

Concise Old Testament Survey

by
J. Hampton Keathley III
hamptonk3@bible.org
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J. Hampton Keathley III, Th.M. is a 1966 graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary and a former pastor of 28 years. Hampton currently writes for the Biblical Studies Foundation and on occasion teaches New Testament Greek at Moody Northwest (an extension of Moody Bible Institute) in Spokane, Washington.

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Introduction

There are, of course, a number of ways one may approach the study of the Bible: *Synthetic*—an overview of the Bible as a whole to provide a grasp of the overall message, *Analytical*—the process of viewing the Bible verse by verse to get an in depth understanding, *Topical or Doctrinal*—a study of the Bible according to its many topics and doctrines, and *Typical*—a study of the many pictures or types found in the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament, that portray the truth of the New Testament. The *synthetic* or *overview* approach is extremely helpful for the beginning student or for those who have never undertaken such a study. Through the *synthetic* approach, we are not only able to grasp the big picture or see the whole forest, but such an overview will help in understanding the details later on in one's study of the Bible.

We are calling this a *short survey* because this study is more of a nutshell approach to the books of the Old and New Testaments. The goal is to give the reader key terms, verses, themes or purposes of each of the books along with a brief description of the content.¹

Comparing the Old and New Testaments

The Bible may be divided into eight basic sections: four for the Old Testament and four for the New, but it should be noted that in each of these, Christ is the hope and underlying theme of all the books of the Bible. On several occasions, Christ claimed that He is the theme of all of Scripture:

1. In Matthew 5:17 He said, "I have come not to abolish them (the Scriptures) but to fulfill them."
2. When walking with the disciples on the Emmaus road, Luke tells us that, "... beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."
3. Later that evening, the Lord spoke to ten of the disciples and regarding that, Luke tells us in Luke 24:44-47, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem."
4. In John 5:39 and 40, when in dialogue with the Jews, Jesus said, "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; 40 and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life."

In addition, in Revelation 19:10 we are told that "the testimony of Jesus (about Jesus) is the spirit of prophecy." In other words, the very nature and purpose of prophecy, and all of Scripture for that matter, is to reveal Jesus Christ. Obviously, due to the fall and need of man, Christ is the theme of both the Old and New Testaments for it is only through Him that we can have both eternal life and life abundantly (John 10:10).

¹ Some of the ideas and the plan used in this Survey for each of the books of the Bible (author and title, date, purpose and theme, key verse(s), etc.) are similar to and drawn from other survey materials such as, *Briefing the Bible*, J. Vernon McGee, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1949; *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament*, Norman L. Geisler, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977, "Old Testament Survey," Alban Douglas, class notes, Prairieview Bible College, and *Talk Thru the Bible*, Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1983.

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Old Testament (four-fold division)		
Law—the <i>Foundation</i> for Christ History— <i>Preparation</i> for Christ Poetry— <i>Aspiration</i> for Christ Prophecy— <i>Expectation</i> of Christ	Preparation & Foundation	The Old Testament in its four-fold division lays the foundation for the coming of the Messiah Savior anticipating Him as Prophet, Priest, and King and as the suffering Savior who must die for man’s sin before He reigns.
New Testament (four-fold division)		
Gospels	Manifestation	Tells the story of the coming of the long-anticipated Savior and His person and work.
Acts	Propagation	Through the work of the Holy Spirit, Acts proclaims the message of the Savior who has come.
Epistles	Explanation & Application	Develops the full significance of the person and work of Christ and how this should impact the walk of the Christian as Christ’s ambassador in the world.
Revelation	Consummation	Anticipates the end time events and the return of the Lord, His end time reign, and the eternal state.

The Law: The First Five Books

The first five books of the Bible are sometimes called the Pentateuch which means “five books.” They are also known as the books of the law because they contain the laws and instruction given by the Lord through Moses to the people of Israel. These books were written by Moses, except for the last portion of Deuteronomy because it tells about the death of Moses. These five books lay the foundation for the coming of Christ in that here God chooses and brings into being the nation of Israel. As God’s chosen people, Israel became the custodians of the Old Testament, the recipients of the covenants of promise, and the channel of Messiah (Rom. 3:2; 9:1-5).

GENESIS (The Book of Beginnings)

Author:

Moses

Date:

1450-1410 B.C.

Name of the Book:

The name *Genesis* is taken from the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

Theme and Purpose:

Even a casual reading of the Book of Genesis reveals the prominence of the theme of blessing and cursing. For obedience and faith, there is blessing as in the Garden of Eden, but for disobedience, there is cursing. The entire book turns on this theme and its antithetical opposite, cursing. But perhaps the main theme is the choice of a nation through Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant. Through Abraham God promised to bless the nations (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1-21).

Key Words:

“Generations” or “account.”

A key word or phrase is “these are the *generations* of” or “this is the *account* of.” It is used some eleven times to introduce the reader to the next section which gives the narrative about what happened in connection with the key events and persons of the book from the creation of the heavens and the earth to all the patriarchs of Israel.

Key Idea:

Beginnings: Genesis not only means ‘beginning’, but it is the book of beginnings. The book of Genesis gives us our historical point of reference, from which all subsequent revelation proceeds. In the book of Genesis all the major themes of the Bible have their origin. It is a book of many beginnings: in it we see the beginning of the universe, of man and woman, of human sin and the fall of the race, the beginning of God’s promises of salvation, and the beginning of the nation Israel as the chosen people of God because of God’s special purpose for them as the channel for Messiah and Savior. In Genesis we learn about Adam and Eve, about Satan the tempter, about Noah, the flood, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph and his brothers. But here we also have the beginning of marriage, family, work, sin, murder, capital punishment, sacrifice, races, languages, civilization, Sabbath, the first attempt at a united nations, and Babylonianism. The Bible is, through and through, a historical revelation. It is the account of God’s activity in history.

Key Chapters:

Since the call of Abraham and the promises of blessing to the nations through his seed is the prominent message of Genesis, the key chapters are those relating to the Abrahamic covenant and its reiteration, 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-9.

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Key People:

Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, Jacob, Rachel, Joseph.

Christ as Seen in Genesis:

Prophetically: Immediately after the fall, the promise of salvation is given in the seed of the woman (3:15), but then the Messianic links are made clear throughout Genesis: the line of Seth (4:25), the offspring of Shem (9:26), the family of Abraham (12:3), the seed of Isaac (26:3), the sons of Jacob (46:3), and the tribe of Judah (49:10).

Typologically: There are several key types that portray the Savior in Genesis.

(1) **Adam** is a type of Christ (Rom. 5:14). As Adam is the head of the old creation, so Christ is the head of the new spiritual creation.

(2) **Abel's** offering of a blood sacrifice points to Christ who would die for us. Abel's murder by Cain may also illustrate Christ's death.

(3) **Melchizedek** is also a type of Christ (see Heb. 7:3).

(4) **Joseph**, who was loved dearly by his father, betrayed by his brothers, and yet became the means of their deliverance typifies Christ.

Outline:

The book easily falls into two major sections: Four Events and Four People

I. Four Events (Gen. 1-11).

- A. The creation of the world and man (1-2)
- B. The corruption of man, the fall (3-5)
- C. The destruction of man, the flood (6-9)
- D. The dispersion of man, the nations (10-11)

II. Four People: the election of a nation and the preparation for the redeemer (Gen. 12-50)

- A. Abraham (the father of faith and of the nation Israel) (12-23)
- B. Isaac (the beloved son of promise) (24-26)
- C. Jacob (scheming and chastening) (27-36)
- D. Joseph (suffering and glory) (37-50)

EXODUS (The Book of Redemption)

Author:

Moses

Date:

1450-1410 B.C.

Name of the Book:

"Exodus" is a Latin word derived from the Greek *exodos*, the name given to the book by those who translated it into the Greek Septuagint (LXX). The word means "exit," "departure."

Theme and Purpose:

Two themes prevail in Exodus: (1) Redemption as pictured in the Passover, and (2) deliverance from the bondage of Egypt as seen in the Exodus out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea.

Key Word:

“Redeem,” used nine times (6:6; 13:13; 15:13; 21:8; 34:20).

After nearly four hundreds years of growth in Egypt, Exodus continues the history of God’s chosen people, the nation of Israel, and describes their deliverance out of Egypt and their development as a nation, actually, a theocracy under God. It describes the birth, history, and call of Moses by God to lead the people out of their Egyptian bondage and into the promised land, the land of Canaan. Through the Passover lamb, the sparing of the firstborn, along with the miracles of the ten plagues, and the crossing of the Red Sea, God showed His people that He was not only more powerful than any Egyptian Pharaoh, but was the sovereign LORD, *Yahweh*, the God of redemption and revelation.

Once the people had crossed the Red Sea and arrived in the wilderness or desert, God gave them His righteous law and declared that they were a treasured possession to Him and were to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation as a testimony to the nations (Ex. 19:4-7). This holy law, including the Ten Commandments, demonstrated God’s holiness, taught them how to love God and one another, but in the process, it also demonstrated how all fall short of the holiness of God and need a way of access to God that provides forgiveness. This was provided for in the tabernacle, the sacrifices, and the levitical priesthood.

Key Chapters:

Chapters 12-14 record the redemption of Israel from slavery in fulfillment of God’s promises; delivered from slavery by blood (the Passover lamb) and by power (the parting of the Red Sea).

Key Verses:

6:6 Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgment’ (see also 20:2).

19:5-6 ‘Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.

Key People:

Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Pharaoh.

Christ as Seen in Exodus:

While Exodus contains no direct prophecy of Christ, there are a number of beautiful types of the Savior.

(1) In many ways, **Moses** is a type of Christ. Deuteronomy 18:15 shows that Moses, as a prophet, anticipates Christ. Both are kinsman-redeemers who were endangered in infancy, renounced their power to serve others, and functioned as mediators, lawgivers, and deliverers.

(2) The **Passover** is a very specific type of Christ as the sinless Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36; 1 Cor. 5:7).

(3) The **Seven Feasts**, each of which portray some aspect of the Savior.

(4) The **Exodus**, which Paul connects with baptism, pictures our identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor. 10:1-2; Rom. 6:2-3).

(5) The **Manna and Water** are both portrayed as pictures of Christ (John 6:31-35, 48-63; 1 Cor. 10:3-4).

(6) The **Tabernacle** portrays the Savior in its material, colors, furniture, arrangement, and the offerings sacrificed there (Heb. 9:1-10:18).

(7) The **High Priest** quite clearly foreshadows the person and ministry of Christ (Heb. 4:14-16; 9:11-12, 24-28).

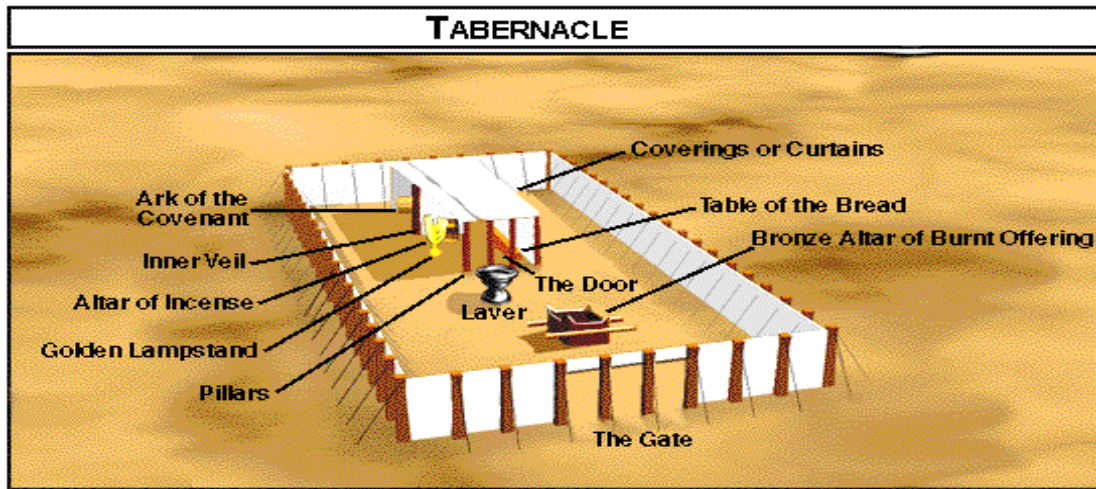
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Outline:

Exodus easily divides into two sections: Redemption and Revelation

- I. Redemption From Egypt (1-18)
 - A. In Bondage (Subjection) (1-12)
 - B. Out of Bondage (Redemption by blood and power) (12-14)
 - C. Journeying to Sinai (Education) (15-18)
- II. Revelation From God (19-40)
 - A. The Giving of the Law (19-24)
 - B. The Institution of the Tabernacle (25-31)
 - C. The Breaking of the Law (32-34)
 - D. The Construction of the Tabernacle (35-40)

Figure 1²



LEVITICUS (The Book of Holiness)

Author:

Moses

Date:

1450-1410 B.C.

Name of the Book:

Leviticus receives its name from the Septuagint and means “relating to the Levites.” The Levites were the priests who were chosen of God to minister to the nation. The book of Leviticus contains many of the laws given by God to direct them in their work as priests for the worship of God.

Theme and Purpose:

Leviticus 11:45 says, “Be holy, because I am holy.” The directives given in the book of Leviticus showed Israel was to walk before God as a holy people. Leviticus was designed to teach Israel (1) how to worship and walk with

² Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Edition*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1995, electronic edition.

God and (2) how the nation was to fulfill its calling as a nation of priests. The great theme of Leviticus is **holiness**. A holy God can only be approached on the basis of sacrifice through the mediation of a priest.

Key Word:

“Holiness.”

Key Verses:

17:11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.

20:7-8 You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. 8 And you shall keep My statutes and practice them; I am the LORD who sanctifies you (see also 11:45).

Key Chapter:

Chapter 16 deals with the Day of Atonement, which became the most important day in the Hebrew calendar because it was the only day the high priest was allowed to enter into the Holy of Holies in order to make atonement for the people. “... for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you shall be clean from all your sins before the LORD” (16:30).

Key People:

Moses and Aaron.

Christ as Seen in Leviticus:

Similar to Exodus, a number of types of Christ are evident in Leviticus.

(1) The **Five Offerings** all typify the person and work of Christ in His sinless life, submission to the Father that we might have fellowship with God.

(2) The **High Priest** as mentioned above is a very prominent type of Christ in Leviticus.

(3) The **Seven Feasts**, again, as mentioned, also form a type of the Savior.

Outline:

Leviticus falls into two clear divisions: Sacrifice and Sanctification

I. Sacrifice (1-17)

- A. The Laws of Sacrifice for Approach to God (1-7)
- B. The Laws of the Priests (8-10)
- C. The Laws Regarding Purity (11-15)
- D. The Laws of National Atonement (16-17)

II. Sanctification (18-27)

- A. The Laws of Sanctification for God’s People (18-20)
- B. The Laws of Sanctification for God’s Priests (21-22)
- C. The Laws of Sanctification in Worship (23-24)
- D. The Laws of Sanctification in the Land of Canaan (25-26)
- E. The Laws of Sanctification and Vows (27)

NUMBERS (Wilderness Wanderings)

Author:

Moses

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Date:

1450-1410 B.C.

Name of the Book:

Numbers gets its name from the two accounts in chapters 1 and 26 of the numbering or counting of the people of Israel first at Mount Sinai and second on the plains of Moab.

Theme and Purpose:

Though Numbers gets its name from the numbering of the people, it is primarily concerned with nearly 40 years of wandering in the desert. A journey which should have only lasted eleven days became a 38-year agony of defeat simply because of the disbelief and disobedience of the people. Numbers, then, shows the consequence of failing to mix faith with the promises of God (see Heb. 3:16-4:2). Further, Numbers teaches us that while life does have its wilderness experiences, God's people do not have to stay in those conditions. Joshua will illustrate this later.

Another important theme shown throughout the book of Numbers is found in God's continual care for his people. Over and over again, regardless of their rebellion and unbelief, He miraculously supplied their needs. He provided them with water, manna, and quail. He continued to love and forgive the people even when they complained, grumbled, and rebelled against Him.

Key Word:

"Wanderings."

Key Verses:

14:22-23 Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs, which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, 23 shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it.

20:12. But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

Key Chapters:

Chapters 13-14 stand as the key chapters because these chapters record a critical turning point for the nation. Here, at Kadesh-Barnea (32:8), after receiving the evil report from 10 of the 12 spies whom Moses sent to spy out the land, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb Israel focused on the giants in the land, failed to believe God, and refused to enter to possess and conquer the land, a Land that flowed with milk and honey.

Key People:

Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Joshua, Caleb, Balak

Christ as Seen in Numbers:

(1) Perhaps no place is there a clearer portrait of Christ and His crucifixion than in the **serpent lifted up** on the standard (cf. Num. 21:4-9 with John 3:14).

(2) The **rock that quenched the thirst** of the people is a type of Christ (1 Cor. 10:4).

(3) The daily **manna** pictures Christ as the bread come down from heaven (John 6:31-33).

(4) The **pillar of cloud** and **fire** portray the guidance of Christ and the cities of refuge certainly portray Christ as our refuge from judgment.

(5) Finally, the **red heifer** is also a type of Christ (ch. 19).

Outline:

Numbers divides into three sections: Preparation at Sinai, Failure of the Old Generation, Preparation of the New Generation.

I. Preparation at Sinai (Old Generation) (1-10)

- A. The Position and Numbering of the People (1-4)
- B. The Precepts of God and Sanctification of the People (5:1-9:14)
- C. The Pilgrimage Toward the Promised Land (9:15-10:36)

II. Failure of the Old Generation (11-25)

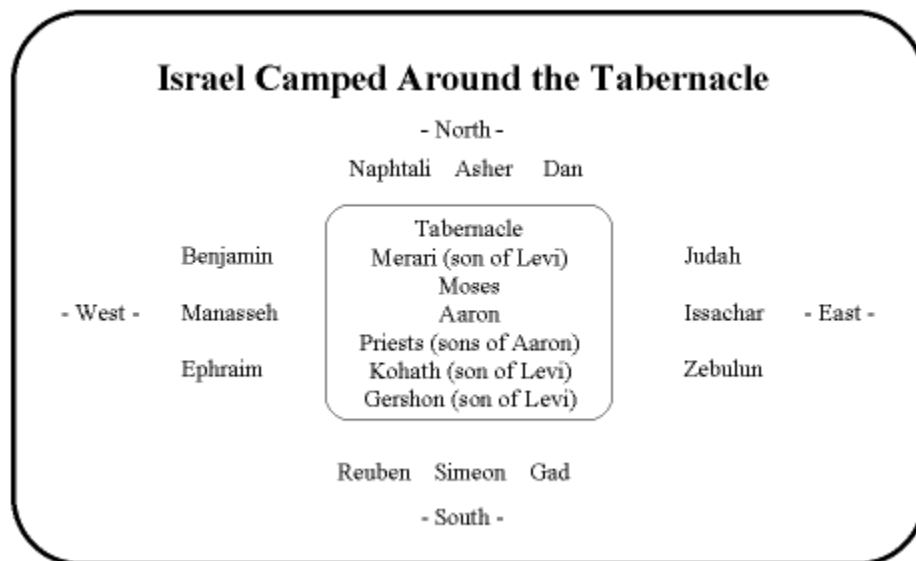
- A. Discontent Along the Way (11-12)
- B. Disbelief at Kadesh-Barnea (13-14)
- C. Discipline from the Lord (15-25)

III. Preparation of the New Generation (26-36)

- A. Reorganization of Israel (26-27)
- B. Regulation of Offerings and Vows (28-30)
- C. Regionalization of the Land (31-36)

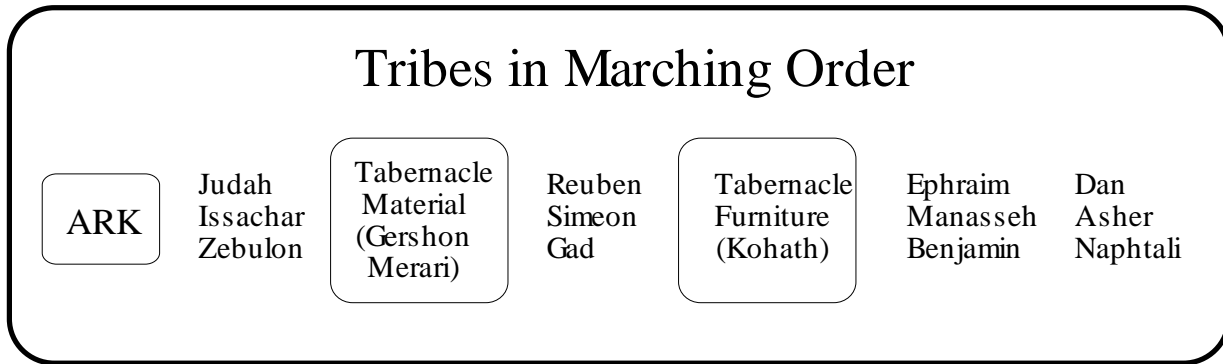
The figures below illustrate the position of the tribes in camp and on the march:

Figure 2³



³ Ryrie Study Bible.

