or second edition of the law [with further directions])**

- Author: Moses
- Contents: Parting counsels of Moses, summary of history, restatement of the law, death of Moses
- Events: All those who had left Egypt were dead, about to enter Canaan (the promised land), recounts their fear and unwillingness to enter the land (Deut 1:19-33)

- People: Moses, Joshua
- Covers 2 months of history (recounts the last 40 years)
- When Jesus answered "It is written", it was all out of Deuteronomy (Matt 4:4, 7, 10)

### **Joshua (first of the 12 historical books)**

- Author: Joshua and/or Phinehas (The high priest Eleazar's son)
- Contents: The conquest of Canaan, the partition of the inheritance, Joshua's last council and death.
- Events: Conquest of Canaan
- People: Joshua and Israel
- Covers 20 years of history

### **Judges (the men raised to deliver Israel from decline after the death of Joshua)**

- Author: Samuel
- Contents: "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judg 17:6)
- Events: Seven apostasies, seven servitudes to seven heathen nations, seven deliverances
- People: Othniel, Ehud, Barak, Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair, Jephtha, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Samson, (Eli and Samuel)
- Covers 350 years of history

### **Ruth**

- Author: Samuel
- Contents: Story in the time of the judges, Ruth the Moabitess in the line of Christ
- People: Ruth, Naomi, Boaz
- Covers 10 years of history

### **1, 2 Samuel (or 1 and 2 Kings in Greek and Hebrew Bibles)**

- Author: Unknown
- Contents: Story of Samuel, Saul and David
- Events: Israel turns from loosely knit group of tribes under judges to a united nation. Samuel and David are godly people who lead and turn away God's wrath.
- People: Eli, Samuel, Saul, David
- Covers 135 years of history

### **1, 2 Kings (or 3 and 4 Kings)**

- Author: Unknown (unnamed prophet who lived in Babylonian exile)
- Contents: Along with 1 and 2 Samuel the books chronicle the entire history of Judah and Israel's kingship from Saul to Zedekiah.

- Events: All the kings of Israel and most of the kings of Judah "did evil in the sight of the Lord." Mostly related to idol worship. Foretold prophecies about exile were fulfilled. Assyrians take the northern kingdom (Israel) and the Babylonians take the southern kingdom (Judah).
- People: History of the kings and the prophets
- Covers 430 years of history

### **1, 2 Chronicles (the annals of the days)**

- Author: Ezra
- Contents: Covers the history of Judah's monarchy only. Covers from Adam to the return from Babylon and was intended to remind Jews of God's promises and intentions.
- Covers 470 years of history

### **Ezra**

- Author: Ezra (scribe/priest)
- Contents: Shows how God fulfilled His promise to return them to the land after 70 years of captivity. Shows how God is sovereign over pagan kingdoms to continue His covenant with Israel.
- Events: Rebuilding the walls and the temple and the reinstatement of the law.
- People: Ezra, Nehemiah, the Jewish remnant
- Covers 80 years of history

### **Nehemiah**

- Author: Ezra
- Contents: Continues from Ezra. Attention to God's Word to perform His will is the theme.
- Events: Enemies of Judah accuse them of revolting against Persia.
- People: Ezra, Nehemiah, the Jewish remnant
- Covers 11 years of history

### **Esther**

- Author: Unknown
- Contents: Esther and her older cousin, Mordecai, in Persia. God's sovereignty working in their lives.
- Events: Esther becomes queen, Mordecai overcomes Haman
- People: Esther, Mordecai, Haman
- Covers 12 years of history

### **Job (first of the 5 poetical/wisdom books)**

- Author: Solomon or Moses
- Contents: Testing/suffering of Job, God's character revealed.
- Events: Job has everything taken from him, is tested, and receives reward.
- People: Job, God, Satan

### **Psalms (“Praises”)**

- Author: Mostly David
- Contents: Expresses human complaints, confidence, prayers, or praise to God. Focus on the sovereignty of God. Includes messianic psalms which are connected with Christ.

### **Proverbs**

- Author: Solomon
- Contents: Proverbs are simple, moral statements that highlight and teach fundamental realities about life. They are God's wisdom.
- Events: Man's relationship to God, himself and to others.

### **Ecclesiastes (“the preacher”)**

- Author: Solomon
- Contents: Warnings to avoid walking through life on the path of human wisdom. Uses “vanity” many times to express the futile attempt to be satisfied apart from God.

### **Song of Solomon**

- Author: Solomon
- Contents: A love song exalts purity of marital affection and romance.

### **Isaiah (first of the 17 prophetic books)**

- Author: Isaiah
- Contents: Prophet to Judah
- Events: Many prophecies fulfilled in his own life time, prophecies fulfilled in Christ's first coming. (Isa 53) We can rely on the prophecies related to Christ's second coming.
- People: Isaiah and Judah

### **Jeremiah**

- Author: Jeremiah—the weeping prophet
- Contents: Predicted and lived through the judgment by the invading Babylonians.
- Events: Judgment upon Judah
- People: Jeremiah and Judah

## Lamentations (“loud cries”)

- Author: Jeremiah
- Contents: Lamentations over Judah's sin that brought destructive judgment.
- People: Judah

## Ezekiel

- Contents: Visions, prophecies, parables, signs and symbols to proclaim and dramatize the message of God to His exiled people.
- Events: Was writing in captivity in Babylon
- People: Judah

## Daniel

- Contents: Prophecies and interpreter of dreams.
- Events: Was writing in captivity in Babylon. He spanned the entire 70 year captivity. Protected in the lion's den.
- People: Daniel, Judah, Babylon

## Minor Prophets

Book	Contents
Hosea	God's love for His people, Israel, in spite of their idolatry.
Joel	The Day of the Lord—a time of wrath and judgment.
Amos	Addressing Israel's sins.
Obadiah	Edom's judgment and demise.
Jonah	Running from God; Jonah and the big fish; message to Nineveh.
Micah	Message of judgment.
Nahum	Sequel to the book of Jonah, judgment comes to Nineveh.
Habakkuk	Cry for divine intervention because of the people's sin; God's response to send the Chaldeans (Babylonians) to judge Judah.
Zephaniah	Message on the Day of the Lord.
Haggai	Motivation in the rebuilding of God's temple.
Zechariah	Joined Haggai in rousing the people in the rebuilding of the temple.
Malachi	Reminder during temple rebuilding that it's not just about ritual, rebukes the people and reminds them of the Lord's coming (Mal 3:1).