

LEADERSHIP & MISSIONS
Survey of The Old Testament
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Introduction to the Old Testament

A. Background of the Old Testament

The term "Old Testament" is most commonly used to apply to what is known as the Hebrew Bible consisting of 39 individual books, covering the time from the creation of the world to approximately 400 years prior to the birth of Jesus Christ.

1. Authorship

While there is some debate about the authorship of some of the books, it is generally accepted that over thirty writers over a period of approximately 1200 years contributed to the content of the Old Testament as we know it today.

2. Language

Most of the Old Testament was written originally in Hebrew. A few minor portions in books like Ezra, Daniel and Jeremiah seem to have been written in Aramaic, a near language to that of Hebrew and very likely the language which Jesus spoke in the New Testament era.

The Old Testament was translated into Greek somewhere in the middle of the third century B.C. The Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament is known as the Septuagint (in reference to some 70 Jewish elders who worked on the translation). This version was in common use during the time of Jesus especially among the Jews of the dispersion.

3. Culture

The Old Testament comes to us out of a very different culture to that of the modern western experience and, therefore, can only be understood fully by understanding certain elements of early eastern culture. The culture of the Bible is a shepherding and agricultural culture. Most of the marriage customs of the Bible times are very different to our western understanding of things.

4. Approximate Chronology of the Old Testament

The books of the Old Testament are not arranged in chronological order. They are arranged by category as listed above. When reading any of the books, especially the prophets, it is important to tie them together with the historical books of the same era. The following timeline will serve as a guide for the students of the Old Testament.

5. Outline of History Covered in the Old Testament

Event(s)	Location	Historical Books
Creation	Garden of Eden	Genesis
Fall of Man	Garden of Eden	Genesis
Man Expelled from Garden	Mesopotamia	Genesis
Populating of the Earth	Widespread	Genesis
Flood of Noah	Worldwide	Genesis
Call of Abraham	Chaldea	Genesis
Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Twelve Sons	Mesopotamia (Nomadic)	Genesis
Joseph, Israel to Egypt	Egypt	Genesis
Israel in Bondage	Egypt	Exodus
Israel in Wilderness	Sinai Peninsula (Nomadic)	Exodus-Deuteronomy
Israel under Joshua	Canaan/Palestine	Joshua

Israel under Judges	Canaan/Palestine	Judges, Ruth
Israel United under Kings, Saul, David, Solomon	Canaan/Palestine	I & II Samuel, I Kings, I Chronicles
Israel Divided, Northern, Southern	Canaan/Palestine	I & II Kings, I & II Chronicles
Northern Kingdom Captive to Assyria (10 Tribes)	Assyria	II Kings, II Chronicles
Southern Kingdom Captive to Babylon (3 Tribes)	Babylon	II Kings, II Chronicles
Restoration of Judah to Land	Canaan/Palestine	Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

I. DEFINITION OF COMMONLY USED TERMS

- **NAMES OF GOD**

1. El
2. Elohim
3. YHWH
4. Adon
5. El Shaddai

- **NAMES OF TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS:**

1. Masoretic Text (MT)
2. Septuagint (LXX)
3. Vulgate
4. Midrash
 - **Halakah** - commentary on the Torah
 - **Haggada** - stories and parables on whole OT
5. Talmud
 - **Mishnah** - oral traditions on Torah from older famous rabbis
 - **Gemara** - commentary on Mishnah by later rabbis

6. Targums
7. Dead Sea Scrolls

II. WHY STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A.** Because it is part of the “All Scripture” that is given by inspiration of God that is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness (*II Tim. 3:14-17*).

The Scripture of the Old Testament provides a source of wisdom.

- a. The Scripture of the Old Testament leads us to salvation.
 - b. The Scripture of the Old Testament guides our steps.
 - c. The Scripture of the Old Testament equips us to fulfill our destiny.
- B.** It was the only Scripture that Jesus and the Apostles had. They quoted from it often.
- C.** It is God’s self revelation. It is inspired.
1. Matthew 5:17
 2. II Timothy 3:15-17
 3. I Corinthians 2:9-13
 4. I Thessalonians 2:13
 5. I Peter 1:23-25
 6. II Peter 1:20-21
 7. II Peter 3:15-16

It was written for us.

1. Romans 4:23-24; 15:4
2. I Corinthians 9:9-10; 10:6, 11

The Old Testament was a shadow of the real (*Heb. 10:1*). It is the purpose of the shadow to point us to the real or the substance that has come to us in Christ (*Col. 2:16-17; Heb. 8:5*).

III. HOW DO WE STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT

Some basic interpretive principles:

- The Bible is written in normal human language:
 1. God is not hiding the truth.
 2. God has accommodated Himself to our ability to understand.
- The key to proper interpretation is the original inspired author’s intent. This is found in the plain meaning of the terms as used by the author and understood by the original hearers. Therefore, to properly interpret a passage one must take into account the following info:
 1. the historical setting;

2. the literary context;
 3. the genre (type of literature);
 4. the grammar (syntax);
 5. the contemporary meaning of words;
 6. the textual design of the author.
- The Scripture of the Old Testament gives us tangible or visible expressions of invisible realities.
 - The Scripture of the Old Testament points us to and help us to visualize all that we have been given in Christ.