Figure 3



DEUTERONOMY (Reiteration and Reviewing)

Author:

Moses

Date:

1410 B.C.

Name of the Book:

The English title, which comes from the Septuagint, means “second law-giving” and comes from the mistranslation of 17:18, which actually says “a copy of this law.” Deuteronomy is a not a second law, but rather a review, expansion, and reiteration of the original law given at Sinai.

Theme and Purpose:

Watch yourself lest you forget. After forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the Israelites were on the eve of entering the promised land. Before they did, it was necessary (lest they forget what God had done and who they were) that they be reminded about all that God had done for them and about God’s holy law which was so vital to their ability to remain in the land and function as God’s holy nation and as a kingdom of priests to the nations (Deut. 4:1-8). As a part of this theme or purpose, the book also emphasizes the vital necessity of teaching children to love and obey God. Deuteronomy ends with the renewal of God’s covenant with Israel (chapter 29), Joshua’s appointment as the new leader (chapter 31), and Moses’ death (chapter 34).

Key Word:

“Covenant” (occurring some 27 times)

Key Verses:

4:9, 23 Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons. **23** So watch yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which He made with you, and make for yourselves a graven image in the form of anything *against* which the LORD your God has commanded you.

4:31 For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.

10:12-14 And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 *and* to keep the LORD’S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good? 14 Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it.

30:19-20 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, 20 by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.

Key Chapters:

Chapter 27 is key because in it there is a formal ratification of Israel’s covenant as Moses and the levitical priests call upon all Israel to take heed and listen, for in verses 9-10 it is declared, “This day you have become a people for the LORD your God. You shall therefore obey the LORD your God, and do His commandments and His statutes which I command you today.”

Chapters 28-30 are also key because of the promises regarding Israel’s near and distant future as it pertains to blessing for obedience or cursing for disobedience.

Key People:

Moses and Joshua.

Christ as Seen in Deuteronomy:

The statement about Moses in 18:15 is one of the clearest portraits of Christ. It reads, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.” Further, Moses, as a type of Christ, is the only figure other than Christ to fill all three of the offices of prophet (34:10-12), priest (Ex. 32:31-35), and king (although Moses was not king, he functioned as ruler of Israel; 33:4-5).⁴

Outline:

Deuteronomy divides into three sections:

- I. Preamble (1:1-5)
- II. Review of Israel’s Wanderings—Historical (1:6-4:43)
- III. Rehearsal of Israel’s Law—Legal (4:44-26:19)
- IV. Ratification of Israel’s Covenant—Motivational (27:1-30:20)
- V. Conclusion (31:1-34:12)

Summary: Key Words and Themes to Remember

Genesis	Beginnings	Election of the nation
Exodus	Redemption	Redemption of the nation
Leviticus	Holiness	Sanctification of the nation
Numbers	Wandering	Direction of the nation
Deuteronomy	Review	Instruction of the Nation

⁴ Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, *Talk Thru the Old Testament*, Vol. I, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983, p. 39.

The Historical Books

Introduction

As previously mentioned, the Old Testament can be divided into four basic sections with each providing a specific focus with regard to the person to Christ. With Joshua through Esther, we come to the second group of twelve books that deals with the history of the nation of Israel. These books cover the life of the nation from their possession of the land down to the two deportations and loss of the land because of unbelief and disobedience. Covering about 800 years of Israel's history, these twelve books tell about the conquering and possession of Canaan, the reigns of the judges, the establishment of kings, the division of Israel into the northern and Southern Kingdoms, the fall of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria, the exile of the Southern Kingdom into Babylon, and the return to Jerusalem under the leadership of men like Nehemiah and Ezra.

As these books prepare us for the coming of Christ, the Messiah, they can be seen as follows:

Historical Books: The Preparation for Christ⁵		
Joshua Judges-Ruth	the possession of the land by the nation the oppression of the nation	The Theocracy: These books cover the period when Israel was ruled by God (1405-1043 B.C.).
1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 1-10 1 Kings 11-22 2 Kings 1-17 2 Kings 18-25 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles	the stabilization of the nation the expansion of the nation the glorification of the nation the division of the nation the deterioration of the Northern Kingdom the deportation of the Southern Kingdom the preparation of the Temple the destruction of the Temple	The Monarchy: These books trace the history of Israel's monarchy from its establishment to its destruction in 586 B.C.
Ezra Nehemiah Esther	the restoration of the Temple the reconstruction of the city the protection of the nation's people	The Restoration: These books describe the return of a remnant to the land after 70 years of captivity (605-536 B.C.).

JOSHUA (Possession and Conquest)

Author:

Joshua

Date:

1400-1370 B.C.

⁵ Some of the ideas for this chart were drawn from *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament*, by Norman L. Geisler, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977, p. 83 and *Talk Thru The Bible*, by Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1983, p. 47-49.

Title of the Book:

Unlike the first five books of the Old Testament, this book appropriately takes its name from the chief human personality of the book, Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses' servant. Joshua's original name was *Hoshea* (Num. 13:8; Deut. 32:44) which means "salvation." But during the wilderness wanderings Moses changed his name to *Yehoshua*, meaning "Yahweh is salvation" or "Save, Yahweh" (Num. 13:16). Joshua is a contracted form of *Yehoshua*. This amounted to a prophetic anticipation and reminder to Joshua, to the spies, and the people that victory over the enemies and possession of the land would be by the power of the Lord rather than by human skill or wisdom or power. This book is given the name *Joshua* because, though Joshua was one of the world's greatest military strategists of history, his wisdom and military achievements came from the Lord who alone is our Salvation. It was the Lord Himself who brought about victory for Israel and vanquished Israel's enemies giving them possession of the land.

Theme and Purpose:

Possessing, conquering, and dividing of the promised land is the theme and purpose of Joshua. The book of Joshua is designed to show God's faithfulness to His promises, doing for Israel exactly as He had promised (cf. Gen. 15:18 with Josh. 1:2-6 and 21:43-45). The events recorded in Joshua are selective to set forth God's special intervention on behalf of His people against all kinds of tremendous odds. The fulfillment of God's promises, as so evident in the birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah and in possessing the land with its fortified cities, is the work of God and that which man could never do no matter how hard he might try (see Rom. 4).

Key Words:

Possession, conquest, victory, dividing the land.

Key Verses:

1:3 Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses. [In this regard, Joshua compares to Ephesians 1:3 in the New Testament, "... blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies."]

1:8-9 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

11:23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war.

24:14-15 Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. 15 And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Key Chapter(s):

Changes in leadership are always critical times for any nation. For that reason, the following chapters are key chapters in Joshua.

Chapters 1-4 record the change of leadership from Moses to Joshua and God's personal promises and words of encouragement to Joshua in his new commission from the Lord, the crossing of the Jordan by the power of God, the commemoration of the crossing followed by the statement, "On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; so that they revered him, just as they had revered Moses all the days of his life."

Chapter 24: In keeping with the crucial nature of changes in leadership, chapter 24 is likewise an important chapter. Here Joshua reminds the people of God's faithfulness from the time of Abraham through their deliverance

out of Egypt, the crossing of the Jordan and victory over the Canaanites. Then he calls on them to remember the necessity of their faithfulness or they would be consumed by the Lord.

Key People:

Joshua, Rahab, Caleb.

Christ as Seen in Joshua:

Though there are no direct Messianic prophecies of Christ, there are a number of types which point to the Savior. Joshua is a type of Christ in two very important ways. First, his name, *Yeshua*, a contracted form of *Yehoshua*, meaning, “*Yahweh* is salvation,” is the Greek equivalent of the name *Jesus*. Joshua is actually called by the name *Jesus* in Acts 7:45. Second, Joshua is seen as a type of Christ in his work of leading Israel triumphantly into the rest of their promised possession, the land of Canaan (cf. Heb. 4:8). This is but a foretaste of the rest we enter by faith in Christ. He surely foreshadows the Savior who leads “many sons to glory” (Heb. 2:9-10). Further, Joshua was met by the Commander of the Lord’s army in 5:13-15. This is undoubtedly a Christophany, a preincarnate appearance of Christ who was there to teach Joshua that He had come not to take sides, but to take over as commander. Finally, Rahab’s scarlet cord (2:21) portrays salvation through the blood and death of Christ (cf. Heb. 9:19-22). This Gentile prostitute heard of the mighty works of God, believed, hid the spies, was delivered when Jericho was destroyed, and is found in the genealogy of Christ (Matt. 1:5).

Outline:

- I. The Invasion of Canaan (1:1-5:12)
 - A. The Commissioning of Joshua (1:1-9)
 - B. The Command of Joshua to the People and Their Response (1:10-18)
 - C. The Canvassing of Jericho (chap. 2)
 - D. The Crossing of the Jordan (chap. 3)
 - E. The Commemoration of the Crossing (chap. 4)
 - F. The Consecration of the People (chap. 5:-12)
- II. The Conquest of Canaan (5:13-12:24)
 - A. Conditioned for Victory: The Divine Commander (5:13-15)
 - B. The Campaign in the Central Portion (chaps. 6-8)
 - C. The Campaign in the South (chaps. 9-10)
 - D. The Campaign in the North (11:1-15)
 - E. The Review of the Victories (11:16-12:24)
- III. The Division of Canaan (chaps. 13-21)
 - A. The Inheritance for the Two and One-Half Tribes (chap. 13)
 - B. The Inheritance for Caleb (chap. 14)
 - C. The Inheritance for the Nine and One-Half Tribes (15:1-19:48)
 - D. The Inheritance for Joshua (19:49-51)
 - E. The Cities of Refuge (20:1-9)
 - F. The Cities for the Levites (21:1-45)
- IV. Conclusion (chaps. 22-24)
 - A. The Dispute About the Altar (chap. 22)
 - B. The Discourse of Joshua (23:1-24:28)
 - C. The Death of Joshua (24:29-33)

JUDGES (Seven Cycles of Apostasy, Judgment, and Deliverance)

Author:

Tradition tells us that Samuel wrote the book, but its authorship is actually uncertain. Samuel may have assembled some of the accounts from the period of the judges and prophets like Nathan and Gad may have had a hand in editing the material (see 1 Chron. 29:29).

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The Hebrew title is *Shophetim*, meaning “judges, rulers, deliverers, or saviors.” *Shophet* not only carries the idea of maintaining justice and settling disputes, but it is also used to mean “liberating and delivering.” First the judges deliver the people; then they rule and administer justice...⁶

Date:

1050-1000 B.C.

Title of the Book:

The book gets its name from the number of leaders called judges whom God raised up to deliver Israel from their oppressors. The title for the book is best expressed in 2:16, “Then the LORD raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them.” Ultimately, however, God was Israel’s Judge and Deliverer because it was God Himself who would first allow the times of oppression as divine discipline for Israel’s repeated apostasy, and then raise up judges to bring deliverance after the nation repented and cried out for help (cf. 11:27 and 8:23).

Theme and Purpose:

The contrast between the moods of Joshua and Judges is striking. Israel goes from the thrill of victory to the agony of defeat, from freedom to oppression, and from advancement to retrogression. So why the book?

Historically, Judges bridges the gap from the time of Joshua to the time of the prophet Samuel and the beginning of the monarchy under Saul and David. It records the history of seven cycles of decline, oppression, supplication, and deliverance. In doing so, it becomes an explanation and reason for the need of a monarchy in Israel. With every man doing that which was right in his own eyes (21:25), the nation needed the leadership of a righteous king.

Doctrinally, Judges draws our attention to a number of important truths. As God had warned in Deuteronomy, obedience brings blessing, but disobedience results in God’s discipline and oppression. But Judges also reminds us that when people will turn to the Lord, cry out to Him and repent, God, who is long-suffering and gracious, responds in deliverance. Judges unfolds its theme by describing cycles of apostasy followed by oppression as a form of divine discipline followed by supplication and repentance by the people followed by judges whom God raised up to deliver the nation.

Key Words:

Evil (14 times), judge, judged, judgment (22 times); Cycles.

Key Verses:

2:15-16 Wherever they went, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had spoken and as the LORD had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed. 16 Then the LORD raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them.

2:20-23 So the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He said, “Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not listened to My voice, 21 I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, 22 in order to test Israel by them, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk in it as their fathers did, or not.” 23 So the LORD allowed those nations to remain, not driving them out quickly; and He did not give them into the hand of Joshua.

21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

⁶ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 59.

Key Chapter:

Chapters 1-2 give a backward look to Israel's sin and a forward look to Israel's servitude. As such, these two chapters provide a kind of overview of the key issues in the book. One of the keys to Israel's failure is found in the repeated phrase, they "did not drive out the inhabitants" of the land (Judges 1:21, 27, 29, 30). This early failure was an ingredient in Israel's later failure to remain faithful to the Lord. Then, chapter 2 gives a kind of summary of the rest of the book which records the picture of the cycles: from being godly to ungodly to oppression to deliverance through the judges.

Key People:

The Judges—Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Tola and Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, and Samson. The best known judges are Deborah, Gideon, and Samson.

Christ as Seen in Judges:

Since each judge functioned as a ruler-deliverer, they served as pictures of the Savior in His work as Savior and Lord, the Righteous Deliverer King.

Outline:

Judges easily divides into three sections: Deterioration (1:1-3:4), Deliverance (3:5-16:31), and Depravity (17:1-21:25). Some like to divide the book around the seven cycles of apostasy.

I. Deterioration—An Introduction, the Reason for the Period of the Judges (1:1-3:6)

- A. The Political Condition (1:1-3:6)
- B. The Spiritual Condition (2:1-3:6)

II. Deliverance—The History and Rule of the Period of the Judges (3:7-16:31)

- A. Mesopotamian Oppression and Othniel's Deliverance (3:7-11)
- B. Moabite Oppression and Ehud's Deliverance (3:12-30)
- C. Shamgar's Victory Over the Philistines (3:31)
- D. Canaanite Oppression and Deliverance by Deborah and Barak (4:1-5:31)
- E. Midianite Oppression and Gideon's Deliverance (6:1-8:35)
- F. Abimelech's Tyranny (9:1-57)
- G. Tola's Judgeship (10:1-2)
- H. Jair's Judgeship (10:3-5)
- I. Ammonite Oppression and Jephthah's Deliverance (10:6-12:7)
- J. Ibzan's Judgeship (12:8-10)
- K. Elon's Judgeship (12:11-12)
- L. Abdon's Judgeship (12:13-15)
- M. Philistine Oppression and Samson's Career (13:1-16:31)

III. Depravity—Apostasy and Anarchy, the Ruin of the Period of the Judges (17:1-21:25)

- A. Micah and the Migration of the Danites (17:1-18:31)
- B. The Benjamite War (19:1-21:25)

RUTH (An Addendum to Judges)

Author:

As with Judges, the author is uncertain though Jewish tradition points to Samuel. This is unlikely, however, since the author of Ruth mentions David, and Samuel died before David's coronation (4:17, 22).

Date:

1000 B.C.

Title of the Book:

The book of Ruth gets its name from one of its main characters, a young woman of Moab, the great-grandmother of David and one who is in the genealogical line of the Savior (Matt 1:5). Another book of the Bible named after a woman is Esther.

Theme and Purpose:

Ruth is the story of a couple in Israel who, during a time of famine, moved to Moab. There the husband and his two sons died, leaving the mother (Naomi) alone with her two daughters-in-law (Orpah and Ruth). Naomi decided to move back to Israel and Ruth insisted on returning with her. Once in Israel, they turned to a relative by the name of Boaz for help. Eventually, Ruth married Boaz.

Like a brilliant diamond against black velvet, Ruth sparkles against the dark days of the book of Judges. Ruth is the story of loyalty, purity, and love in a day when anarchy, selfishness, and depravity was generally the rule. As such, Ruth serves as a positive picture of faith and obedience in the midst of apostasy and shows how such faith brings blessing. Ruth also serves as an important link in the ancestry of King David and, as mentioned, is found in the line of Messiah. Other purposes of Ruth are seen in the way it illustrates the truths of the Kinsman-Redeemer, the presence of a godly remnant even in times of great apostasy, and God's faithfulness to those who will walk with Him by faith. Since Ruth was a Gentile, the book illustrates God's desire to bring the Gentile world into the family of God.

It may seem surprising that one who reflects God's love so clearly is a Moabitess. Yet her complete loyalty to the Israelite family into which she has been received by marriage and her total devotion to her desolate mother-in-law mark her as a true daughter of Israel and a worthy ancestress of David. She strikingly exemplifies the truth that participation in the coming kingdom of God is decided, not by blood and birth, but by the conformity of one's life to the will of God through the "obedience that comes from faith" (Rom. 1:5). Her place in the ancestry of David signifies that all nations will be represented in the kingdom of David's greater Son.⁷

Key Words:

Kinsman (14 times), Redeem (9 times). In thought, a key term would be *Kinsman-Redeemer*.

Key Verses:

1:15-17 Then she said, "Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; return after your sister-in-law." 16 But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you *or* turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people *shall be* my people, and your God, my God. 17 Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if *anything but* death parts you and me."

3:11-13 "And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence. 12 And now it is true I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. 13 Remain this night, and when morning comes, if he will redeem you, good; let him redeem you. But if he does not wish to redeem you, then I will redeem you, as the LORD lives. Lie down until morning."

Key Chapters:

Chapter 1 is a key chapter because it demonstrates Ruth's decision of faith, devotion, and commitment to stay with Naomi, a decision that led to her redemption.

Chapter 4 is another key chapter because in this chapter, Ruth goes from being a widow and poverty to marriage and wealth through the Kinsman-Redeemer.

⁷ Notes from the *NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, 1985, electronic version.

Key People:

Ruth, Naomi, Boaz.

Christ as Seen in Ruth:

In the Old Testament, if a person or an estate were sold into bondage, they could be redeemed if certain requirements were met by what is called the Kinsman-Redeemer or *goel*, “close relative.” This is a perfect illustration of the redemptive work of the Savior. The *goel* must:

1. be a blood relative (a kinsman) of those he redeems (Deut. 25:5, 7-10; John 1:14; Rom. 1:3; Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 2:14-15);
2. be able to pay the price of redemption (cf. 2:1; 1 Pet. 1:18-19);
3. be willing to redeem or pay the price (cf. 3:11; Matt. 20:28; John 10:15, 19; Heb. 10:7);
4. be free himself, as Christ was free from the curse of sin, being without sin (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5).

Outline:

- I. The Resolve and Return of Ruth (1:1-22)
 - A. Her Background, 1:1-5
 - B. Her Choice, 1:6-18
 - C. Her Arrival in Bethlehem, 1:19-22
- II. The Reaping Rights of Ruth (2:1-23)
 - A. Her Right to Glean (2:1-3)
 - B. The Results of Her Gleaning (2:4-17)
 - C. The Report of Her Gleaning (2:17-23)
- III. The Request of Ruth (3:1-18)
 - A. Suggested by Naomi (3:1-4)
 - B. Executed by Ruth (3:5-9)
 - C. Agreed to by Boaz (3:10-18)
- IV. The Reward of Ruth (4:1-22)
 - A. A Husband (4:1-12)
 - B. A Son (4:13-17)
 - C. A Lineage (4:18-22)

FIRST SAMUEL (Transition From Judges to Kingship)

Author:

Precisely who wrote 1 and 2 Samuel is not certain. The Jewish talmudic tradition says that it was written by Samuel. However, though 1 and 2 Samuel take their name from the prophet Samuel, the key figure of the early chapters, the prophet could not possibly have written more than part of 1 Samuel, since his death is recorded in chapter 25. But 1 Samuel 10:25 does attest to the fact that Samuel did write a book. Further, 1 Chronicles 29:29 indicates that Nathan and Gad also wrote about the events recorded in Samuel.

