

## Old Testament Survey

### **The Old Testament is more than history book.**

*“Narratives are stories – purposeful stories retelling the historical events of the past that are intended to give meaning and direction for a given people in the present. This has always been so for all peoples in all cultures; and in this regard, the biblical narratives are no different from other such stories. Nonetheless, there is a crucial difference between the biblical narratives and all others, because inspired by the Holy Spirit as they are, the story they tell is not so much our story as it is God’s story – and it becomes ours as he “writes” us into it.”* (How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, G. Fee p.90)

1. Over 40% percent of the Old Testament was written in the narrative genre. The narratives tell the story of God’s providence over creation and his relationship with his people.
  - a. The Old Testament has three narrative levels
    - i. Top (Third) Level –is God’s redemptive plan for his creation
    - ii. Second Level – are the stories of God redemption of people through covenants for his glory
    - iii. First Level – are the individual redemption stories that make up the overall theme of God’s redemption.
2. The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew Narrative Style.
  - a. The inspired writers present the meaning and point of view using the characters and events of the story to the audience. The writer lets the action and words of the characters speak for themselves.
  - b. The writers focused on comparing and contrasting the main characters. The audience learns about the characters through their actions and words rather than descriptive narration.
  - c. Repetition was commonly used to emphasize key events, stress importance of words, and to keep the focus of the audience.

### **Covenant Themes in the Old Testament**

*“The Old Testament law is a covenant. A covenant is a binding contract between two parties, both of whom have obligations specified in the covenant. In Old Testament Times, covenants were often given by an all powerful suzerain (overlord) to a weaker, dependent vassal (servant). They guaranteed the vassal benefits and protection. But in turn, the vassal was obligated to be loyal solely to the suzerain, with the warning that any disloyalty would bring punishments as specified in the covenant.”* (How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, G. Fee p. 166)

#### The Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

1. God makes a covenant with Noah that creation will never be punished by a flood. This is the first covenant recorded. Gen 9:11-13

2. Abraham was called by God to move from the land of Ur to Canaan. God's covenant to Abraham meant that he would have multitude of descendants and possess the land of Canaan. Gen 15: 9-21. God promises in the second covenant that Abraham will be the father of nations and that God would be the God of Abraham. This suzerain covenant was shown by circumcision of all male descendants. Gen 17: 1-11.
3. Moses and the Israelites entered into a covenant with God at Mount Sinai. God gave the Pentateuch to Moses to teach the Israelites how to be a kingdom as God as their king. Moses becomes the Israelites mediator with God. Ex 19:3-6 and Ex 24:7-8 (NASB)
4. The Books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy shows God's character through the Pentateuch. This covenant establishes the relationship and expectations between God and his people.

Historical Books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Ester

1. God continues to fulfill his covenant to the Israelites by the conquering and settlement of Canaan. (Book of Joshua) God's faithfulness to Israel's covenant is shown in the Book of Judges even though they were disobeying God. Judges 2:16-18
2. God establishes an earthly kingdom where the king would be under the authority of God through the prophets. (1 & 2 Samuel) After God gives peace to King David's kingdom, God establishes a covenant that one of his descendants will be the messiah. 2 Sam 7:12-16
3. The kings that reigned after Solomon failed in keeping God's covenant. (1 & 2 King and Chronicles) The prophets spoke God's Law and judgment to his people. God remained faithful to the covenants made to King David, on Mt. Sinai and to Abraham. God's patience and faithfulness to his covenants while the Israelites continued to sin is a central theme in these historical books. 2 Kings 8:16-19
4. Eventually the people of Israel are conquered by their enemies. The kingdom of Judah falls and its people are exiled to Babylon while the kingdom of Israel is dispersed throughout Assyria. God remained faithful by allowing the exiles from the Kingdom of Judah to return to Jerusalem 70 years later. This led to a great spiritual revival and a renewal of the past covenants made with God.

Wisdom Books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

1. These books reflect the covenant between God and his people. King David wrote a genre of psalms called Royal Psalm that referenced the messianic covenant. Psalms 2:4-9
2. The Song of Solomon describes the sacred relationship between a husband and wife. Many interpretations parallel the joy and intimacy in a covenant marriage to how we are to obey and have joy in our relationship with God.

Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

1. The prophets spoke for God to the audience of that period and culture. Prophets were the mediators of the covenant between God and his people, much like the role of Moses at Mt. Sinai.
2. Isaiah spoke God's word and judgment to the Kingdom of Judah for their disobedience. Isaiah 35:10
3. Jeremiah also spoke God's judgment to the Kingdom of Judah before the Babylonian Empire conquered Judah. He spoke of repentance and hope to the remnant of Israel and spoke of the coming messiah. Jer 23:3-6
4. Malachi was the last prophet to speak God's word to Israel. He spoke during the post exilic period, about 100 years after the Israelites returned from captivity. The Israelites were still under foreign rule had enemies along its borders. Malachi spoke of hope and declared that no prophesy will be spoken until the Messiah comes. Mal 3:1-4

## The Old Testament Song

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers,  
Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges,  
Ruth, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings,  
First and Second Chronicles

Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job,  
Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes,  
Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah,  
Lamentations,

Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel,  
Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah,  
Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah,  
Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

## The Old Testament Song

Genesis, \_\_\_\_\_, Leviticus, \_\_\_\_\_,  
Deuteronomy, \_\_\_\_\_, Judges,  
Ruth, \_\_\_\_\_, First and Second Kings,  
\_\_\_\_\_

Oh - \_\_\_\_\_, Nehemiah, \_\_\_\_\_, Job,  
Psalms, \_\_\_\_\_, Ecclesiastes,  
Song of Solomon, \_\_\_\_\_, Jeremiah,  
\_\_\_\_\_

Oh - Ezekiel, \_\_\_\_\_, Hosea, \_\_\_\_\_,  
Amos, \_\_\_\_\_, Jonah, \_\_\_\_\_,  
Nahum, \_\_\_\_\_, Zephaniah,  
\_\_\_\_\_, Zechariah, \_\_\_\_\_.

## The Old Testament Song

Genesis, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Numbers,  
\_\_\_\_\_, Joshua, \_\_\_\_\_,

Ruth, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
First and Second Chronicles

\_\_\_\_\_, Nehemiah, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,

Psalms, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,

Song of Solomon, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,

Lamentations,

\_\_\_\_\_, Daniel, \_\_\_\_\_, Joel,

Amos, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Micah,

\_\_\_\_\_, Habakkuk, \_\_\_\_\_,

Haggai, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

\*I have to thank ebibleteacher.com for this song.