Old Testament or Covenant	New Testament or Covenant
Natural	Spiritual
Flesh	Spirit
Testimony	Things Spoken After
Shadow	Image
Figure	Things to Come
Made with Hands	Not Made with Hands
Patterns	Heavenly Things
Figures	True

For a Time	Eternal
Visible (Seen)	Invisible (Unseen)
Temporal	Eternal
By Sight	By Faith”

- Study the chart above in relation to these verses: **John 3:5-6; II Corinthians 4:18; Hebrews 3:5; 8:7, 13; 9:9, 23-24; 10:9.**
- The Scripture of the Old Testament presents the natural that precedes and paves the way for the spiritual (**I Cor. 15:44-47**).
 - Natural birth precedes spiritual birth (**Jn. 3:5**).
 - Natural Israel precedes spiritual Israel (**Gal. 6:16**).
 - Natural Jerusalem precedes spiritual or heavenly Jerusalem (**Heb. 12:22**).
 - Natural temple precedes the spiritual temple (**I Pet. 2:5**).
 - Natural priesthood precedes a spiritual priesthood (**I Pet. 2:5**).
 - Natural sacrifices precede spiritual sacrifices (**Heb. 13:16**).
 - Natural enemies and warfare precede spiritual enemies and warfare (**Eph. 6:12**).
- The entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments, relates the unfolding struggle between the two seeds—the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman (**Gen. 3:15**).

The Seed of the Woman	The Seed of the Serpent
Children of Light	Children of Darkness
Mystery of Godliness	Mystery of Iniquity

Spirit of Truth	Spirit of Error
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Children of Promise	Children of the Flesh
Kingdom of God	Kingdom of Satan
Life	Death
Godly Seed or Line	Godly Seed or Line
Christ	Antichrist

- The entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments, could be labeled the ***Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ***.
- The Old Testament is the foundation on which the house of the New Testament is built (***Heb. 3:1-6; Eph. 2:20***).
- God has only ever had one people; His chosen ones. The saints of the New Testament are inseparably connected to the saints of the Old Testament (***Heb. 11:40; Mt. 8:11***).
- The prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament were all working on the same spiritual temple made of both Jew and Gentile (***Eph. 2:19-22***).
- The Scripture of the Old Testament is the only word that shaped the New Testament church because it was the only Bible they had.
- Rightly dividing the Scripture of the Old Testament was essential for the success of the Early Church (***II Tim. 2:15***). Without adherence to the principles contained in the Old Testament, the New Testament workman will end up being “ashamed.”

IV. THE BASIC MAP OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AS IT RELATES TO THE OT

A. Bodies Of Water (from west to east)

1. Mediterranean Sea (Great or Upper Sea)
2. Nile River
3. Red Sea
4. Gulf of Aqaba
5. River (or brook) of Egypt
6. Salt Sea (Dead Sea)
7. Jordan River
8. Jabbok River
9. Arnon River
10. Sea of Galilee (Lake Chinnereth)
11. Euphrates River
12. Tigris River
13. Persian Gulf (Lower Sea)

B. Countries that impact the People of God in the OT (west to east)

1. Rome
2. Greece
3. Caphtor (Crete)
4. Kittim (Cyprus)
5. Egypt
6. Philistia
7. Judah
8. Israel
9. Edom
10. Moab
11. Ammon
12. Phoenicia (Lebanon)
13. Syria
14. Hittite (Anatolia)
15. Arabia
16. Assyria
17. Babylon
18. Persia
19. Media
20. Elam

C. The Capitals Of The Major Countries

1. Memphis (Egypt)
2. Jerusalem (Judah)
3. Samaria (Israel)
4. Tyre (Phoenicia)
5. Damascus (Syria)
6. Nineveh (Assyria)

7. Babylon (Babylon)
8. Susa (Persia)

D. Other Important Cities

1. Ur
2. Haran
3. Megiddo
4. Shechem
5. Jericho
6. Bethlehem
7. Hebron
8. Beersheba
9. Avaris/Zoan/Tanis
10. Thebes

E. Mountains

1. Ararat
2. Hermon
3. Tabor
4. Ebal or Gerizim (Shechem)
5. Carmel
6. Nebo/Pisgah
7. Zion/Moriah (Jerusalem)
8. Sinai/Horeb

V. THE BASIC TIMELINE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. Undated events (*Gen. 1-11*)

1. Creation
2. The Fall
3. The Flood
4. The Tower of Babel

B. Ten dates and events:

- a. the Patriarchal Period (Gen. 12-50 & Job) — 2000 B.C.
- b. the exodus (Exodus) — 1445/1290 B.C.
- c. the conquest (Joshua) — 1400/1250 B.C.
- d. the united monarchy (Saul, David, Solomon) — 1000 B.C.
- e. the divided monarchy (Rehoboam-Jeroboam I) — 922 B.C.
- f. the fall of Samaria (Israel) — 722 B.C.
- g. the fall of Jerusalem (Judah) — 586 B.C.