Date:

930 B.C. and later.

Title of the Book:

Originally, the books of 1 and 2 Samuel were placed together as one book in the Hebrew Bible. These two books give the history of the monarchs of Israel in the early period of the monarchy. Fundamentally, 1 Samuel is about king

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Saul and 2 Samuel is about king David. Both 1 and 2 Samuel get their names from the prophet Samuel whom God used in the transition from using judges to the establishment of the monarchy.

Though originally one book, 1 and 2 Samuel were divided into two books by the translators of the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT). This division was later followed by Jerome (the Latin Vulgate) and by modern versions. The title of the book has varied from time to time, having been designated “The First and Second Books of Kingdoms” (Septuagint), “First and Second Kings” (Vulgate) and “First and Second Samuel” (Hebrew tradition and most modern versions).

Theme and Purpose:

Beginning with the birth of Samuel and his training in the temple, 1 Samuel describes how this great man of God led Israel as prophet, priest, and the last judge. During Samuel’s leadership, the people of Israel, wanting to be like the nations, demanded a king. Under God’s direction, Samuel then anointed Saul to be the first king. But Saul was rejected by God because of his disobedience. To replace Saul, again under God’s directions, Samuel anointed David, a man after God’s own heart to become the king of Israel. The rest of the book describes the struggles between jealous and demented Saul and godly David.

First Samuel picks up the history of Israel where Judges left off with Samuel following Samson (cf. Judges 16:31). This book traces the transition of leadership in the nation from judges to kings, from a theocracy to a monarchy. Because the people of Israel would not allow *Yahweh* to rule their lives, with every man doing that which was right in his own eyes, the monarchy brought stability because the people were more willing to follow an earthly king. “And the LORD said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them” (8:7).

The clamor for an earthly king in First Samuel was a natural outcome of this practical rejection (8:7). God had intended to give Israel a king (see Gen. 49:10; Deut. 17:14-20), but the people insisted on the king of their choice instead of waiting for God’s king. ... Saul was rejected by the Lord because he failed to learn the truth that “to obey is better than sacrifice” (15:22). He became characterized by mental imbalance, raging jealousy, foolishness, and immorality. David illustrated the principle that, “the Lord does not see as man sees” (16:7). The Lord established the Davidic dynasty because of David’s obedience, wisdom, and dependence on God.⁸

Historically, one of the key purposes of 1 Samuel is to record the divine origin of the Davidic dynasty.

Key Word:

In thought, the key word is *transition*, but in use, *anoint* (7 times) and *rejected* (7 times) are two key terms to this period of transition.

Key Verses:

8:6-7 But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” And Samuel prayed to the LORD. 7 And the LORD said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.”

13:14 But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.

15:22-23 And Samuel said, “Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from *being* king.”

⁸ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 72.

Key Chapters:

Chapter 8, particularly verses 19-22, record the sad complaint of the nation in their desire for a king over them like that of the nations to judge them and fight their battles. Here, in answer to their request, Samuel is told by the Lord to appoint them a king and the prophet assumes his role of becoming a king-maker.

Chapter 15 is another key chapter in that it records the transition of kingdom authority from Saul to David because of Saul's disobedience and self-willed character (cf. 15:23).

Chapter 16 forms another key chapter in that it records the choice and anointing of David.

Key People:

Samuel the prophet, Saul the disobedient king, and David the shepherd.

Christ as Seen in 1 Samuel:

Samuel forms an interesting portrait of Christ in that he was a prophet, a priest, and though he was not a king, he was a judge who was used of God to inaugurate a new age.

Messiah is literally "the anointed one" and Samuel is the first biblical book to use the word *anointed* (2:10). Furthermore, the primary portrait and anticipation of *Messiah* is found in the life of David. He was born in Bethlehem, worked as a shepherd, was ruler over Israel, and became the forerunner of Messiah King through the Davidic dynasty. In the New Testament, Christ is described as a "descendant of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3).

Outline:

- I. Samuel, the Last Judge (1:1-8:22)
 - A. The Call of Samuel (1:1-3:21)
 - B. The Commission of Samuel (4:1-7:17)
 - C. The Concern of Samuel (8:1-22)
- II. Saul, the First King (9:1-15:35)
 - A. The Selection of Saul (9:1-12:25)
 - B. The Rejection of Saul (13:1-15:35)
- III. David, the Next King (16:1-31:13)
 - A. David, the Shepherd, Chosen and Anointed (16:1-23)
 - B. David, the Giant Killer, Acclaimed by the Court of Saul (17:1-58)
 - C. David, the Friend of Jonathan, but Rejected by Saul (18:1-19:24)
 - D. David, the Fugitive, Pursued by Saul (20:1-26:25)
 - 1. David protected by Jonathan (20:1-42)
 - 2. David protected by Ahimelech (21:1-9)
 - 3. David protected by Achish (21:10-15)
 - 4. David and his band of men (22:1-26:25)
 - E. The Refuge of David in Philistine Territory (27:1-31:13)
 - 1. David becomes a Philistine servant (27:1-28:2)
 - 2. Saul consults the medium at En-dor (28:3-25)
 - 3. David dismissed by the Philistines (29:1-11)
 - 4. David destroys the Amalekites (30:1-31)
 - 5. The Philistines and the death of Saul (31:1-13)

SECOND SAMUEL (David's Reign; Expansion of the Nation)

Author:

See comments under 1 Samuel.

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Date:

930 B.C. and later.

Name:

See comments under 1 Samuel.

Theme and Purpose:

With no real break in the story of Israel's kingdom, 2 Samuel continues the narrative of the beginning of Israel's kingdom beginning with Saul's death and continuing with the reign of David. It is distinctively about the forty-year reign of David (5:4-5) and traces his reign through his triumphs and tragedies, which include his sins of adultery, murder, and their consequences on his family and the nation. The theme, as 2 Samuel recounts David's reign, could be summarized as "how sin turns triumphs into troubles." Whereas the kingdom was established under Saul, it is expanded by David. Saul's kingdom gave stabilization to Israel from the time of the judges, but David's reign brought growth or expansion. In the typical fashion of the Bible which candidly tells the story of its leaders with warts and all, 2 Samuel portrays the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of the life of King David.

Key Word:

Since the name of David occurs some 267 times (NASB), his name clearly becomes the key word.

Key Verses:

7:12-16 When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, 15 but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took *it* away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 And your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.

12:12-14 "Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun." 13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die. 14 However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die."

Key Chapters:

Chapter 5 is a key chapter in that it records David's reign as king over all Israel, but **chapters 11-12** are perhaps the more pivotal chapters in that they record David's sin with Bathsheba and her husband Uriah, his rebuke by Nathan the prophet, and the discipline that came on David's house as a result.

Key People:

David, Bathsheba, Nathan, Absalom, Joab, Amnon, and Ahithophel.

Christ as Seen in 2 Samuel:

With the exception of his sins, David remains a type of Christ as the king of Israel. It is in this chapter that God establishes the Davidic Covenant which ultimately has its fulfillment in the person of Christ.

Outline:

Second Samuel naturally falls into three sections: The Triumphs of David (1-10), the Transgressions of David (11), and the Troubles of David (12-24).

- I. The Triumphs of David (1-10)
 - A. The Coronation of the King (1:1-5:6)
 - B. The Consolidation of the Kingdom (5:7-6:23)
 - C. The Covenant Concerning the Kingdom (7:1-29)
 - D. The Conquests of the King (8:1-10:19)
- II. The Transgressions of the King (11:1-27)
 - A. The Adultery by the King (11:1-13)
 - B. The Murder Caused by the King (11:14-27)
- III. The Troubles of the King (12:1-24:25)
 - A. Troubles at Home (12:1-13:36)
 - B. Troubles in the Kingdom (13:37-24:25)

FIRST KINGS (David's Death; Disruption of the Kingdom)**Author:**

The author is unknown, though the Jews credit its writing to Jeremiah. As Ryrie points out:

Whoever the author or compiler of these books was, he used historical sources (11:41; 14:19, 29). He likely was one of the exiles who lived in Babylon, perhaps an unknown one, or Ezra or Ezekiel or Jeremiah (though someone other than Jeremiah would have had to write the last chapter of 2 Kings, since Jeremiah apparently died in Egypt, not Babylon; Jer. 43:6-7).⁹

Date:

About 550 B.C. The release of Jehoiachin from prison is the last event recorded in 2 Kings. This took place in the 37th year of his imprisonment (560 B.C.). Therefore 1 and 2 Kings could not have been written before that event. It seems unlikely that the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity in 538 B.C. had taken place when 1 and 2 Kings were written; had it occurred, the author would probably have referred to it. Probably 1 and 2 Kings were completed in their final form between 560 and 538 B.C.¹⁰

Title of the Book:

First and Second Kings, originally one book (like 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Chronicles) and simply called "Kings" in the Hebrew tradition (*Melechim*), are appropriately titled since they trace the history of the kings of Israel and Judah from the time of Solomon to the Babylonian captivity. First Kings abruptly ends with the beginning of the reign of Ahaziah in 853 B.C.

Theme and Purpose:

After David's death (chaps. 1-2), his son Solomon became king. Chapters 1-11 trace the life and reign of Solomon, including Israel's rise to the peak of her glory, the spread of the nation's kingdom, and the construction of the temple and palace in Jerusalem. But in Solomon's later years, he drifted from the Lord because of his pagan wives who wrongly influenced him and turned his heart away from the worship of God in the temple.

⁹ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Edition*, Moody, electronic media.

¹⁰ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, Editors, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Victor Books, Wheaton, 1983, 1985, electronic media.

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As a result, the king with the divided heart leaves behind a divided kingdom. For the next century, the book of First Kings traces the twin histories of two sets of kings and two nations of disobedient people who are growing indifferent to God's prophets and precepts.¹¹

The next king was Rehoboam, who lost the northern part of the kingdom. After this the Northern Kingdom, which included 10 tribes, was known as Israel, and the Southern Kingdom, which included the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, was called Judah. In the last chapters of 1 Kings, the focus is on the evil of King Ahab and righteous prophet Elijah who condemned Ahab's wickedness and Israel's disobedience.

The central theme, therefore, is to show how disobedience led to the disruption of the kingdom. The welfare of the nation depended on the faithfulness of its leadership and people to the covenants of God with Israel. First Kings not only gives a record of the history of these kings, but it demonstrates the success of any king (and of the nation as a whole) depends on the measure of the king's allegiance to God's law or truth. The book truly illustrates how "righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people" (Prov. 14:34). Unfaithfulness to God's covenant resulted in decline and captivity.

Key Word:

While the key word is "kingdom," which occurs some 357 times (NASB), the key concept is the division of the kingdom.

Key Verses:

9:3-7 And the LORD said to him, "I have heard your prayer and your supplication, which you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built by putting My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. 4 And as for you, if you will walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you *and* will keep My statutes and My ordinances, 5 then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, just as I promised to your father David, saying, 'You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.' 6 But if you or your sons shall indeed turn away from following Me, and shall not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you and shall go and serve other gods and worship them, 7 then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them, and the house which I have consecrated for My name, I will cast out of My sight. So Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples."

11:11 So the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant."

Key Chapters:

Chapters 11 and 12: The key chapters are 11 and 12 which describe the demise of Solomon and the division of the kingdom.

Other significant chapters that have key roles are **3 and 4** dealing with Solomon's choice of wisdom and wise rule, **chapter 8** the dedication of the temple, **chapters 17 through 19** recording the great ministry of Elijah.

Key People:

Solomon, Jeroboam, Rehoboam, Elijah and Elisha, Ahab and Jezebel.

¹¹ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 84.

Christ as Seen in 1 Kings:

Like David, Solomon is one of the greatest types in the Old Testament of Christ, portraying Messiah in His future reign on earth. Solomon especially does this as his fame, glory, wealth, and honor all speak of Christ in His earthly kingdom. Solomon also portrays Christ in the great wisdom he demonstrated.

Outline:

First Kings naturally falls into two sections: the united kingdom (1-11) and the divided kingdom (12-22).

I. The United Kingdom: The Forty Year Reign of Solomon (1:1-11)

- A. Solomon's Accession (1:1-3:1)
- B. Solomon's Wisdom (3:2-4:34)
- C. Solomon's Temple (5:1-8:66; cf. 2 Chron. 2:1-7:22)
- D. Solomon's Fame (9:1-10:29; cf. 2 Chron. 8:1-9:28)
- E. Solomon's Decline and Downfall (11:1-43)

II. The Divided Kingdom: The First Eighty Years of the Two Kingdoms (12-22)

- A. The Cause of Division (12:1-24)
- B. The Reign of Jeroboam in **Israel** (12:25-14:20)
- C. The Reign of Rehoboam in **Judah** (14:21-31)
- D. The Reign of Abijam in **Judah** (15:1-8)
- E. The Reign of Asa in **Judah** (15:9-24)
- F. The Reign of Nadab in **Israel** (15:25-31)
- G. The Reign of Baasha in **Israel** (15:32-16:7)
- H. The Reign of Elah in **Israel** (16:8-14)
- I. The Reign of Zimri in **Israel** (16:15-20)
- J. The Reign of Omri in **Israel** (16:21-28)
- K. The Reign of Ahab in **Israel** (16:29-22:40)
- L. The Reign of Jehoshaphat in **Judah** (22:41-50)
- M. The Reign of Ahaziah in **Israel** (22:51-53)

SECOND KINGS (Dispersion—Willful Sin Has a Woeful End)

Author:

Since 1 and 2 Kings were originally one book and were artificially divided, see the previous discussion regarding the author in the 1 Kings overview.

Date:

About 550 B.C. Again, since 1 and 2 Kings were originally one book, see the discussion on the date in 1 Kings.

Title of the Book:

See 1 Kings.

Theme and Purpose:

Second Kings continues the history of Elijah and his successor, Elisha, but it also continues what might be termed, the "Tale of the Two Kingdoms." As such, it continues to trace the history of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah until they are finally conquered and taken into captivity. Israel fell to Assyria in 722 B.C. and Judah fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C. In both kingdoms the prophets continued to warn the people that God would punish them unless they repented. Second Kings teaches that willful sin in a nation has a woeful end. In 1 and 2 Samuel, the nation is born, in 1 Kings it is divided, and in 2 Kings it is dispersed. After years of pleading with His people through the prophets, God's patience finally turns to discipline just as He promised. Because both books were originally one, 1 and 2 Kings share the same theme and goal. They teach us how unfaithfulness (disobedience to God's

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law and rebellion) must lead to God's discipline and the overthrow of the monarchy. The two kingdoms collapsed because of the failure of the kings to rule righteously and give heed to God's truth.

Key Word:

Two key words are the word, "king," occurring over 400 times (NASB), and the word "prophet," which occurs some 34 times (NASB). But the key term that describes the content would be *dispersion* or *captivities* since this book describes the historical demise that led to the loss of the monarchies and the dispersion of the two kingdoms.

Key Verses:

17:18-23 So the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; none was left except the tribe of Judah. 19 Also Judah did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the customs which Israel had introduced. 20 And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted them and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them out of His sight. 21 When He had torn Israel from the house of David, they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. Then Jeroboam drove Israel away from following the LORD, and made them commit a great sin. 22 And the sons of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them, 23 until the LORD removed Israel from His sight, as He spoke through all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away into exile from their own land to Assyria until this day.

23:27 And the LORD said, "I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen, and the temple of which I said, 'My name shall be there.'"

Key Chapters:

A number of chapters fall into this category: **chapter 2**, Elijah taken to heaven; **chapter 4**, Elisha's miracle for the widow; **chapter 5**, the healing of Naaman and Gehazi's greed; **chapter 6**, Elisha's prayer for his servant and the capture of Syria; **chapter 17**, Israel's fall and the Assyrian Captivity (722 B.C.); **chapters 18-19**, Sennacherib's invasion of Judah and Hezekiah's prayer; **chapters 22-23**, Josiah's revival, reforms, and renewal; **chapters 24-25**, the fall of Judah to Babylon (586 B.C.)

Key People:

Elijah, Elisha, Josiah, Naaman, Hezekiah.

Christ as Seen in 2 Kings:

Elijah naturally anticipates the forerunner of Christ in John the Baptist (Matt. 11:14; 17:10-12; Luke 1:17) and Elisha in many ways reminds us of Jesus Christ in His ministry. Jensen compares and summarizes their ministry:

Elijah is noted for great public acts, while Elisha is distinguished by the large number of miracles he performed, many of them for individual needs. Elijah's ministry emphasized God's law, judgment, and severity. Elisha supplemented this by demonstrating God's grace, love and tenderness. Elijah was like John the Baptist, thundering the message of repentance for sin. Elisha followed this up by going about, as Christ did, doing deeds of kindness, and by doing miracles attesting that the words of the prophets were from God.¹²

Outline:

Second Kings also naturally falls into two sections. The first section, The Divided Kingdom (1:1-17:41), selectively traces the reign of the kings of both nations until the dispersion of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The second

¹² Irving L. Jensen, *II Kings with Chronicles, A Self-Study Guide*, Moody, p. 20.

section, The Surviving Kingdom of Judah (18:1-25:30), then traces the reign of the surviving kings of the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

I. The Divided Kingdom (1:1-17:41)

- A. The Reign of Ahaziah in **Israel** (1:1-18)
- B. The Reign of Jehoram (Joram) in **Israel** (2:1-8:15)
 - 1. The translation of Elijah (2:1-11)
 - 2. The beginning of Elisha's ministry (2:12-25)
 - 3. Jehoram's expedition against Moab (3:1-27)
 - 4. Elisha's ministry (4:1-8:15)
- C. The Reign of Joram (Jehoram) in **Judah** (8:16-24)
- D. The Reign of Ahaziah in **Judah** (8:25-29)
- E. The Reign of Jehu in **Israel** (9:1-10:36)
- F. The Reign of Athaliah in **Judah** (11:1-16)
- G. The Reign of Jehoash (Joash) in **Judah** (11:17-12:21)
- H. The Reign of Jehoahaz in **Israel** (13:1-9)
- I. The Reign of Jehoash (Joash) in **Israel** (13:10-25)
- J. The Reign of Amaziah in **Judah** (14:1-22)
- K. The Reign of Jeroboam II in **Israel** (14:23-29)
- L. The Reign of Azariah (Uzziah) in **Judah** (15:1-7)
- M. The Reign of Zechariah in **Israel** (15:8-12)
- N. The Reign of Shallum in **Israel** (15:13-15)
- O. The Reign of Menahem in **Israel** (15:16-22)
- P. The Reign of Pekahiah in **Israel** (15:23-26)
- Q. The Reign of Pekah in **Israel** (15:27-31)
- R. The Reign of Jotham in **Judah** (15:32-38)
- S. The Reign of Ahaz in **Judah** (16:1-20)
- T. The Reign of Hoshea in **Israel** (17:1-41)
 - 1. Israel's Defeat (17:1-6)
 - 2. Israel's Sins (17:7-23)
 - 3. Israel's Dispersion (17:24-41)

II. The Surviving Kingdom of Judah (18:1-25:30)

- A. The Reign of Hezekiah (18:1-20:21)
- B. The Reign of Manasseh (21:1-18)
- C. The Reign of Amon (21:19-26)
- D. The Reign of Josiah (22:1-23:30)
- E. The Reign of Jehoahaz (2 Chron. 36:1-4) (23:31-33)
- F. The Reign of Jehoiakim (23:34-24:7)
- G. The Reign of Jehoiachin (24:8-16)
- H. The Reign of Zedekiah (24:17-25:21)
 - 1. Rebellion against Babylon and destruction of the Temple (24:17-25:10)
 - 2. Third deportation to Babylon (25:11-21)
- I. The Governorship of Gedaliah, a Puppet Governor (25:22-26)
- J. The Release of Jehoiachin in Babylon (25:27-30)

Note carefully the instructive contrasts Ryrie demonstrates for us in the content of 1 and 2 Kings.¹³ These contrasts clearly demonstrate the truth that Willful Sin has a Woeful End.

¹³ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Edition*, Moody, Chicago, electronic media.

1 & 2 Kings in Contrast

1 Kings

Begins with King David
Opens with Solomon's glory
Begins with the blessings of obedience
Opens with the building of the temple
Traces the progress of apostasy
Shows how kings failed to rule God's people
Introduces the prophet Elijah
Emphasizes the patience of the Lord

2 Kings

Ends with the king of Babylon
Closes with Jehoiachin's shame
Ends with the curse of disobedience
Closes with the burning of the temple
Describes the consequences of apostasy
Depicts consequences of that failure
Introduces the prophet Elisha
Confirms the Lord's sure punishment of sin

FIRST CHRONICLES (Preparation of the Temple)

Author:

Chronicles (originally both 1 and 2 Chronicles were one book) does not identify the author, but Jewish tradition has traditionally ascribed the book to Ezra. The consistency of style throughout the book indicates that though several sources were used in compiling the book, one editor shaped the final product. The various sources include the prophetic records by Samuel (1 Chron. 29:29), Isaiah (2 Chron. 32:32), and others (2 Chron. 9:29; 12:15; 20:34; 33:19); but particularly a source called "the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel" (2 Chron. 16:11; 25:26). The content suggests a priestly authorship because of the strong focus on the temple, the priesthood, and the theocratic line of David and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. That Ezra is the compiler of the book is also supported by the common themes of Ezra and Chronicles as the building and dedication of the temple.

Date:

450-425 B.C.

Title of the Book:

Though the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles cover the same period of Jewish history, the perspective is very different. So while the content is similar, it is not a mere repetition, but more of a spiritual editorial of the history of the people of Israel. The Kings give man's viewpoint while the Chronicles give God's perspective.

Originally one book with 2 Chronicles (until 180 B.C.), the book's Hebrew title means "the words (affairs) of the days," i.e., the annals of Israel from Adam to the Babylonian captivity and Cyrus's decree allowing the exiled Jews to return. In a sense it is a "miniature Old Testament," tracing in capsule form the flow of Old Testament history.¹⁴

When producing the Septuagint, the translators divided Chronicles into two sections. At that time it was given the title, "Of Things Omitted," referring to the things omitted from Samuel and Kings. The name "Chronicles" comes from Jerome in his Latin Vulgate Bible (A.D. 385-405): *Chronicorum Liber*. He meant his title in the sense of "The Chronicles of the Whole of Sacred History."¹⁵

¹⁴ Ryrie.

¹⁵ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 100.

Theme and Purpose:

First Chronicles begins with an outline of history from Adam through the death of King Saul. The rest of the book is about the reign of King David. The books of Chronicles seem like a repeat of Samuel and Kings, but they were written for the returned exiles to remind them that they came from the royal line of David and that they were God's chosen people. The genealogies point out that the Davidic promises had their source in those pledged to Abraham that He would make him the father of a great nation, one through which He would bless the nations. The main theme is that God is faithful to His covenant.

Chronicles emphasizes the role of the Law, the priesthood, and the temple. Although Solomon's temple was gone, the second temple could be regarded as the Remnant's link to the first. This book also taught that the past was pregnant with lessons for their present. Apostasy, idolatry, intermarriage with Gentiles, and lack of unity were the reasons for their recent ruin. It is significant that after the Exile, Israel never again worshiped foreign gods.¹⁶

Key Word:

The key words are David (183 times) and the Davidic Covenant.

Key Verses:

11:1-3 THEN all Israel gathered to David at Hebron and said, "Behold, we are your bone and your flesh. 2 In times past, even when Saul was king, you *were* the one who led out and brought in Israel; and the LORD your God said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and you shall be prince over My people Israel.'" 3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD through Samuel.

17:11-14 "And it shall come about when your days are fulfilled that you must go *to be* with your fathers, that I will set up *one of* your descendants after you, who shall be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He shall build for Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. 13 I will be his father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. 14 But I will settle him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever."

29:11-12 Thine, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Thine is the dominion, O LORD, and Thou dost exalt Thyself as head over all. 12 Both riches and honor *come* from Thee, and Thou dost rule over all, and in Thy hand is power and might; and it lies in Thy hand to make great, and to strengthen everyone.

Key Chapters:

Chapter 17. Because of the importance of God's covenant with David to all of Scripture and its fulfillment in the person of Christ, this chapter is the pivotal and key chapter since it unfolds the Davidic Covenant as does 1 Samuel 7.

Key People:

As mentioned, it is a book about David, though others that were prominent in 1 Samuel are also important here like Nathan, Bathsheba, and Uriah.

Christ as Seen in 1 Chronicles:

What was said in 1 and 2 Samuel regarding David as a type of Christ would naturally be prominent here also.

¹⁶ Wilderson and Boa, p. 101.

Outline:

First Chronicles naturally divides into four sections: (1) The Genealogies or the Royal Line of David (1:1-9:44); (2) the Rise of David or His Anointing (10:1-12:40), (3) The Reign of David (13:1-29:21), and (4) The Assessment of Solomon and the Death of David (29:22-30).

I. Genealogies from Adam to David (1:1-9:44)

- A. Adam to Abraham (1:1-27)
- B. Abraham to Jacob (1:28-54)
- C. Jacob to David (2:1-55)
- D. David to the Captivity (3:1-24)
- E. Genealogies of the Twelve Tribes (4:1-8:40)
- F. Jerusalem's Inhabitants (9:1-34)
- G. The Family of Saul (9:35-44)

II. The Rise and Anointing of David (10:1-12:40)

- A. The Death of Saul (10:1-14)
- B. The Accession of David (11:1-3)
- C. The Capture of Jerusalem (11:4-9)
- D. The Heroes of David (11:10-12:40)

III. David's Reign (13:1-29:21)

- A. David and the Ark (13:1-17:27)
 - 1. David brings the Ark to Chidon: Uzza's death (13:1-14)
 - 2. David's fame and victory over the Philistines (14:1-17)
 - 3. David brings the ark to Jerusalem (15:1-29)
 - 4. David's celebration and arrangements for the ark (16:1-43)
 - 5. David's desire to build a Temple: the Davidic covenant (17:1-27)
- B. David's Wars (18:1-20:8)
- C. David's Sinful Census (21:1-30)
- D. David's Preparations for the Temple (22:1-23:1)
- E. David's Organization of the Levites (23:2-26:32)
 - 1. Numbering of and duties of the Levites (23:2-32)
 - 2. Dividing the Levites into twenty-four groups (24:1-31)
 - 3. Assigning the musicians (25:1-31)
 - 4. Appointing gatekeepers (26:1-19)
 - 5. Assigning the treasures (26:20-28)
 - 6. Delegating magistrates (26:29-32)
- F. David's Civil Leaders (27:1-34)
- G. David's Last Instructions to the People and to Solomon (28:1-21)
- H. David's Offerings and Worship (29:1-21)

IV. The Accession of Solomon and Death of David (29:22-30)

SECOND CHRONICLES (Destruction of the Temple)

Author:

As previously mentioned, 1 and 2 Chronicles were originally one book. As with 1 Chronicles, it does not state who wrote it, but Jewish tradition, which identifies the author as Ezra, and the consistency of viewpoint and style suggest it was probably the work of one person sometimes referred to by writers as the *chronicler*. In support of Ezra as the author are certain commonalities like the extensive lists, the Levites, and the temple. Whoever he was, he had access to a number of official sources like: (1) the book of the kings of Israel and Judah (27:7; 35:27; 36:8); (2) the book of the kings of Judah and Israel (16:11; 25:26; 28:26; 32:32); (3) the book of the kings of Israel (20:34; 33:18); (4) the annals of the book of the kings (24:27); (5) the book Nathan, the prophecy of Ahijah, and the visions of Iddo (9:29); (6) the history of Shemaiah (12:15); (7) the annals of Iddo (13:22); (8) the writings of the prophet Isaiah (26:22); (9) the sayings of Hozai (33:19); (10) the Laments (35:25); and (11) the writings of David and his son Solomon (35:4).

Date:

450-425 B.C.

Title of the Book:

See under 1 Chronicles.

Theme and Purpose:

While 1 Chronicles parallels 1 and 2 Samuel, 2 Chronicles continues the history of David's line and parallels 1 and 2 Kings. But for all practical purposes, it ignores the Northern Kingdom because of apostasy and total absence of any godly kings who patterned their life after David. By contrast, 2 Chronicles focuses on those kings who did walk after the lifestyle of David. Chapters 1-9 describe the building of the temple during Solomon's reign. Chapters 10-36 trace the history of the Southern Kingdom of Judah to the final destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the people to Babylon. Therefore, it devotes extended sections to the lives of those kings who brought revival and reform to the nation like Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

As mentioned, Chronicles goes over some of the same history as Samuel and Kings, but from a different perspective in order to emphasize certain things: In 1 Chronicles, David is the subject while in 2 Chronicles the house of David is central. In Kings the history of the nation is given from the throne whereas in Chronicles it is given from the altar (the temple). In Kings the palace is central, but in Chronicles the temple is prominent. In Kings the focus is on the political history while in Chronicles the focus is on the religious or spiritual element of Israel's history.

Chronicles is more than simply an historical record. It is God's commentary on the spiritual characteristics of David's dynasty. Because of this, the focus is on the kingdom of Judah, the Southern Kingdom where there were revival and godly kings in David's line and why the Northern Kingdom, with no godly kings, is basically ignored.

Key Word:

References to the House of God and the priest(s) occur often. For this reason, the key word conceptually is "the priestly perspective of Judah."

Key Verses:

7:14 ... and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

16:9 For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. You have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars.

See also 1:1; 5:1; 36:14, 17-18.

Key Chapters:

The chapters covering the reforms of godly kings are key chapters in the way they illustrate the promise of 7:14. See especially chapter 34 and the reforms under Josiah when the book of the Law was found, read, and obeyed.

Key People:

Josiah, Rehoboam, Solomon.

Christ as Seen in 2 Chronicles:

The throne of David has been destroyed, but the line of David remains. Murders, treachery, battles, and captivity all threaten the messianic line; but it remains clear and unbroken from Adam to Zerubabel. The fulfillment in Christ can be seen in the genealogies of Matthew 1 and Luke 3.¹⁷

The temple which is so prominent in 2 Chronicles is a beautiful portrait of Christ (see Matt. 12:6; John 2:19; and Revelation 21:22).

Outline:

- I. The Reign of Solomon (1:1-9:31)
 - A. Solomon's Inauguration (1:1-17)
 - B. Solomon's Temple (2:1-7:22)
 - C. Solomon's Fame (8:1-9:28)
 - D. Solomon's Death (9:29-31)
- II. The Kings of Judah (10:1-36:21)
 - A. Rehoboam (10:1-12:16)
 - B. Abijah (13:1-22)
 - C. Asa (14:1-16:14)
 - D. Jehoshaphat (17:1-20:37)
 - E. Jehoram (21:1-20)
 - F. Ahaziah (22:1-9)
 - G. Athaliah (22:10-23:15)
 - H. Joash (23:16-24:27)
 - I. Smaziah (25:1-28)
 - J. Uzziah (26:1-23)
 - K. Jotham (27:1-9)
 - L. Ahaz (28:1-27)
 - M. Hezekiah (29:1-32:33)
 - N. Manasseh (33:1-20)
 - O. Amon (33:21-25)
 - P. Josiah (34:1-35:27)
 - Q. Joahaz (36:1-4)
 - R. Jehoiakim (36:5-8)
 - S. Jehoiachin (36:9-10)
 - T. Zedekiah (36:11-21)
- III. The Decree of Cyrus (36:22-23)

EZRA (Reconstruction of the Temple and Restoration of the People)

Author:

Though the book of Ezra does not name its author, Jewish tradition (the Talmud) ascribes it to Ezra along with Chronicles and Nehemiah. Modern scholarship often agrees that Ezra is the author and that he wrote these using various documents (e.g., 4:7-16), genealogies (e.g., 2:1-70), and personal memoirs (e.g., 7:27-9:15) as his sources. In the Vulgate (Latin Bible), Ezra and Nehemiah are titled 1 and 2 Esdras, while the apocryphal book called 1 Esdras in the English text is 3 Esdras in the Vulgate.

The fact that Ezra is the principal character of the major sections of Ezra lends further support to his authorship. He takes part in the events described in chapters 1-10 and also in chapters 8-10 of Nehemiah. In both cases, the passages are written in the first person.

¹⁷ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 110.

Tradition holds that Ezra was the founder of the Great Synagogue where the canon of Old Testament scripture was settled. Another tradition says that he collected the biblical books into a unit and that he originated the synagogue form of worship.¹⁸

Date:

Ezra wrote between 457 B.C. and 444 B.C.

Although some date the book around 330 B.C., its linguistic similarities with the fifth-century Aramaic papyri from the Jewish community at Elephantine, Egypt, argue for an earlier date during the lifetime of Ezra (who lived to the time of Nehemiah, Neh. 8:1-9; 12:36). Ezra probably finished the book between 456 (when the events of 10:17-44 took place) and 444, when Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem.¹⁹

Title of the Book:

In the ancient Hebrew Bible, Ezra and Nehemiah were treated as one book and called “The Book of Ezra.” Modern Hebrew Bibles designate the two-fold arrangement of Ezra and Nehemiah as in our English versions. Further, Josephus (*Against Apion* 1. 8) and Jerome (*Preface to the Commentary on Galatians*) also considered the books of Ezra and Nehemiah as one. But not all agree.

... there is evidence that the two books were originally separate. The lists in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 are basically the same. This would militate against the idea that the two books were originally one, for it would seem strange to repeat the same list in one volume. The name Ezra for the title of the first work comes from the major person in the second half of the book, who also appears in chapters 8 and 12 of the Book of Nehemiah.²⁰

Theme and Purpose:

From an historical standpoint, Ezra continues the narrative where 2 Chronicles ends and traces the history of the return of the Jews from exile in Babylon and the rebuilding of the temple. From a spiritual and doctrinal standpoint, Ezra demonstrates how God fulfilled His promise to return His people to the land of promise after seventy years of exile as announced by the prophets. As in Chronicles, Ezra, as a priest, shows the centrality of the temple and its worship to the life of the nation as God’s people. It begins with the decree of Cyrus, king of Persia, which allowed a remnant of the people to return. The people enthusiastically began rebuilding the temple, but were delayed for 18 years by enemies from the north. Finally a decree from Darius let them finish (see Ezra 1-6). Chapters 7-10 tell about the return of the priest Ezra who taught the people the law and reformed the nation’s spiritual life.

The theme can be summarized as the spiritual, moral, and social restoration of the Remnant who returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Ezra.

Key Word:

Fitting with the concepts to return to the land and the temple in Jerusalem, two key words are “Jerusalem,” which occurs 48 times, and “temple,” which occurs 25 times.

Key Verses:

1:3 Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem.

¹⁸ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 117.

¹⁹ Ryrie, electronic media.

²⁰ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, Editors, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Victor Books, Wheaton, 1983,1985, electronic media.

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2:1 Now these are the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of the exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away to Babylon, and returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his city.

6:21-22 And the sons of Israel who returned from exile and all those who had separated themselves from the impurity of the nations of the land to *join* them, to seek the LORD God of Israel, ate *the* Passover. **22** And they observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the LORD had caused them to rejoice, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them to encourage them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

7:10 For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Key Chapters:

Key chapters would include (1) the decree of Cyrus allowing the remnant to return, **chapter 1**, (2) the foundation of the temple completed, **chapter 3**, (3) the completion and dedication of the temple and the keeping of the Passover, **chapter 6**, (4) the return under Ezra and his prayer, **chapters 7-9**.

Key People:

Cyrus (Persian king who decreed to allow the return), Ezra (priest and scribe), Jeshua (the high priest), and Zerubbabel.

Christ as Seen in Ezra:

In keeping with the Davidic covenant and God's promises to keep the line of descendants alive for Messiah, Son of David, Ezra and Nehemiah show how God continued to keep His promises by restoring His people to their land.

Outline:

Ezra divides into two sections: the earlier return under Zerubbabel, the restoration of the temple (1-6) and the later return under Ezra, the reformation of the people (7-10). Or it may be divided:

I. The Restoration; The First Return to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel (1-6)

- A. The Decree of Cyrus (1:1-11)
- B. The Census of the People (2:1-70)
- C. The Construction of the Temple Begun (3:1-13)
- D. The Opposition (4:1-24)
- E. The Construction Renewed (5:1-6:12)
- F. The Temple Completed (6:13-22)

II. The Reformation of the People; the Return Under Ezra (7:1-10:44)

- A. The Return to Jerusalem (7:1-8:36)
- B. The Revival of Jerusalem (9:1-10:44)

NEHEMIAH (Reconstruction of the City)

Author:

Though some believe that Nehemiah wrote the book of Nehemiah because of the words, "The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah" (1:1), many believe the evidence suggests that Ezra is the author of Nehemiah and used Nehemiah's memoirs and firsthand accounts as though quoting Nehemiah. On the other hand, many scholars believe that Nehemiah authored the book that bears his name since much of the book is presented as a first-person account of the

circumstances surrounding his return to Jerusalem (chaps. 1-7; 12:31-13:31).²¹ Also, in view of the similarities of Ezra 2 and Nehemiah, one wonders why the same author would repeat the same material in one volume.

Date:

The historical setting is simply that of the last half of the ancient Hebrew book of Ezra-Nehemiah which means it was written about 445 B.C. to 425 B.C.

Title of the Book:

Though originally one book, the last half of that book draws its name from the prominence of Nehemiah, contemporary of Ezra and cupbearer to the king of Persia. Nehemiah's name means "*Yahweh* consoles or comforts."

Theme and Purpose:

The book of Nehemiah continues the history of the Jews who returned from exile. Nehemiah gave up his position as cupbearer to Artaxerxes, the Persian king, to become governor of Jerusalem and lead the people in repairing the city walls. Ezra and Nehemiah were contemporaries (see Neh. 8:2, 9), were both men of God but served *Yahweh* in different capacities. While Ezra was a priest and involved more with the religious restoration of returning Remnant, Nehemiah was a layman and served in a political capacity as governor in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah was also written to show the obvious hand of God in the establishment of His people in their homeland in the years after their exile. Under the leadership of Nehemiah, they accomplished in fifty-two days what had not been done in the ninety-four years since the first return under Zerubabel. By obedient faith they were able to overcome what appeared to be insurmountable opposition.²²

Key Words:

With the rebuilding of the walls the key element, the key words are "wall" and "walls," used some 33 times and "build," "building," "rebuilding," etc., is found more than 20 times.

Key Verses:

4:6 So we built the wall and the whole wall was joined together to half its *height*, for the people had a mind to work.

6:15-16 So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of *the month* Elul, in fifty-two days. 16 And it came about when all our enemies heard *of it*, and all the nations surrounding us saw *it*, they lost their confidence; for they recognized that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.

8:8 And they read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.

Key Chapters:

Key chapters would include, (1) Nehemiah's prayer and God's answer, **chapters 1-2**, (2) the work on the walls, the opposition, and its completion, **chapters 3-7**, (3) the confession of the people and their reaffirmation of the covenant, **chapter 9**.

²¹ Walvoord/Zuck, electronic media.

²² Wilkinson and Boa, p. 125.

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Key People:

Nehemiah, Artaxerxes, Sanballet, Ezra.

Christ as Seen in Nehemiah:

Nehemiah surely portrays Christ in willingness to leave his high position in order to bring about His work of restoration. Further, the decree of Artaxerxes marks the beginning point of Daniel's prophecy of seventy weeks of years which, though interrupted by an unspecified time, begins the countdown for the return of Messiah (Dan. 9:25-27).

Outline:

Like Ezra, Nehemiah also falls into two specific issues: (1) the rebuilding of the walls (1-7) and the restoration of the people (8-13).

- I. The Rebuilding of the Walls (1-7)
 - A. Preparation for Rebuilding (1:1-2:20)
 - B. Rebuilding(3:1-7:73)
- II. The Restoration of the People (8:1-13:31)
 - A. The Renewal of the Covenant (8:1-10:39)
 - B. The Obedience of the People to the Covenant (11:1-13:31)

ESTHER (Protection of God's People)

Author:

The book gives no hint of who wrote it. But whoever it was knew the Persian culture well. The account has all the marks of a person who was there for he described the events as an eyewitness. And he was probably a Jew. Some have suggested that Ezra or Nehemiah wrote the account but no specific evidence supports that view.²³

Date:

The events of Esther occurred between the sixth and seventh chapters of Ezra, between the first return led by Zerubbabel and the second return led by Ezra. Esther was written sometime between 470 and 465, during the latter years of Xerxes' reign (see 10:2-3), or in the reign of his son Artaxerxes (464-424).

Title of the Book:

The book takes its name from the chief character, whose Hebrew name *Hadassah* (Myrtle) was changed to the Persian name *Ester*, which probably means "star."