- h. the decree of Cyrus (Persia) — 538 B.C.
- i. the second temple — 516 B.C.
- j. the close of the OT (Malachi) — 430 B.C.

C. The major enemies of the People of God:

- 1. Egypt
- 2. Canaan
- 3. Philistia
- 4. Syria
- 5. Assyria
- 6. Babylon
- 7. Persia
- 8. Greece
- 9. Rome

D. Kings on the timeline:

1. United Monarchy

- a. Saul
- b. David
- c. Solomon

2. Israel

- a. Jeroboam I
- b. Ahab
- c. Jeroboam II
- d. Hoshea

3. Judah

- a. Rehoboam
- b. Uzziah
- c. Hezekiah
- d. Manasseh
- e. Josiah

- f. Jehoahaz (3 months)
- g. Jehoiakim
- h. Jehoiachin (3 months)
- i. Zedekiah
- j. Gediliah (Persian Governor)

4. Persia

- a. Cyrus II (550-530 B.C.)
- b. Cambyses (530-522 B.C.)
- c. Darius I (530-522 B.C.)
- d. Xerxes I (486-465 B.C.)
- e. Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C.)

See full list of kings of Judah and Israel as well as kings of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece at the end of I and II Kings.

Genesis—The Book of Beginnings

I. NAME OF THE BOOK

- In Hebrew, it is the first word of the book, ***Bereshith***, "in the beginning" or "by way of beginning."
- From the Septuagint translation it is ***Genesis***, which means "beginning" or "origin" which was taken from 2:4a.
 - The Book of Genesis marks the beginning of the universe. It lets us know that the universe had an actual beginning, that matter is not eternal and that God was the active force in creation.

The Book of Genesis details three new beginnings.

- The original creation (***Gen. 1-9***) that was followed by the fall of mankind, rebellion and ultimately God's judgment in a worldwide flood.
- The new beginning with Noah and his family that was followed by the tower of Babel rebellion and ultimately God's judgment in the confounding of languages (***Gen. 10-11***).
- The new beginning with Abram (***Gen. 12-50***) when God put His hand on a nation and set them apart as His instrument in the earth to fulfill His purposes.
 - Key words in the Book of Genesis include: ***Begat*** (67), ***Generation*** (21) and some form of ***begin*** or ***beginning*** (12).

II. AUTHORSHIP

- The Bible itself does not name the author. Genesis has no "I" sections like Ezra, Nehemiah or "we" sections like Acts.
- Jewish tradition:
 1. Ancient Jewish writers say Moses wrote it:
 - Ben Sirah ***Ecclesiasticus 24:23***, written about 185 B.C.
 - The Baba Bathra 14b, a part of the Talmud
 - Philo of Alexandria, Egypt, a Jewish philosopher, writing just before Jesus' ministry
 - Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian, writing just after Jesus' ministry.
 2. The Torah is one unified historical account. After Genesis each book begins with the conjunction "and" (except Numbers).
 3. There is very little debate among conservative theologians that Moses was the author of this book. All Jewish literature attributes the writing to Moses. The New Testament and the early church fathers confirm this same conclusion (***Lk. 24:44***).

How could Moses write this book when he was not alive at the time of the events recorded in this book?

There are two possible sources from which Moses got his understanding of the events described in the Book of Genesis.

1. From oral tradition. It was not uncommon in those days, due to the lack of developed writing skills, to pass down oral tradition from generation to generation through the use of storytelling. Moses was educated in the best that the world had to offer while in Pharaoh's house which made him a good candidate for writing.
2. From God himself. It is clear in Moses' case that he had some direct input from God, Who was indeed there when these events occurred (***Acts 7:37-38***).

III. MAIN TRUTHS

- **How did it all begin?**
 1. God (1-2). The Bible's world-view is not polytheism but monotheism. It does not focus on the "how" of creation but on the "who." It was totally unique in its day.
 2. God wanted fellowship. The creation is only a stage for God to fellowship with man.
 3. There is no possibility of understanding the rest of the Bible without Genesis 1-3 and 12.
 4. Humans must respond by faith to what he understands of God's will (***Gen. 15:6 & Rom. 4***).
- **Why is the world so evil and unfair? It was "very good" (1:31), but man sinned (3). The terrible results are obvious:**

1. Cain kills Abel, **(4)**
 2. revenge of Lamech **(4:23)**
 3. wickedness of man, **(6:5,11-12; 8:21)**
 4. the drunkenness of Noah **(9)**
 5. the Tower of Babel, **(11)**
 6. the polytheism of Ur
- **How is God going to fix it?**
 1. Messiah will come (3:15)
 2. God calls one to call all (Gen. 12:1-3 & Ex. 19:5-6)
 3. God is willing to work with fallen man (Adam, Eve, Cain, Noah, Abraham, the Jews and Gentiles) by His grace provisions:
 - a. Promises
 - b. Covenants (unconditional and conditional)
 - c. Sacrifice
 - d. Worship