Theme and Purpose:

Esther tells the story of a beautiful Jewish girl whom King Xerxes of Persia chose to be his queen. When Haman plotted to murder all the Jews, Queen Esther's cousin Mordecai persuaded Esther to try to save her people. Risking her own life, she appealed to the king and rescued the Jews. Although the name of God does not appear in this book, the theme and purpose of the book is to show God's providential care of His people in their trials and persecutions.

²³ Walvoord/Zuck, electronic media.

Key Word:

The key word is “Jews,” which is repeated some 44 times. Thus, in concept, a key term is the word “providence,” God’s providence in caring for the Jews.

Key Verses:

4:14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?

8:17 And in each and every province, and in each and every city, wherever the king’s commandment and his decree arrived, there was gladness and joy for the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many among the peoples of the land became Jews, for the dread of the Jews had fallen on them.

Key Chapters:

The key chapters would include, (1) Haman’s persuading Ahasuerus to decree to annihilate the Jews, **chapter 3**, (2) the honoring of Mordecai and the hanging of Haman, **chapters 6-7**, (3) the reversal of the decree that led to the deliverance of the Jews, **chapter 8**, (4) the Jew’s defensive victory and the inauguration of the feast of Purim, **chapter 9**.

Key People:

Esther, Haman, Mordecai, Xerxes (Ahasuerus, Hebrew form of the name of the king of Persia).

Christ as Seen in Esther:

Esther provides a fitting picture of Christ in that she was willing to put herself in the place of death for her people’s salvation and also in that she acted as an advocate for them. In addition, we also see how God continued to providentially protect the Jews through whom He would give the Messiah.

Outline:

Esther easily divides into two sections: (1) the danger or threat to the Jews (1-3) and (2) the deliverance or triumph of the Jews (4-10). Or it may be divided into three sections: (1) the danger to God’s people (1-3), (2) the decision of God’s servant (4-5), and (3) the deliverance of God’s people (6-10).

I. The Danger to the Jews (1:1-3:15)

- A. The Choice of Esther as Queen in Place of Vashti (1:1-2:23)
- B. The Conspiracy of Haman Against the Jews (3:1-15)

II. The Deliverance of the Jews (4:1-10:3)

- A. The Decision of Esther for the Jews (4:1-5:14)
- B. The Defeat of Haman (6:1-7:10)
- C. The Decree of King Ahasuerus (Xerxes) and Mordecai (8:1-17)
- D. The Defeat Over the Enemies of the Jews (9:1-19)
- E. The Days of the Feast of Purim (9:20-32)
- F. The Declaration of Mordecai’s Fame and Exaltation at Court (10:1-3)

The Poetical Books

Introduction

The previous survey of the first seventeen books (Law and History), Genesis through Nehemiah, covered the whole history of the Old Testament. All the remaining books, *Poetical* and *Prophetical*, fit somewhere into the history of those seventeen books. The next section to be covered, the *Poetical*, is a much smaller section consisting of five books—Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

Before examining them, we should note certain characteristics that all of these five books have.

The seventeen books which lie behind us are *historical*. These five poetical books are *experiential*. The seventeen historical books are concerned with a *nation*, as such. These five poetical books are concerned with *individuals*, as such. The seventeen have to do with *the Hebrew race*. These five have to do with *the human heart*. These five so-called “poetical books” are *not the only poetry* in the Old Testament Scriptures. There are stretches of unexcellable poetry in the writings of the prophets, which we shall come to later ...

We ought clearly to understand, also, that the term “poetical” refers only to their *form*. It must not be thought to imply that they are simply the product of human imagination.... These books portray real human experience, and grapple with profound problems, and express big realities. Especially to they concern themselves with the experiences of the *godly*, in the varying vicissitudes of this changeful life which is ours under the sun ...²⁴

Important Comparisons

The Place of the Poetical Books in the Old Testament

The Old Testament divides into four major sections which relate to the nation of Israel as God’s chosen people in the following manner from the standpoint of their major characteristics or focus:

1. The *Law*—relates to Israel’s moral life.
2. The *Historical*—relates to Israel’s national development and life.
3. The *Poetical*—relates to Israel’s spiritual life.
4. The *Prophetical*—relates to Israel’s future life as fulfilled in the Messiah.

The Relation of the Poetical Books to Each Other

1. The Book of Job—*Blessing* through *Suffering*.
2. The Psalms—*Praise* through *Prayer*.
3. The Proverbs—*Prudence* through *Precept*.
4. Ecclesiastes—*Verity* through *Vanity*.
5. Song of Solomon—*Bliss* through *Union*.²⁵

The Periods of the Poetical in the Old Testament

While Hebrew poetry occurred throughout Old Testament history, there were three primary periods of poetic literature.

I. The Patriarchal period—Job (c. 2000 B.C.)

²⁴ J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore The Book*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1960, pp. 110-111.

²⁵ Baxter, p. 13.

- II. The Davidic period—Psalms (c. 1000 B.C.)
- III. The Solomonic period
 - A. Song of Solomon—a young man’s love
 - B. Proverbs—a middle-aged man’s wisdom
 - C. Ecclesiastes—an old man’s sorrow (c. 950 B.C.)²⁶

Christ in the Poetical Books

As noted previously, Christ, the Messiah, is the heart of all the Bible. With the two disciples on the Emmaus road who were so saddened and perplexed over the events of the previous days as the crucifixion, death, and reports of the resurrection, the resurrected Savior came along side and explained the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures (Luke 24:27). Then later when he appeared to the eleven and He said: “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, than all things which are written about Me in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled” (Luke 24:44).

With this in mind, before launching into the overview of each of these poetical books, it would be well to get their Christological perspective. Regarding this element Geisler writes:

Whereas the *foundation* was laid for Christ in the Law and *preparation* was made for Christ in the books of History, the books of Poetry reveal the *aspiration* for Christ in the hearts of the people. They aspired to a life fulfilled in Christ in both an explicit and an implicit way, both consciously and unconsciously. The following list will serve as an overall guide to the Christ-centered aspirations of the poetical books:

1. Job—aspiration for *mediation* by Christ.
2. Psalms—aspiration for *communion* with Christ.
3. Proverbs—aspiration for *wisdom* in Christ.
4. Ecclesiastes—aspiration for ultimate *satisfaction*.
5. Song of Solomon—aspiration for *union* in love with Christ.²⁷

Hebrew Poetry

The Nature of Hebrew Poetry

Hebrew poetry, so characteristic of the wisdom literature of the Old Testament (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon), is unlike English poetry which emphasizes rhyme and meter. Hebrew poetry relies on *other characteristics* for its impact. Parallelism is the chief characteristic of biblical poetry, but it has other features that distinguish it from the typical prose or narrative we find in the rest of Scripture. First, there a relatively greater conciseness or terseness of form, and second there is a greater use of certain types of rhetorical devices. These are parallelism, rhythm, a rich use of imagery, and figures of speech.

The Three Kinds of Hebrew Poetry

There are three kinds of poetry: (1) lyric poetry, which was originally accompanied by music on the lyre (the Psalms); (2) didactic poetry, which, using maxims, was designed to communicate basic principles of life (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes); (3) dramatic poetry, which used dialog to communicate its message (Job and the Song of Solomon).

The Two Key Elements of Hebrew Poetry

Parallelism. In contrast to English verse which manipulates sound and emphasizes rhyme and meter, Hebrew poetry repeats and rearranges thoughts rather than sounds. Parallelism refers “to the practice of balancing one thought

²⁶ Norman L. Geisler, *A Popular survey of the Old Testament*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1977, p. 180.

²⁷ Geisler, p. 181.

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or phrase by a corresponding thought or phrase containing approximately the same number of words, or at least a correspondence in ideas.”²⁸ There are several types of parallel arrangement of thoughts, with three being basic.

1. *Synonymous*--the thought of the first line is basically repeated in different words in the second line (2:4; 3:1; 7:17).
2. *Antithetical*--the thought of the first line is emphasized by a contrasting thought in the second line (1:6; 34:10). They are often identified with “but.”
3. *Synthetic*--the second line explains or further develops the idea of the first line (1:3; 95:3).
4. *Climactic*--The second line repeats with the exception of the last terms (29:1).
5. *Emblematic*--One line conveys the main point, the second line illuminates it by an image (42:1; 23:1).

Figures of Speech. Like the Hebrew language itself, Hebrew poetry uses vivid images, similes, metaphors, and other rhetorical devices to communicate thoughts and feelings. Some of these are as follows:

1. *Simile*: This is the simplest of all the figures of speech. A simile is a comparison between two things that resemble each other in some way (cf. Ps. 1:3-4; 5:12; 17:8; 131:2).
2. *Metaphor*: This is a comparison in which one thing is likened to another without the use of a word of comparison as in “like” or “as.” In Psalm 23:1, David says, “The Lord is my Shepherd,” that is, He is to me like a shepherd is to his sheep (see also 84:11; 91:4).
3. *Implication*: This occurs when there is only an implied comparison between two things in which the name of one thing is used in place of the other (cf. Ps. 22:16; Jer. 4:7).
4. *Hyperbole*: This is the use of exaggeration or over statement to stress a point (Ps. 6:6; 78:27; 107:26).
5. *Paronomasia*: This refers to the use or repetition of words that are similar in sound, but not necessarily in sense or meaning in order to achieve a certain effect. This can only be observed by those who can read the original Hebrew text. Psalm 96:10 reads, “For all the gods (kol-elohay) of the nations are idols (elilim). This latter word means *nothings*, or things of *naught*; so that we might render it, “The gods of the nations or imaginations.”²⁹ (see also Ps. 22:16; Prov. 6:23).
6. *Pleonasm*: This involves the use of redundancy for the sake of emphasis. This may occur with the use of words or sentences. In Psalm 20:1 we are told, “MAY the LORD answer you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob set you *securely* on high!” Here “name” appears to be redundant. It means *God Himself* and has more emphasis than if only the term “God” had been used.
7. *Rhetorical question*: The use of a question to confirm or deny a fact (Ps. 35:10; 56:8; 106:2).
8. *Metonymy*: This occurs where one noun is used in place of another because of some relationship or type of resemblance that different objects might bear to one another (Ps. 5:9; 18:2; 57:9; 73:9).
9. *Anthropomorphism*: The assigning of some part of the human anatomy to God’s Person to convey some aspect of God’s being like the eyes or ears (cf. Ps. 10:11, 14; 11:4; 18:15; 31:2).
10. *Zoomorphism*: The assigning of some part of an animal to God’s Person to convey certain truths about God (cf. Ps. 17:8; 91:4).

²⁸ Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1994, Electronic Edition, 1997, Parsons Technology, Inc.

²⁹ E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1898, Reprinted in 1968, p. 311.

JOB (Blessing Through Suffering)

Author:

While we know the title of this book obviously comes from its main character, Job, and that he was an historical person (Ezek. 14:14, 20; James 5:11), the author is unknown and there are no textual claims as to the author's identify. Commentators have suggested Job himself, Elihu, Moses, Solomon, and others.

Date:

It is important to distinguish between the date of writing and of the events of the book. Regarding the date, Ryrie writes;

The date of the events in the book and the date of the writing of the book are two different matters. The events may have taken place in a patriarchal society in the second millennium B.C., around the time of Abraham. Several facts support this dating: (1) Job lived more than 140 years (42:16), a not uncommon life span during the patriarchal period; (2) the economy of Job's day, in which wealth was measured in terms of livestock (1:3), was the type that existed in this period; (3) like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Job was the priest of his family (1:5); (4) the absence of any reference to the nation Israel or the Mosaic Law suggests a pre-Mosaic date (before 1500 B.C.).

Three principal views exist concerning the date of writing: (1) in the patriarchal age, shortly after the events happened; (2) in the time of Solomon (950 B.C.); (3) at the time of the Exile or after, though the mention of Job by Ezekiel (Ezek. 14:14) negates such a late date. The detailed report of the speeches of Job and his friends seems to argue for the book's being written shortly after the events occurred. On the other hand, the book shares characteristics of other wisdom literature (e.g., Pss. 88, 89) written during the Solomonic age and should be regarded as a dramatic poem describing real events, rather than a verbatim report.³⁰

Title of the Book:

Set in the time of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, the Book of Job derives its name from its chief character, a man called Job, who, experiencing extreme suffering (the loss of wealth, family and health), struggles with the question of why? The English name, Job, comes from the Hebrew *áIyo*,b. Some believe it comes from *áa,yab*, which basically means, "to be hostile to, to be an enemy," by there is little linguistic evidence to support this.³¹ But not all agree.

Earlier attempts to determine an etymology of the name have given way to evidence from a well-attested west Semitic name in the second millennium found in the Amarna Letters, Egyptian Execration texts, Mari, Alalakh, and Ugaritic documents. The original form of the name was *Ayyabum*, which can mean "Where is [my] father?" or possibly "no father." Either form might suggest an orphan or illegitimacy.³²

³⁰ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Edition*, Moody, p. 777.

³¹ R. Laird Harris, L. Archer, Jr. Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Word Book of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 36).

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Theme and Purpose:

The book is a theodicy (a vindication of God's goodness, justice, and sovereign character in the face of the existence of suffering and evil). As such,

The book wrestles with the age-old question: Why do righteous men suffer, if God is a God of love and mercy? It clearly teaches the sovereignty of God and the need for man to acknowledge such. Job's three friends gave essentially the same answer: All suffering is due to sin. Elihu, however, declared that suffering is often the means of purifying the righteous. God's purpose, therefore, was to strip away all of Job's self-righteousness and to bring him to the place of complete trust in Him.³³

Gleason Archer gives an excellent summary of the theme:

This book deals with the theoretical problem of pain and disaster in the life of the godly. It undertakes to answer the question, Why do the righteous suffer? This answer comes in a threefold form: (1) God is worthy of love even apart from the blessings He bestows; (2) God may permit suffering as a means of purifying and strengthening the soul in godliness; (3) God's thoughts and ways are moved by considerations too vast for the puny mind of man to comprehend. Even though man is unable to see the issues of life with the breadth and vision of the Almighty; nevertheless God really knows what is best for His own glory and for our ultimate good. This answer is given against the background of the stereotyped views of Job's three "comforters," Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.³⁴

A further purpose is certainly to demonstrate the conflict of the ages between God and Satan and to show the relationship of suffering to this conflict. In the end, it demonstrates the truth of Romans 8:28.

Key Words:

The key words are "affliction, misery, hardship, etc." (9 times), "righteous" or "righteousness" (20 times), but the key concept is the *sovereignty* of God.

Key Verses:

2:3-6 And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to ruin him without cause." And Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. "However, put forth Your hand, now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face." So the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life."

13:15 "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him."

42:5-6 "Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me. 'I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You; Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes.'"

42:10 And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the LORD increased all that Job had twofold.

Key Chapters:

Chapters 1-2 are key in that they introduce the reader to the source of Job's suffering—Satan's accusations and the affliction that fell upon Job.

Chapters 38-42 While chapters 3-37 record the counsel of Job's friends who raise the question, "Does God allow the innocent to suffer?" the next key chapters are chapters 38-41, God's speech and silencing of Job, followed by Job's repentance and restoration, chapter 42.

³³ Ryrie, p. 777

³⁴ Archer, Electronic Edition.

Key People:

Job, a blameless and upright man, Satan, Job's accusers, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zopher, and Elihu, the younger and wiser of Job's friend who sought to give Job counsel.

Christ as seen in Job:

Christ is seen in several ways in Job. Job acknowledges a Redeemer (19:25-27) and prays for a Mediator (9:33; 33:23). He knows he needs someone who can explain the mystery of "suffering" which is answered only in Christ Who identifies with our suffering and ultimately both answers Satan's accusations, which are ultimately against God, and defeats him (Heb. 2:14-18; 4:15; Rom. 8:32-34).

Outline:

- I. The Prologue: the Disasters (Afflictions) of Job (1-2)
 - A. His Circumstances and Character (1:1-5)
 - B. His Calamities and their Source—Satan (1:6-2:10)
 - C. His Comforters (2:11-13)
- II. The Dialogues or False Comfort of the Three Friends (3:1-31:40)
 - A. First cycle of debate (3:1-14:22)
 1. Job's lament (3:1-26)
 2. Eliphaz' reply (4:1-5:27; and Job's rejoinder, 6:1-7:21)
 3. Bildad's reply (8:1-22; and Job's rejoinder, 9:1-10:22)
 4. Zophar's reply (11:1-20; and Job's rejoinder, 12:1-14:22)
 - B. Second cycle of debate (15:1-21:34)
 1. Eliphaz' reply (15:1-35; and Job's rejoinder, 16:1-17:16)
 2. Bildad's reply (18:1-21; and Job's rejoinder, 19:1-29)
 3. Zophar's reply (20:1-29; and Job's rejoinder, 21:1-34)
 - C. Third cycle of debate (22:1-31:40)
 1. Eliphaz' reply (22:1-30; and Job's rejoinder, 23:1-24:25)
 2. Bildad's reply (25:1-6; and Job's rejoinder, 26:1-31:40)
- III. The Words of Elihu (32:1-37:24)
 - A. First speech: God's instruction to man through affliction (32:1-33:33)
 - B. Second speech: God's justice and prudence vindicated (34:1-37)
 - C. Third speech: the advantages of pure and consistent piety (35:1-16)
 - D. Fourth speech: God's greatness and Job's guilt in accusing God of unfairness (36:1-37:24)
- IV. God's Revelation from the Whirlwind (38:1-42:6)
 - A. The First Revelation: God's omnipotence proclaimed in creation; Job's self-condemning confession (38:1-40:5)
 - B. The Second Revelation: God's power and man's frailty; Job's humble re-response (40:6-42:6)
- V. The Epilogue: God's rebuke of the false comforters; Job's restoration and reward of a long and blessed life (42:7-17)

PSALMS (Praise Through Prayer)**Author:**

The Book of Psalms is not only the largest book of the Bible, but it perhaps the most widely used book in Scripture because of the way it speaks to the human heart in all of our experiences in life. Again and again sighing is turned into singing through prayer and praise. For the most part, though the texts of the psalms do not designate their authors, the titles do often indicate the author of the various psalms. The following chart designates the authors of these psalms as they are found in the titles:³⁵

³⁵ Ryrie, p. 831.

Authorship of the Psalms		
David	73	Book 1, Book 2, 18, Book 3, 1, Book 4, 2; Book 5, 15
Asaph	12	Ps. 50, 73-83
Korahites	12	Ps. 42-49; 84; 86; 87; 88
Solomon	2	Ps. 72, 127
Moses	1	Ps. 90
Ethan	1	Ps. 89

Division and Classification of the Psalms:

Divisions of the Psalter

The Psalms are really five books in one. Each of the following book division concludes with a doxology while Psalm 150 occupies the place of the doxology and forms an appropriate conclusion to the entire collection.

Epiphanius said, “The Hebrews divided the Psalter into five books so that it would be another Pentateuch.” The Midrash of Psa. 1:1 states, “Moses gave the Israelites the five books of the Law, and to correspond to these David gave to them the Book of the Psalms in five books.”³⁶

This correspondence to the Pentateuch may be seen in the following outline:³⁷

1. Psalms about man and creation (1-41)—corresponds to Genesis.
2. Psalms about Israel and redemption (42-72)—corresponds to Exodus.
3. Psalms about worship and the Temple (73-89)—corresponds to Leviticus.
4. Psalms about our sojourn on the earth (90-106)—corresponds to Numbers.
5. Psalms about praise and the Word of God (107-150)—corresponds to Deuteronomy.

Another way of looking at the book divisions:

Book	Psalms	Author	General Content
Book I	Psalms 1-41	David	Songs of worship
Book II	Psalms 42-72	David & Korah	Hymns of petition
Book III	Psalms 73-89	Mainly Asaph	Hymns of petition
Book IV	Psalms 90-106	Mainly Anonymous	Anthems of praise
Book V	Psalms 107-150	David and Anonymous	Anthems of praise

³⁶ Charles L. Feinberg, *Class Notes*, Dallas Theological Seminary, p. 3, 1960’s. Feinberg pointed out this quote was very ancient. The *Midrash* is a Rabbinical Commentary.

³⁷ Geisler, pp. 195-196.

Categories or Types of Psalms

As to their types, the following illustrates a generally agreed upon set of categories:

1. **Lament** or **Petition**, either individual (Ps. 3) or communal (Ps. 44);
2. **Thanksgiving** or **Praise**, either individual (Ps. 30) or communal (Ps. 65);
3. **Trust** in God (Ps. 4);
4. **Enthronement** hymns of *Yahweh*: psalms concerning Jerusalem (Ps. 48), and royal psalms (some of which are messianic; Ps. 2, 110);
5. **Didactic** and **Wisdom** psalms (Pss. 1, 37, 119).
6. **Theme** psalms: The psalms may also be classified according to special themes as: creation (Ps. 8, 19), nature psalms (Ps. 19; 104), acrostic or memory device psalms (Ps. 111, 112, 119), the Exodus (Ps. 78), imprecation (Ps. 7), penitence (Ps. 6), pilgrim psalms (Ps. 120), and Messianic psalms, those that include prophecies about Messiah as Psalm 2, 8, 16, 22, 40, 45, 72, 110, 118.

Date:

With their very broad chronological range, the wide thematic arrangement, and the many different audiences living under a variety of conditions, the psalms reflect a multitude of moods and experiences that make them extremely relevant to the reader regardless of the day in which he lives. Regarding the date of the various psalms, Archer writes:

Of these, the earliest would naturally be Ps. 90, by Moses, presumably composed about 1405 B.C. The Davidic psalms would have originated between 1020 and 975 B.C.; those of Asaph from approximately the same period; Ps. 127 from the period of Solomon's reign, possibly 950. It is hard to date the descendants of Korah and the two Ezrahites who are mentioned; presumably they were pre-exilic. Of the psalms not carrying titles, some were undoubtedly Davidic (e.g., 2 and 33) and the others date from later periods all the way up to the return from exile (such as 126 and 137, the latter of which is at least as late as the Exile). No convincing evidence, however, has been offered for the dating of any of the psalms later than approximately 500 B.C.³⁸

Title of the Book:

In the Hebrew, The Book of Psalms is titled, *Tehillim* (praise) or *Sepher Tehillim* (book of praises). A shortened form is *Tillim*. Only one psalm (145) is designated *Tehillah* (praise), but praise is the heart of the psalms. The Septuagint gives the name *Psalmoi* (psalms), that is "songs or poems sung with musical accompaniment." *Psalmos* comes from *psallein*, "to pluck a stringed instrument" as an accompaniment to song.

Theme and Purpose:

The psalms provide us with a message of hope and comfort through the common theme of worship. They are, in essence, an antidote to fear and complaining, through a personal response to the person and work of God. They are an expression of the worship, faith, and spiritual life of Israel. In the psalms we have a mirror of the heart of God's people recording the simple, universal human experiences of man in the light of God's person, promises, plan, and presence.

As a collection of a 150 psalms they naturally cover a great variety of feelings, circumstances and themes. This means it is difficult to make any generalizations about a theme or purpose, but it is safe to say that all the psalms embody a personal response on the part of the believer toward the goodness and grace of God. Often they include a record of the psalmist's own inner emotions of discouragement, anxiety, or thankfulness even when faced with the opposition of God's enemies or in view of God's varied providences. But whether the psalmist is occupied with a mournful or a joyous theme, he is always expressing himself as in the presence of the living God. There are a few

³⁸ Archer, Electronic Media.

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psalms, of course, which mostly contain the thoughts and revelations of God Himself, such as Ps. 2, but these are most exceptional.³⁹

Many of the psalms survey the Word of God, His attributes, and are Messianic in their scope in anticipation of the coming Messiah.

Key Word:

In thought, *worship*, is certainly a key word as expressed in the theme above. In this regard, *praise*, which occurs some 166 times and some form of the word *bless, blessing, bless*, occurs over a 100 times in the NASB.

Key Verses:

How do you list key verses in a book like psalms where nearly everyone is bound to have his or her own special verses that have been dear to their heart, but the following is a suggestion:

1:1-3 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

19:8-11 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. 10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. 11 Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.

19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.

119:9-11 How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. 10 With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. 11 Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.

145:21 My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD; And all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever.

Key Chapters:

As with the verses, so we also face difficulty in selecting key chapters, but the following are suggested. Psalm 1, 22, 23, 24; 37; 78; 100; 119; 121, and 150. Psalm 100 beautifully unites to central themes of praise and worship.

Key People:

Though the titles to the psalms do sometimes point to the subject or author of the psalm, like David or Korah, the text of the psalms does not. Rather, the focus seems to be more on the people of God in their worship and walk with Lord.

Christ as seen in Psalms:

Many of the psalms are Messianic and speak of the person and work of Christ. They fall into falling categories:

1. **Typically messianic:** These psalms are less obviously messianic. The psalmist in some way is a type of Christ (cf. 34:20; 69:4, 9), but other aspects of the passage do not apply. Perhaps, in this case Jesus and the apostles were applying familiar psalmic expressions to their experiences (e.g., 109:8 in Acts 1:20).

³⁹ Adapted from Archer's *Survey of the Old Testament*, Electronic Media.

2. **Typological-prophetic:** though the psalmist describes his own experience, the language is such that points beyond his own life and becomes historically true only in the person of Christ (22).
3. **Indirectly messianic:** when the psalm was written it referred to the house of David or a specific king, but will find its final and ultimate fulfillment only in the person of Christ (2, 45, 72).
4. **Purely prophetic:** refers directly to Christ without any reference to any other person or son of David (110).
5. **Enthronement or eschatological:** these are psalms that anticipate the coming of the Lord and the consummation of His Kingdom as fulfilled in the person of Messiah, Christ (96-99).

Specific Prophetic fulfillments applied to Christ:

Prophecy	Psalm	New Testament Passage
1. Birth	104:4	Heb. 1:7
2. Humiliation	8:4	Heb. 2:6
3. Deity	45:6	Heb. 1:8
4. Ministry	69:9	John 2:17
5. Rejection	118:22	Matt. 21:42
6. Betrayal	41:9	John 13:18
7. Crucifixion events	22	Matt. 27:39, 43, 46; Luke 23:35
8. Resurrection	2 and 16	Acts 2:27
9. Ascension	68:18	Eph. 4:8
10. Reign	102:26	Heb. 1:11

Outline:

Book I: Psalms 1-41

- Psalm 1: The Blessed Man: The Two Ways of Life Contrasted: that of Word and the World
- Psalm 2: The Messiah King: The Confederacy Against God and Christ
- Psalm 3: Quietness Amid Troubles: Protection in Danger
- Psalm 4: An Evening Prayer of Trust in God
- Psalm 5: A Morning Prayer of God’s Confidence in God’s Presence
- Psalm 6: A Prayer of a Soul in Deep Anguish
- Psalm 7: A Prayer for Refuge
- Psalm 8: The Glory of the Creator and Man’s Dignity
- Psalm 9: A Prayer of Thanksgiving for God’s Justice
- Psalm 10: A Prayer for the Overthrow of the Wicked
- Psalm 11: The Lord as a Refuge and Defense
- Psalm 12: A Prayer for Help Against Lying Tongues
- Psalm 13: A Prayer for Help in Trouble
- Psalm 14: A Description of the Folly and Wickedness of Man
- Psalm 15: A description of the Godly Man
- Psalm 16: The Lord as the Refuge of the Saints
- Psalm 17: A Prayer for Deliverance through God’s Justice
- Psalm 18: A Prayer of Praise for Deliverance
- Psalm 19: God’s Revelation in His Creation Work and Written Word
- Psalm 20: Prayer for Victory Over Enemies

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- Psalm 21: The Lord as the Strength of the King
- Psalm 22: A Portrait of the Cross: a Psalm of Anguish and Praise
- Psalm 23: A Portrait of the Divine Shepherd: a Psalm of the Goodness of God
- Psalm 24: A Psalm of the King of Glory
- Psalm 25: An Acrostic Psalm: a Prayer for Deliverance, Guidance, and Forgiveness
- Psalm 26: The Plea of Integrity and for Redemption
- Psalm 27: A Prayer of Fearless Confidence in the Lord
- Psalm 28: Prayer for Help and Praise for its Answer: the Lord My Strength and My Shield
- Psalm 29: The Powerful Voice of God
- Psalm 30: A Prayer of Thankfulness for God's Faithfulness in a Time of Need
- Psalm 31: A Prayer of Complaint, Petition, and Praise
- Psalm 32: The Blessing of Forgiveness and Trust in God
- Psalm 33: Praise to the Lord as the Creator and Deliverer
- Psalm 34: Praise to the Lord as the Provider and Deliverer
- Psalm 35: A Prayer for Vindication and Rescue from Enemies
- Psalm 36: The Wickedness of Men Contrasted with the Loving Kindness of God
- Psalm 37: A Plea for Resting in the Lord
- Psalm 38: A Prayer for Reconciliation Acknowledging the Heavy Burden of Sin
- Psalm 39: A Prayer Acknowledging the Frailty of Man
- Psalm 40: Praise for the Joyful Experience and Expectation of Salvation
- Psalm 41: Praise for God's Blessings in Adversity

Book II: Psalms 42-72

- Psalms 42-43: Longing For God and Hoping in the Lord's Salvation
- Psalm 44: National Lament and Prayer for Redemption
- Psalm 45: The Wedding Song of a Son of David
- Psalm 46: God is Our Refuge and Strength
- Psalm 47: The Lord Is the Victorious King
- Psalm 48: Praise for Mount Zion, the Beautiful City
- Psalm 49: The Emptiness of Riches Without Wisdom
- Psalm 50: The Sacrifice of Thanksgiving
- Psalm 51: Confession and the Forgiveness of Sin
- Psalm 52: The Futility of Boastful Wickedness
- Psalm 53: A Portrait of the Godless
- Psalm 54: The Lord as Our Help!
- Psalm 55: The Lord Sustains the Righteous!
- Psalm 56: Trust in the Midst of Our Fears
- Psalm 57: The Exaltation of the Lord in the Midst of Alienation
- Psalm 58: The Righteous Shall Surely Be Rewarded
- Psalm 59: Prayer For Deliverance From Enemies
- Psalm 60: Prayer For Deliverance of the Nation
- Psalm 61: Prayer From a Fainting Heart
- Psalm 62: Waiting On the Lord
- Psalm 63: Thirsting God's Love
- Psalm 64: Prayer for Protection
- Psalm 65: God's Bounty for Earth and Man
- Psalm 66: Remember What God Has Done
- Psalm 67: A Call for All to Praise God
- Psalm 68: God Is a Father to the Oppressed
- Psalm 69: Prayer for Deliverance According to God's Compassion
- Psalm 70: Prayer for the Poor and Needy
- Psalm 71: Prayer for the Aged

- Psalm 72: The Glorious Reign of Messiah

Book III: Psalms 73-89

- Psalm 73: Prayer for an Eternal Perspective
- Psalm 74: Plea for Help in a Time of National Adversity
- Psalm 75: Justice Is the Lord's
- Psalm 76: The Victorious Power of the God of Jacob
- Psalm 77: In the Day of Trouble, Remember God's Greatness
- Psalm 78: Lessons From Israel's History
- Psalm 79: A Plea for the Lord to Remember the Sheep of His Pasture
- Psalm 80: Israel's Plea for God's Mercy
- Psalm 81: A Plea for Israel to Listen to the Lord
- Psalm 82: Unjust Judges Rebuked
- Psalm 83: Prayer for Judgment on Israel's Enemies
- Psalm 84: A Deep Longing for the Presence of God
- Psalm 85: Prayer for Revival
- Psalm 86: Prayer for Mercy on the Nation
- Psalm 87: The Joy of Living in Zion
- Psalm 88: A Prayer in the Darkness of Despair
- Psalm 89: Claiming God's Person and Promises in Affliction

Book IV: Psalms 90-106

- Psalm 90: Teach Us to Number Our Days
- Psalm 91: In the Shelter of the Most High
- Psalm 92: In Praise of the Lord
- Psalm 93: *Yahweh* Reigns Gloriously
- Psalm 94: *Yahweh* Is the Judge of the Earth: Vengeance is His
- Psalm 95: Let Us Kneel Before Our Maker: a Call to Worship
- Psalm 96: Worship the Lord Who Will Judge the World in Righteousness
- Psalm 97: Rejoice! The Lord Reigns
- Psalm 98: Sing a New Song to the Lord
- Psalm 99: Exalt the Lord Who Reigns
- Psalm 100: Serve the Lord With Gladness: He is the Lord and He is Good
- Psalm 101: Commitment to a Holy Life
- Psalm 102: Prayer of a Saint Who is Overwhelmed
- Psalm 103: Bless the Lord: His Compassions Never Fail!
- Psalm 104: The Lord's Care Over All Creation
- Psalm 105: The Lord's Faithful Acts in Salvation History
- Psalm 106: A Remembrance of *Yahweh's* Love and Israel's Disobedience

Book V: Psalms 107-150

- Psalm 107: Praise for God's Deliverance from Manifold Troubles
- Psalm 108: Praise and Prayer for Victory
- Psalm 109: A Imprecatory Prayer for Vindication and Judgments Against Enemies
- Psalm 110: Messiah Pictured as the Priest King Warrior
- Psalm 111: Celebration of God's Faithfulness
- Psalm 112: The Triumph of Faith
- Psalm 113: Praise to the Exalted Lord Who Condescends to the Lowly
- Psalm 114: Praise for the Exodus
- Psalm 115: The Impotence of Idols and the Greatness of the Lord
- Psalm 116: Praise to the Lord for Deliverance
- Psalm 117: The Praise of All People

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- Psalm 118: Praise for the Lord's Saving Goodness
- Psalm 119: In Praise of the Scriptures
- Psalm 120: Prayer for Deliverance from Slanderers
- Psalm 121: The Lord is My Guardian
- Psalm 122: Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem!
- Psalm 123: Plea for Mercy
- Psalm 124: Our Helper is the Maker of Heaven and Earth!
- Psalm 125: Peace Be on Israel
- Psalm 126: Praise for Restoration!
- Psalm 127: Praise for Children, a Gift from the Lord
- Psalm 128: The Family Blessed by the Lord
- Psalm 129: The Prayer of the Persecuted
- Psalm 130: Waiting for God's Redemption
- Psalm 131: Childlike Trust in the Lord
- Psalm 132: Prayer for the Lord's Blessing on Zion
- Psalm 133: The Blessedness of Brotherly Unity
- Psalm 134: Praise to the Lord in the Night
- Psalm 135: Praise for the Wondrous Works of God
- Psalm 136: Praise for God's Mercy Which Endures Forever
- Psalm 137: Tears Over Captivity
- Psalm 138: The Lord Answers Prayer and Delivers the Humble
- Psalm 139: The Lord Knows Me!
- Psalm 140: Prayer for Deliverance: You Are My God!
- Psalm 141: May My Prayer Be Like Incense!
- Psalm 142: No One Cared but the Lord; He Alone Is My Portion
- Psalm 143: Prayer for Guidance; Lead Me on Level Ground
- Psalm 144: The Lord is My Rock and My Warrior
- Psalm 145: Praise for the Lord's Greatness and Wonderful Works
- Psalm 146: Praise to the Lord, an Abundant Helper
- Psalm 147: Praise to the Lord Who Heals the Brokenhearted
- Psalm 148: Praise to the Lord, the Wise Creator
- Psalm 149: Praise to the Lord Who Delights in His People
- Psalm 150: Praise to the Lord

PROVERBS (Wisdom Through Precept)

Author:

According to 1 Kings 4:32, Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs. And while he wrote most of proverbs in this book, later chapters indicate that he was not the only author of the book. Three sections of the proverbs are ascribed to Solomon; chapters 1:1-9:18; 10:1-22:16, and 25:1-29:27. However, the proverbs in the latter section (25:1-29:27) were selected from Solomon's collection by King Hezekiah's committee (25:1). Proverbs 22:17 refers to the "sayings of the wise," and 24:23 mentions additional "sayings of the wise." Proverbs 22:17-21 serves as an introduction which suggests that these sections stem from a circle of wise men, not from Solomon himself. Chapter 30 is specifically attributed to Agur, son of Jakeh, and 31:1-9 to King Lemuel. Lemuel's sayings contain several Aramaic spellings that point to a non-Israelite background.

Date:

950-700 B.C.

As a book of wisdom, Proverbs is not an historical book but rather the product of the school of wisdom in Israel. Solomon's proverbs were written before his death in 931 B.C., and those collected by Hezekiah's scribes probably around 700 B.C.

Title of the Book:

Proverbs obviously gets its name from its contents—short sayings or maxims that convey truth in a pointed and pithy way. The Hebrew word for *proverb* (from *ma, sEa, l*, “to be like, represent”) means “parallel,” “similar,” or “a comparison.” It refers to a comparison or simile as underlying the moral maxim. As a pithy saying, a proverb centers in a comparison or an antithesis. The title comes from the fact this writing is a compendium of moral and spiritual instruction designed to enable one to live wisely.

Theme and Purpose:

As suggested by the title and the meaning of the term *proverb*, the theme and purpose of the book is wisdom for living through special instruction on every conceivable issue of life: folly, sin, goodness, wealth, poverty, the tongue, pride, humility, justice, family (parents, children, discipline), vengeance, strife, gluttony, love, laziness, friends, life, and death. No book is more practical in terms of wisdom for daily living than Proverbs.

The fundamental theme is “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (1:7a). The absence of a fear of God leads to an unbridled and foolish life. To fear the Lord is to stand in awe of His holy character and power. At the same time, Proverbs shows that true wisdom leads to the fear of the Lord (2:1-5).

Key Words:

The key word is “wisdom,” “wise,” etc., occurring some 110 times. Also important and related to wisdom are the terms, “instruction” and “taught, teach,” together occurring some 23 times.

Key Verses:

1:5-7 A wise man will hear and increase in learning, And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel, To understand a proverb and a figure, The words of the wise and their riddles. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.

9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Key Chapters:

There are obviously many sections of proverbs that might be considered as key such as **chapter 1:20-33** where wisdom is personified as a woman inviting all to come to her and learn, but the majority refuse to heed her appeal, but perhaps **chapter 31** gets the honors as the key chapter.

The last chapter of Proverbs is unique in ancient literature, as it reveals a very high and noble view of women. The woman in these verses is: (1) A good woman (31:13, 15-16, 19, 25); (2) a good wife (31:11-12, 23-24); (3) a good mother (31:14-15, 18, 21, 27); and (4) a good neighbor (31:11-12, 23-24). Her conduct, concern, speech, and life stand in sharp contrast to the woman pictured in chapter 7.⁴⁰

Christ as seen in Proverbs:

In chapter 8, wisdom is personified and seen in its perfection. It is divine (8:22-31), it is the source of biological and spiritual life (3:18; 8:35-36), it is righteous and moral (8:8-9), and it is available to all who will receive it (8:1-6, 32-35). This wisdom became incarnate in Christ “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3). “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus,

⁴⁰ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 164.

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who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30; cf. 1 Cor. 1:22-24).⁴¹

Outline:

- I. Introduction: the Purpose of Proverbs (1:1-7)
- II. The Precepts of Wisdom: Proverbs to Youth (1:8-9:18)
 - A. Obey Parents (1:8-9)
 - B. Avoid Bad Company (1:10-19)
 - C. Heed Wisdom’s Call and Advice (1:20-33)
 - D. Avoid the Adulteress (2:1-22)
 - E. Trust and Honor God (3:1-12)
 - F. The Blessings of Wisdom (3:13-20)
 - G. Be Kind and Generous to Others (3:21-35)
 - H. Get Wisdom (4:1-9)
 - I. Avoid Bad Company (4:10-19)
 - J. Above All, Keep Your Heart (4:20-27)
 - K. Do Not Commit Adultery (5:1-14)
 - L. Be Faithful to Your Own Spouse (5:15-23)
 - M. Avoid Surety (6:1-5)
 - N. Shun Laziness (6:6-19)
 - O. Avoid Adultery (6:20-35)
 - P. Avoid the Adulteress (7:1-27)
 - Q. Wisdom and Folly Contrasted (8:1-9:18)
- III. The Proverbs of Solomon (10:1-24:34)
 - A. Proverbs Contrasting the Godly and the Wicked (10:1-15:33)
 - B. Proverbs Encouraging Godly Lives (16:1-22:6)
 - C. Proverbs Concerning Various Practices (22:17-23:35)
 - D. Proverbs Concerning Various People (24:1-34)
- IV. The Proverbs of Solomon Copied by Hezekiah’s Men (25:1-29:27)
 - A. Proverbs Concerning Relationships with Others (25:1-26:28)
 - 1. With kings (25:1-7)
 - 2. With neighbors (25:8-20)
 - 3. With enemies (25:21-24)
 - 4. With yourself (25:25-26:2)
 - 5. With fools (26:3-12)
 - 6. With sluggards (26:13-16)
 - 7. With gossips (26:17-28)
 - B. Proverbs Concerning Actions (27:1-29:27)
 - 1. In relation to life (27:1-27)
 - 2. In relation to law (28:1-10)
 - 3. In relation to wealth (28:11-28)
 - 4. In relation to stubbornness (29:1-27)
- V. The Words of Agur (30:1-33)
 - A. Personal Words (30:1-14)
 - B. Numerical Proverbs (30:15-33)
- VI. The Words of Lemuel (31:1-9)
- VII. The Capable Wife (31:10-31)

⁴¹ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 164.

ECCLESIASTES (A Search For Purpose)

Author:

There are two lines of evidence (external and internal) that point to Solomon as the author of Ecclesiastes. For the external evidence, the Jewish tradition attributes the book to Solomon. Internally, a number of lines of evidence show that Solomon was surely the author. First, the author identifies himself as “the son of David, king in Jerusalem” (1:1). Then, references in the book to the author’s unrivaled wisdom (1:16), extreme wealth (2:7), opportunities for pleasure (2:3), and extensive building activities (2:4-6) all suggest Solomon as the author. There is simply no other descendant of David who measured up to these descriptions.

Date:

931 B.C.

According to Jewish tradition, Solomon wrote the Song in his early years, expressing a young man’s love. He wrote the Proverbs in his mature years, manifesting a middle-aged man’s wisdom. He reportedly wrote Ecclesiastes in his declining years, revealing an old man’s sorrow (cf. 12:1). Perhaps Ecclesiastes is the record of Solomon’s regret for and repentance from his grave moral lapses recorded in 1 Kings 11. The Book of Ecclesiastes, then, would have been written just before Solomon’s death and subsequent division of his kingdom that occurred in 931 B.C.⁴²

Title of the Book:

The name Ecclesiastes stems from the title given in the Greek translation, the Septuagint. Greek term, *ecclesiastes*, means “assembly” and is derived from the word *ekkle,sia*, “assembly, church.” “The Hebrew title is Qoheleth, which means “one who convenes and speaks at an assembly,” or “an ecclesiastic” or “preacher.”

Theme and Purpose:

The basic theme is the futility of life apart from God. In the development of this theme, four key purposes emerge.

First, in seeking to demonstrate that life without God has no meaning, Solomon is seeking to demolish confidence in man-based achievements and wisdom; he shows that all of man’s goals or the “way that seems right to man” must of necessity lead to dissatisfaction and emptiness.” Solomon recorded the futility and emptiness of his own experiences to make his readers desperate for God. He sought to show that their quest for happiness cannot be fulfilled by man himself in the pursuits of this life.

Second, Solomon affirms the fact that much in life cannot be fully understood, which means we must live by faith, not by sight. Life is full of unexplained enigmas, unresolved anomalies, and uncorrected injustices. There is much in life that man cannot comprehend nor control, but by faith, we can rest in the sovereign wisdom and work of God. Much like the Book of Job, Ecclesiastes not only affirms that man is finite, but that he must learn to live with mystery. Life down here on earth, “life under the sun,” cannot provide the key to life itself for our world fallen, bankrupt. In view of this, man must have more than a horizontal outlook; he must have the upward look to God, fearing and trusting Him. Enigmas and injustices must be left in His hands to resolve.

Third, Ecclesiastes presents a realistic view of life that counterbalances the optimism of Proverbs. It shows there are exceptions to the laws and promises of proverbs, at least from the standpoint of this life. Proverbs 10:16 affirms that justice is meted to the righteous and the wicked, but Ecclesiastes 8:14 observes that this is not always the case, at least not in this life. Are these contradictions? No, because Proverbs is noting the general laws of God without noting the exceptions that occur because we live in a fallen, sin-ridden world. Ecclesiastes points out that while a righteous order exists, as affirmed in Proverbs, it is not always evident to man as he views life “under the sun” from his finite perspective.

Fourth, Solomon showed that man, left to his own strategies will always find life empty, frustrating, and mysterious. The book, however, does not mean that life has no answers, that life is totally useless or meaningless. Meaning

⁴² Geisler, p. 214.

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and significance can be found, he explained, in fearing God. Frustrations can thus be replaced with contentment through fellowship with God.

Key Word:

Vanity

Key Verses:

1:2 “Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.”

2:24 There is nothing better for a man *than* to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen, that it is from the hand of God.

12:13-14 The conclusion, when all has been heard, *is*: fear God and keep His commandments, because this *applies to* every person. 14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

Key Chapter:

At the end of Ecclesiastes, the Preacher looks at life through “binoculars.” On the other hand, from the perspective of the natural man who only sees life “under the sun,” the conclusion is, “all is vanity.” Life’s every activity, even though pleasant for the moment, becomes purposeless and futile when viewed as an end in itself.

The preacher carefully documents the latter view with a long list of his own personal pursuits in life. No amount of activities or possessions has satisfied the craving of his heart. Every earthly prescription for happiness has left the same bitter aftertaste. Only when the Preacher views his life from God’s perspective “above the sun” does it take on meaning as a precious gift “from the hand of God” (2:24).

Chapter 12 resolves the book’s extensive inquiry into the meaning of life with the single conclusion, “Fear God and Keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (12:13).⁴³

Christ as seen in Ecclesiastes:

Since Christ alone is man’s means to God where man finds wholeness and satisfaction, or life and life more abundantly (John 10:10; 7:37-38), the futility and perplexity experienced in life can only be removed through a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus. Man’s aspiration for significance and satisfaction are found only in the Savior.

Outline:⁴⁴

- I. Introduction: The Problem Stated (1:1-3)
 - A. The Problem Demonstrated (1:4-2:26)
 - 1. The Futility of the Cycles of Life (1:4-11)
 - 2. The Futility of Human Wisdom (1:12-18)
 - 3. The Futility of Pleasure and Wealth (2:1-11)
 - 4. The Futility of Materialism (2:12-23)
 - 5. Conclusion: Enjoy and Be Content with the Providences of God (2:24-26)
- II. God’s Immutable Plan for Life (3:1-22)
 - A. He Predetermines the Events of Life (3:1-11)
 - B. He Predetermines the Conditions of Life (3:12-13)
 - C. He Judges All (3:14-21)
 - D. Conclusion (3:22)

⁴³ Wilkinson and Boa, pp. 170-171.

⁴⁴ Adapted from *The Ryrie Study Bible*, pp. 1016-1017.

III. The Futility of the Circumstances of Life (4:1-5:20)

- A. Evil Oppression (4:1-3)
- B. The Emptiness of Hard Work (4:4-12)
- C. The Emptiness of Political Success (4:13-16)
- D. The Emptiness of Human Religion (5:1-7)
- E. The Emptiness of Human Riches (5:8-17)
- F. Conclusion (5:18-20)

IV. The Futility of Life as a Whole (6:1-1)

- A. Wealth Cannot Satisfy (6:1-2)
- B. Children Cannot Satisfy (6:3-6)
- C. Labor Cannot Satisfy (6:7-12)

V. Counsel for Living With Vanity (7:1-12:8)

- A. Counsel in View of Man's Wickedness (7:1-29)
- B. Counsel in View of God's Inscrutable Providences (8:1-9:18)
- C. Counsel in View of the Uncertainties of Life (10:1-20)
- D. Counsel in View of the Aging Processes of Life (11:1-12:8)

VI. Conclusion (12:9-14)

SONG OF SOLOMON (A Royal Wedding)

Author:

Though some critics reject King Solomon as the author and take 1:1 to mean, "which is about Solomon," the internal evidence supports the traditional belief that Solomon is its author. The contents of the book agree with all that we know about the abilities and wisdom of Solomon, and there is no compelling reason not to regard him as the author.⁴⁵ Solomon is mentioned seven times (1:1, 5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:11-12), and he is identified as the groom. Verse 1 asserts that Solomon wrote this song as one of many (in fact the best of the many) songs which he wrote (1 Kings 4:32 tells us he composed 1,005 such songs). Note that the text does not simply say, "The Song of Solomon" but "The Song of Songs, which are Solomon's."

Date:

About 965 B.C.

The Song was probably written early in Solomon's career, about 965. At this point, Solomon had sixty queens and eighty concubines (6:8), but later in his life, he would have seven hundred queens and three thousand concubines (1 Kings 11:3).

Title of the Book:

Regarding the title of this book Ryrie writes:

This book has been titled several ways: the Hebrew title from verse 1, The Song of Songs, which means "the most superlative, or best, of songs"; the English title, also from verse 1, The Song of Solomon, which designates the author; and the Canticles, meaning simply "songs," derived from the Latin.⁴⁶

Theme and Purpose:

The Song of Solomon is a love song filled with metaphors and imagery designed to portray God's view of love and marriage: the beauty of physical love between man and woman. The book which is presented as a drama with several scenes, has three major player: the bride (Shulamite), the king (Solomon), and a chorus (daughters of

⁴⁵ Ryrie, p. 1032.

⁴⁶ Ryrie, p. 1032.

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Jerusalem). The purpose of the book will depend on the viewpoint taken as to the way the book should be interpreted. The following will illustrate this in the discussion of the three views presented here.

In summary, there have been three basic views on the interpretation of this Song of Solomon.

(1) **Purely an Allegory:** Some have regarded it only an allegory portraying fictional characters employed teach the truth of God's love for His people. Regarding this view, Archer writes:

The allegorical interpretation prevailed from ancient times until the rise of modern scholarship. It identified Solomon with Jehovah (or else, according to the Christians, with Christ) and the Shulamite as Israel (or the Church). The historicity of Solomon's love affair is of small importance to the exponents of this theory. They tend to interpret each detail in a symbolic manner; thus Solomon's eighty concubines, according to some, represent the eighty heresies destined to plague the Church...

It must be admitted that these passages establish at least a typical relationship between human love and marriage and the covenant relationship between God and His people. Nevertheless, the allegorical view faces certain difficulties, not the least of which is that the book seems to speak of a historical episode in Solomon's life and accords well with Solomon's situation, at least in the earlier part of his reign (judging from the comparatively small number of his concubines).⁴⁷

(2) **The Literal View:** Others regard the Song as simply a secular love song not intended to convey a spiritual lesson and expressing human love in a highly romantic way drawn from an historical event in the life of Solomon.

(3) **The Literal/Typical View:** This view sees a combination a literal historical event portraying the beauties of physical love along with a typical portrait of God's Love and Christ's love for the church.

Others rightly understand the book to be an historical record of the romance of Solomon with a Shulamite woman. The "snapshots" in the book portray the joys of love in courtship and marriage and counteract both the extremes of asceticism and of lust. The rightful place of physical love, within marriage only, is clearly established and honored. Within the historical framework, some also see illustrations of the love of God (and Christ) for His people. Obviously Solomon does not furnish the best example of marital devotion, for he had many wives and concubines (140 at this time, 6:8; many more later, 1 Kings 11:3). The experiences recorded in this book may reflect the only (or virtually the only) pure romance he had.⁴⁸

This combined perspective is seen in Archers explanation of the theme of Canticles:

The theme of Canticles is the love of Solomon for his Shulamite bride and her deep affection for him. This love affair is understood to typify the warm, personal relationship which God desires with His spiritual bride, composed of all redeemed believers who have given their hearts to Him. From the Christian perspective, this points to the mutual commitment between Christ and His church and the fullness of fellowship which ought to subsist between them.⁴⁹

Key Word:

Love

Key Verses:

7:10 "I am my beloved's, And his desire is for me.

Key People:

The book has three major player: the bride (Shulamite), the king (Solomon), and a chorus (daughters of Jerusalem).

⁴⁷ Archer, Electronic Media.

⁴⁸ Ryrie, p. 1032.

⁴⁹ Archer, Electronic Media.

Christ as seen in the Song of Solomon:

This book illustrates Christ's love for the church which is seen as the bride of Christ in the New Testament (cf. 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23-25; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9).

Outline:

- I. Title (1:1)
- II. Falling in Love (1:2-3:5)
- III. United in Love (3:6-5:1)
- IV. Struggling in Love (5:2-7:10)
- V. Maturing in Love (7:11-8:14)

The Major Prophets

The Prophets of Israel Viewed as a Whole

Their Designation

The first division of the Old Testament was known as the Law with the second being called the Former Prophets, but these included four books which have already been outlined—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Though these books deal with the history of Israel, they were composed from a prophetic viewpoint and possibly even the authors themselves may have been prophets by profession.

The seventeen books considered in this section were classified in the Hebrew Bible as the Latter Prophets. The term ‘latter’ speaks primarily of their place in the canon rather than of their chronological position. These prophets are sometimes called *the writing prophets* because their authors wrote or recorded their utterances. There were other *oral prophets* like Nathan, Ahijah, Iddo, Jehu, Elijah, Elisha, Oded, Shemaiah, Azariah, Hanani, Jahaziel, and Huldah who left no records of their utterances. Mostly because of their size, the Latter Prophets are subdivided into the Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel), and the twelve Minor Prophets, whose writings could all be included in one large scroll which came to be known in Greek as the *Do, decaprophe, ton*, “the Twelve-Prophet Book”).⁵⁰ Daniel, usually viewed as one of the Major Prophets in the English Bible, actually appears in the third division of the Hebrew Canon called “the Writings.”

Lamentations will also be dealt with here because of its place in the English Bible, though in the Hebrew Bible it is among the five rolls or *megilloth*, the shorter books, which were brief enough to be read publicly on anniversaries.

Their Description

The authors of these books were described or referred to by a number of terms due to the nature of their ministry and calling. They were called prophets, seers, watchmen, men of God, messengers, and servants of the Lord. Unger writes:

According to I Samuel 9:9 the prophet was in earlier Israel commonly called a *ro'eh*, that is one who perceives that which does not lie in the realm of natural sight or hearing. Another early designation of similar etymology was a *hozeh* “one who sees supernaturally” (II Samuel 24:11). Later the Hebrew seer was more commonly called a *nabhi* (I Samuel 9:9). This popular name is to be related to the Accadian *nabu*, “to call or announce,” either passively, as Albright (*From the Stone Age to Christianity*, 1940, pp. 231 ff.), “one who is called” (by God), or actively with Koenig (*Hebraeisches and Aramaeisches Woerterbuch zum Alten Testament*, 1936, p. 260), “an announcer” (for), or preferably with Guillaume (*Prophecy and Divination*, 1938, pp. 112f), who construes the term to mean that the prophet is the passive recipient of a message manifest in his condition as well as in his speech, and is “one who is in the state of announcing a message which has been given to him” (by God).⁵¹

As can be seen from Unger’s comments, a certain amount of uncertainty exists regarding the exact meaning of the word “prophet.” The word *prophet* is from the Hebrew *ayb]n** (*nabi*). The derivation of this word is a matter of controversy, but the essential idea in the word is that of an *authorized spokesman*. This is clear, not from the etymology of this word which has been lost in antiquity, but from its use in three Old Testament passages: (1) **Exodus 6:28-7:2**. When Moses objected to being the spokesman for God to Pharaoh, God appointed Aaron to be Moses prophet, i.e., his authorized spokesman. The issue here is one person speaking for another. (2) **Numbers 12:1-8**. Aaron and Miriam, perhaps out of jealousy, sought to supplant Moses as mediator of God’s revelation with themselves (cf. Vs. 2), but God dramatically intervened to show He would speak directly with Moses alone and that He would also speak through those called *prophets* by dreams and visions. But the implication as to the meaning of “prophet” is clear. A true prophet is one who speaks for God to man. (3) **Deuteronomy 18:9-22**. Just before the death of Moses, we have

⁵⁰ Archer, Electronic Media.

⁵¹ Unger, pp. 306-307.

the formal announcement of the office of the *nabi*, the prophet, on a continuing basis.⁵² These verses make it clear that the prophet is one who speaks forth the message which God has revealed to him.

Their Directive or Message

As a mouthpiece or spokesman for God, the prophet’s primary duty was to speak forth God’s message to God’s people in the historical context of what was happening among God’s people. The broadest meaning is that of *forthtelling*; the narrower meaning is that of *foretelling*. In the process of proclaiming God’s message, the prophet would sometimes reveal that which pertained to the future, but, contrary to popular opinion, this was only a small part of the prophets message. *Forthtelling* involved *insight* into the will of God; it was *exhortative*, challenging men to obey. On the other hand, *foretelling* entailed *foresight* into the plan of God; it was *predictive*, either encouraging the righteous in view of God’s promises or warning in view of coming judgment. So the prophet was the divinely chosen spokesman who, having received God’s message, proclaimed it in oral, visual, or written form to the people. For this reason, a common formula used by the prophets was, “Thus says the Lord.”

As God’s spokesman, their message can be seen in a three-fold function they had among the people of God in the Old Testament:

First, they functioned as preachers who expounded and interpreted the Mosaic law to the nation. It was their duty to admonish, reprove, denounce sin, threaten with the terrors of judgment, call to repentance, and bring consolation and pardon. Their activity of rebuking sin and calling for repentance consumed far more of the prophets’ time than any other feature of their work. The rebuke was driven home with predictions about the punishment that God intended to send on those failing to heed the prophet’s warning (cf. Jonah 3:4).

Second, they functioned as predictors who announced coming judgment, deliverance, and events relating to the Messiah and His kingdom. Predicting the future was never intended merely to satisfy man’s curiosity, but was designed to demonstrate that God knows and controls the future, and to give purposeful revelation. The prediction given by a true prophet would be visibly fulfilled. The failure of the prediction to be fulfilled would indicate that the prophet had not spoken the word of *Yahweh* (cf. Deut. 18:20-22). In 1 Samuel 3:19 it is said of Samuel that the Lord was with him and let none of his prophetic words fail (lit., “fall to the ground”).

Finally, they functioned as watchmen over the people of Israel (Ezek. 3:17). Ezekiel stood as a watchman on the walls of Zion ready to trumpet a warning against religious apostasy. He warned the people against political and military alliances with foreign powers, the temptation to become involved in idolatry and Canaanite cultic worship, and the danger of placing excessive confidence in religious formalism and sacrificial ritual.

While the prophets functioned in various ways as they communicated God’s message, *they occupied one major role* in Israel’s religious system. The prophets in Israel occupied the role of a *royal diplomat or prosecuting attorney*, indicting the nation for violations of the Mosaic covenant.⁵³

A Comparison of the Four Major Prophets⁵⁴

Comparison of the Four Major Prophets				
	Isaiah	Jeremiah	Ezekiel	Daniel

⁵² R. Laird Harris, L. Archer, Jr. Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Word Book of the Old Testament*, Vol. 2, p. 544.

⁵³ Carl Laney, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Oct.-Dec. 1981, p. 315-316.

⁵⁴ The following chart comparing the four major prophets is taken from *The Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Edition*, Moody Press, 1995, p. 1151.

Prophesied To:	Jews in Judea	Jews in Judea and captivity	Jews captive in Babylon	Jews captive in Babylon and Gentile kings
Concerning:	Judah and Jerusalem (Isa. 1:1; 2:1)	Judah and Nations (Jer. 1:5, 9-10; 2:1-2)	The whole house of Israel (Ezek. 2:3-6; 3:4-10, 17)	Israel and Gentile Nations (Dan. 2:36ff; 9)
During the reigns of:	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah (kings of Judah)	Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah (kings of Judah)	Zedekiah (king of Judah); Nebuchadnezzar (king of Babylon)	Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah (kings of Judah). Nebuchadnezzar (king of Babylon)
Dates:	740-680 B.C.	627-585 B.C.	592-570 B.C.	605-536 B.C.
Historical Setting:	2 Kings 15-21; 2 Chronicles 26-30	2 Kings 22-25	Daniel 1-6	Daniel 1-6

A Review of the Old Testament's Anticipation of Christ ⁵⁵

By way of review, it would be well to remember that the **Law** laid the *foundation* for Christ by the election (Genesis), redemption (Exodus), sanctification (Leviticus), direction (Numbers), and instruction (Deuteronomy) of the nation of Israel as the custodians of the oracles of God (Rom. 3:1) and the channel for Messiah (Gen. 12:1f; Rom. 9:4-5).

Then further preparation for Christ was given in the **Historical Books** by giving the nation the Land of Israel for their possession (Joshua). The nation was then oppressed by foreign nations and was unfaithful, still God raised up judges and found faithfulness in the nation (Ruth). Stabilization was given to the nation under king Saul (1 Samuel), then expansion under king David (2 Samuel), and glorification of the nation under Solomon's reign (1 Kings 1-10). This was followed with division in the nation (1 Kings 11-22) into the northern 10 tribes and the southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin. These both suffered deterioration (2 Chronicles) resulting eventually in *deportation* by Assyria and Babylon (2 Kings). Consequently, the Temple suffered *deprivation* (1 Chronicles) and destruction (2 Chronicles). However, God's faithfulness to His promises remained and so there was *reconstruction* of the Temple (Ezra) and *restoration* of a remnant of the nation to the land (Nehemiah) followed by *protection* of God's people (Esther).

All the while, in the **Poetical Books** there was always *spiritual aspiration* for Christ with the moral foundation being laid in the Law and the national framework being developed in the books of History.

Through the **Prophetical Books** we have the nation of Israel, through the prophets, looking forward with great *expectation* to Christ. This is done in the following ways:

The earlier prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos) expect a *national restoration* by the Messiah. Isaiah and Micah predict *international salvation* through the coming of Christ. But Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah warn of God's *retribution on the nations*. Lamentations grieves over God's *retribution on His people* but Jeremiah looks for a *covenantal reaffirmation* in Christ. Ezekiel expects the nation's *religious restoration* and Daniel predicts its *political restoration*. After the Babylonian captivity Haggai and Zechariah exhort the people in their *religious reconstruction* and Malachi in their *social and moral reconstruction*, as they await the coming of the "sun of righteousness [that] shall rise, with healing in its wings" (Mal. 4:2).⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Though not quoted verbatim, the focus here was taken from Norman L. Geisler's, *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1977, pp. 227-228.

⁵⁶ Geisler, p. 228.

ISAIAH (The Salvation of *Yahweh*)

Author:

As the book clearly declares, the author is Isaiah, the son of Amoz, an apparently influential and distinguished Jewish family. Isaiah but he appears to have been on familiar terms with the royal court even in the reign of Ahaz. He was evidently a well-educated student of international affairs, who spent most of his time in the city of Jerusalem, where he rubbed shoulders with royalty and gave advice on foreign affairs because he was so in touch with the cross-currents of world affairs. Though often scoffed at, being directed by God, he vigorously opposed any entangling alliances with foreign powers (whether with Assyria as against Samaria and Damascus, or with Egypt as against Assyria). As warned by the Lord in chapter six, his cause was doomed to failure, for both government and people chose to put their trust in the political alliances of man rather than in the sure person and promises of God.

An old tradition relates that he was martyred at some time in the reign of Manasseh, possibly by being sawed in two inside a hollow log (d. Heb. 11:37). Since he records the death of Sennacherib in Isa. 37:37-38, it is fair to assume that Isaiah lived until after Sennacherib's death in 681 B.C.⁵⁷

The unity of the book of Isaiah has been challenged by liberal critics who hold that a "Deutero-Isaiah" wrote chapters 40-66 after the Babylonian captivity. Concerning the various viewpoints of the critics, Ryrie writes.

Much dispute has arisen over the authorship of chaps. 40-66. Some assign the entire section to a "Deutero-Isaiah," who lived around 540 B.C. (after the Babylonian captivity). Others see a "Trito-Isaiah," who wrote chaps. 56-66. Still others see insertions and editing as late as the first century B.C., a position difficult to maintain in view of the discovery of the Qumran Isaiah scroll dated in the second century B.C.

These suggestions attempt to eliminate the supernatural element necessary for predictive prophecy. Hence, the Babylonian captivity and the return under a Persian king (specifically named Cyrus) are not viewed as being predicted 150 years in advance, but as happenings recorded after the events. But even if one were to grant such a conclusion, it would not invalidate predictive prophecy. The name of King Josiah was predicted by a prophet three centuries before his time (1 Kings 13:2), and Bethlehem was named as the birthplace of Messiah seven centuries before the event (Mic. 5:2). In addition, there is predictive prophecy in chaps. 1-39 of Isaiah (see 7:16; 8:4,7; 37:33-35; 38:8 for prophecies soon fulfilled and 9:1-2; 13:17-20 for prophecies of the more distant future).

If "Deutero-Isaiah" lived in Babylon, as is claimed, he shows little knowledge of Babylonian geography but great familiarity with Palestine (41:19; 43:14; 44:14). Further, it is asserted that differences in language and style can only be accounted for by assuming different authors, a theory which, if applied to Milton, Goethe, or Shakespeare, would force us to conclude that many of their writings were spurious. On the contrary, one can point out 40 or 50 sentences and phrases that appear in both sections of the book and that therefore argue for single authorship (cf. 1:20 with 40:5 and 58:14; 11:6-9 with 65:25; 35:6 with 41:18, etc.).

To claim two or more authors for this book is also to contradict the evidence of the New Testament. Quotations from chaps. 40-66 are found in Matthew 3:3; 12:17-21; Luke 3:4-6; Acts 8:28; Romans 10:16, 20, and all are attributed to Isaiah. Moreover, in John 12:38-41, quotations from Isaiah 6:9-10 and 53:1 appear together, and both are ascribed to the Isaiah who saw the Lord in the Temple vision of chap. 6. We must therefore conclude that the same author was responsible for the entire book and that no part of it was written at the time of the Babylonian captivity.⁵⁸

For more on this issue, see Gleason Archer's coverage in his work, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, Updated and Revised Edition, 1994, Moody Bible Institute, Paperback Edition.

⁵⁷ Archer, Electronic Media.

⁵⁸ Ryrie, pp.1044-1045.

Date:

740–680 B.C.

Isaiah had a very long ministry that ranged from around 740 to 680. His ministry began near the end of the reign of Uzziah (790-739 B.C.) and continued through the reigns of Jotham (739-731 B.C.), Ahaz (731-715 B.C.), and Hezekiah (715-686 B.C.). From the standpoint of Gentile rulers of the time, Isaiah ministered from the time of Tiglath-pileser (745-727 B.C.) to the time of Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.) of Assyria.

He outdated Hezekiah by a few years because chapter 37, verse 38, records the death of Sennacherib in 681 B.C. Hezekiah was succeeded by his wicked son Manasseh who overthrew the worship of *Yahweh* and no doubt opposed the work of Isaiah.⁵⁹

Title of the Book:

The title, *Isaiah*, is obviously taken from the name of the human author who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, composed it. The Hebrew name of this prophet, Yes, aàya, hu,, means *Yahweh* is salvation, which appropriately, is an excellent summary of the theme and contents of the book.

Theme and Purpose:

As just mentioned, Isaiah's name provides the theme of the book, "salvation is of *Yahweh*." This is most evident by the fact the term "salvation" occurs some twenty-six times in Isaiah but only seven times in all the other prophets combined. Because of this, Isaiah has been called "the evangelical prophet" because he says so much about the salvation and redemptive work of Messiah. In fact, more is said about the person and work of Messiah in His first and second advents than in any other Old Testament book. In some respects, Isaiah is a miniature Bible. It has sixty-six chapters while the Bible has sixty-six books. The first thirty-nine chapters of Isaiah correspond to the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament which largely anticipate the coming of Messiah. The last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah neatly parallel the twenty-seven chapters of the New Testament because they speak a great deal about Messiah and His Kingdom as the Servant of the Lord. Chapters 1-39 speak of man's great need of salvation while chapters 40-66 reveal God's provision of Salvation in Messiah and His kingdom.

Summarizing the theme and content, Archer writes:

Appropriately enough, the basic theme of Isaiah's message is that salvation is bestowed only by grace, by the power of God, the Redeemer, rather than by the strength of man or the good works of the flesh. The holy God will not permit unholiness in His covenant people, and will therefore deal with them in such a way as to chasten and purge them and make them fit to participate in His program of redemption. Isaiah sets forth the doctrine of Christ in such full detail that he has rightly been described as "the evangelical prophet." Deeper Christological insights are to be found in his work than anywhere else in the Old Testament.⁶⁰

Key Word:

Again in keeping with the theme and Isaiah's name, the key word is *salvation*.

Key Verses:

7:14. "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

9:6-7. For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David

⁵⁹ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 191.

⁶⁰ Archer, Electronic Media.

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and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

53:4-7. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.

Key Chapters:

Chapter 53: With a book so full of rich truth and Messianic anticipation, deciding of a key chapter is not easy, but surely Isaiah 53 which points to Messiah as a suffering Savior who must die for our sin, is the most remarkable and key chapters of the Old Testament.

Key People:

Isaiah the prophet is the key human personage, but *Yahweh* by the way He is focused on as the *Mighty One of Israel*, as the *Holy One of Israel*, and as the *Lord God of Hosts*, is clearly the chief focus of Isaiah's book.

Christ as seen in Isaiah:

No book of the Old Testament presents a portrait of Christ that is as complete and comprehensive as does Isaiah. Isaiah portrays Messiah in His sovereignty above (6:1f), birth and humanity (7:14; 9:6; 11: 1), in His ministry by the Spirit (11:2f), His divine nature (7:14; 9:6); His Davidic descent (11:1); His work of redemption as our substitute (53), His ministry as the Servant Savior (49ff), and much more.

Outline:

Due to the size of Isaiah, we will restrict the outline to major sections.

I. Prophecies of Denunciation and Judgment (1:1-39:8)

A. Prophecies Against Judah (1:1-12:6)

1. The Condemnation of Judah (1:1-5:30)
2. The Commission of the Prophet (6:1-13)
3. The Coming of Messiah (7:1-12:6)

B. Prophecies Against Gentile Nations (13:1-23:18)

1. Against Babylon (13:1-14:23)
2. Against Assyria (14:24-27)
3. Against Philistia (14:28-32)
4. Against Moab (15:1-16-14)
5. Against Damascus and Her Ally, Israel (17:1-14)
6. Against Ethiopia (18:1-7)
7. Against Egypt (19:1-20:6)
8. Against Babylon (21:1-10)
9. Against Edom (21:11-12)
10. Against Arabia (21:13-17)
11. Against Jerusalem (22:1-25)
12. Against Tyre (23:1-18)

C. Prophecies of the Day of the Lord (24:1-27:13)

1. Judgments of the Tribulation (24:1-23)
2. The Triumphs and Blessings of the Kingdom (25:1-27:13)

D. Prophecies Against Israel and Judah (Woes and Blessings) (28:1-35:10)

1. Woe on Samaria (28:1-29)
2. Woe on Judah (29:1-31:9)

3. Behold Messiah and His Kingdom (32:1-20)
4. Woe to Assyria, the Spoiler of Jerusalem (33:1-24)
5. Woe to the Nations (34:1-17)
6. Behold the Coming Kingdom (35:1-10)
- E. Prophecies Against Sennacherib (36:1-39:8)
 1. The Taunt from Assyria (36:1-22)
 2. The Truth from God (37:1-7)
 3. The Threat from Assyria (37:8-35)
 4. The Triumph over Assyria (37:36-38)
 5. The Sickness of Hezekiah (38:1-22)
 6. The Stupidity of Hezekiah (39:1-8)
- II. Prophecies of Comfort or Consolation (40:1-66:24)
 - A. Prophecies of Israel's Deliverance and the Greatness of God (40:1-48:22)
 - B. Prophecy of Israel's Deliverer; the Salvation of the Suffering Servant (49:1-57:21)
 - C. Prophecies of Israel's Glorious Future; God's Program for Peace (58:1-66:24)

JEREMIAH (Warnings Against Sin and Judgment)

Author:

As with Isaiah, this book clearly identifies the human author who is Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah from the priest city of Anathoth in the land of Benjamin (1:1). Jeremiah dictated his prophecies to Baruch, his secretary. Only chapter 52 was not written by the prophet. Jeremiah is often called the "weeping prophet" (9:1; 13:17) or the "prophet of loneliness" perhaps because he was commanded not to marry (16:2). He is also known as the reluctant prophet (1:6), but he faithfully proclaimed God's judgments on an apostate Judah even though he experienced opposition, beatings, and imprisonment (11:18-23; 12:6; 18:18; 20:1-3; 26:1-24; 37:11-38:28).

Date:

627-585 B.C.

Jeremiah was a contemporary of Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Daniel, and Ezekiel. His prophetic ministry began in 626 B.C. and ended sometime after 586. His ministry was immediately preceded by that of Zephaniah. Since Ezekiel began his ministry in Babylon in 593 he too was a late contemporary of this great prophet in Jerusalem. How and when Jeremiah died is unknown though Jewish tradition asserts that Jeremiah was put to death while living in Egypt (cf. Heb 11:37).

Title of the Book:

The book takes its name from its author, Jeremiah. "The name Jeremiah, Yirme-Ya,hu,, apparently means 'Jehovah establishes' (Orelli in ISBE), if the verb ra,ma, ("to throw") is to be understood in the sense of laying a foundation."⁶¹ But compare the following regarding Jeremiah's name:

The meaning of his name is uncertain. Suggestions include "The LORD exalts" and "The LORD establishes," but a more likely proposal is "The LORD throws," either in the sense of "hurling" the prophet into a hostile world or of "throwing down" the nations in divine judgment for their sins.⁶²

Theme and Purpose:

Two themes are prominent: warnings of God's judgment against sin are prominent throughout the book, but with that there was also the message of hope and restoration if the nation would genuinely repent.

⁶¹ Archer, Electronic Media.

⁶² *NIV Study Bible*, General Editor, Kenneth Barker, Zondervan, 1985, p. 1115.

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As hinted earlier, an aura of conflict surrounded Jeremiah almost from the beginning. He lashed out against the sins of his countrymen (44:23), scoring them severely for their idolatry (16:10-13, 20; 22:9; 32:29; 44:2-3, 8, 17-19, 25)—which sometimes even involved sacrificing their children to foreign gods (7:30-34). But Jeremiah loved the people of Judah in spite of their sins, and he prayed for them (14:7, 20) even when the Lord told him not to (7:16; 11:14; 14:11).⁶³

Key Words or Ideas:

Judah's last hour in view of backsliding and unfaithfulness. There are more references to Babylon in Jeremiah (164) than in all the rest of the Bible together.

Key Verses:

1:4-10. Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." Then I said, "Alas, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, Because I am a youth." But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' Because everywhere I send you, you shall go, And all that I command you, you shall speak. "Do not be afraid of them, For I am with you to deliver you," declares the LORD. Then the LORD stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. "See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, To pluck up and to break down, To destroy and to overthrow, To build and to plant."

7:23-24. "But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.' "Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward.

8:11-12. "And they heal the brokenness of the daughter of My people superficially, Saying, 'Peace, peace,' But there is no peace. "Were they ashamed because of the abomination they had done? They certainly were not ashamed, And they did not know how to blush; Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time of their punishment they shall be brought down," Declares the LORD.

Key Chapters:

In keeping with the suffering Jeremiah experienced, **chapter 1** is surely a key chapter in that it records the call of the prophet. Then **chapter 23** is key in that it gives the prophecy of the Messiah, the righteous branch who is seen in contrast to the wicked shepherds and lying prophets described in this same chapter. Twenty-four is another important chapter because it prophesies the Babylonian captivity which will last for seventy years. Finally, **chapters 31-32** are key in that they speak of restoration, the New Covenant when the Lord will "Put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; ..." (31:33)

Key People:

The key person throughout is of course Jeremiah, his preaching, resistance, and persecution.

Christ as seen in Jeremiah:

Many pictures of Christ are seen in Jeremiah: He is portrayed as the fountain of living waters (2:13; cf. John 4:14), the balm of Gilead (8:22), the Good Shepherd (23:4), a Righteous Branch (23:5), and the Lord our Righteousness (23:6). He is seen as the one who will bring in the New Covenant (31:31-34).

Another prophecy in Jeremiah has significant Messianic implications.

⁶³ *NIV Study Bible*, p. 1116.

The curse on Jehoiachin (Jeconiah, Coniah) meant that no physical descendant would succeed him to the throne (22:28-30). Matthew 1:1-17 traces the genealogy of Christ through Solomon and Jeconiah to His legal (but not His physical) father Joseph, but no son of Joseph could sit upon the throne of David, for he would be under the curse of Jehoiachin. Luke 3:23-38 traces Christ's lineage backward from Mary (His physical parent) through David's other son Nathan (Luke 3:31), thereby avoiding the curse. The Righteous Branch will indeed reign on the throne of David.⁶⁴

Outline:

- I. Jeremiah's Call and Commission (1:1-19)
 - A. The Call (1:1-10)
 - B. The Confirmation of the Call (1:11-19)
- II. Prophecies to Judah (2:1-45:5)
 - A. The Condemnation of Judah (2:1-25:38)
 - 1. Judah's Willful Sin (2:1-3:5)
 - 2. Judah's Chastening (3:6-6:30)
 - 3. Judah's Wrong Religion (7:1-10:25)
 - 4. Judah's Breaking of God's Covenant (11:1-13:27)
 - 5. Judah's Coming Drought (14:1-15:9)
 - 6. Judah's Prophet Recommissioned (15:10-16:9)
 - 7. Judah's Sins (16:10-17:27)
 - 8. Judah and the Sovereign Potter (18:1-23)
 - 9. Judah as a Broken Jar (19:1-20:18)
 - 10. Judah's Kings (21:1-23:8)
 - 11. Judah's False Prophets (23:9-40)
 - 12. Judah's Captivity (24:1-25:38)
 - B. The Conflicts of Jeremiah (26:1-29:32)
 - 1. Judah's Reaction to Jeremiah's Ministry (26:1-24)
 - 2. Judah's Advice from Jeremiah: Submit to Nebuchadnezzar (27:1-29:32)
 - C. Judah's Hope of Restoration (30:1-33:26)
 - D. Events Before the Fall of Jerusalem (34:1-38:28)
 - E. The Fall of Jerusalem (39:1-18)
 - F. Events After the Fall of Jerusalem (40:1-45:5)
- III. Prophecies to the Gentiles (46:1-51:64)
 - A. Prophecies Against Egypt (46:1-28)
 - B. Prophecies Against the Philistines (47:1-7)
 - C. Prophecies Against Moab (48:1-47)
 - D. Prophecies Against Ammon (49:1-6)
 - E. Prophecies Against Edom (49:7-22)
 - F. Prophecies Against Damascus (49:23-27)
 - G. Prophecies Against Arabia (49:28-33)
 - H. Prophecies Against Elam (49:34-39)
 - I. Prophecies Against Babylon (50:1-51:64)
- IV. Historical Supplement (52:1-34)
 - A. The Fate of Jerusalem (52:1-23)
 - B. The Fate of Certain People (52:24-34)

LAMENTATIONS (A River of Tears)

Author:

The author of Lamentations is unnamed in the book, but two lines of evidence favor Jeremiah as the author.

⁶⁴ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 200.

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1. **External Evidence:** The consensus of Jewish tradition attribute the book to Jeremiah. The superscription to Lamentations in the Septuagint points to Jeremiah as the one weeping over the captivity and the desolation of Jerusalem.
2. **Internal Evidence:** That the author is an eyewitness of Jerusalem's siege and fall is clear from the graphic nature of the scenes portrayed in the book (cf. 1:13-15; 2:6, 9; 4:1-12). Further, there are a number of similarities between the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations (e.g., the phrase "daughter of" occurs about 20 times in each book). In addition, Jeremiah is connected with this type of literature in 2 Chronicles 35:25).

Date:

586 or 585 B.C.

Since the book was written soon after Jerusalem's destruction which was completed in 586, the earliest possible date for the book is 586 B.C. The graphic immediacy of Lamentations argues for a date shortly after this like 586 or 585 B.C.

Title of the Book:

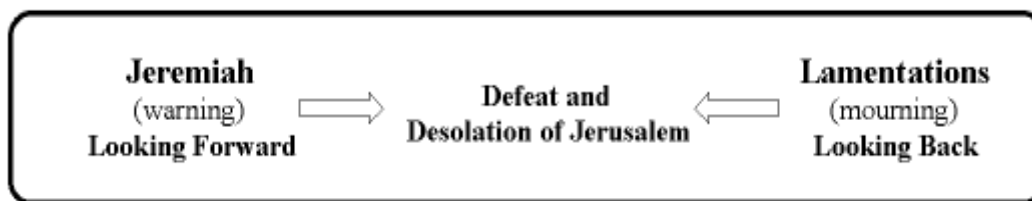
The Hebrew title of the book is *áe,ka*, ("How ... !"), the first word found in 1:1, 2:1; and 4:1. Because of its subject matter, the book is also referred to in Jewish tradition as *qinot*, "Lamentations," which is the title given to it in the Greek Septuagint and Latin Vulgate.

Theme and Purpose:

The primary theme of the book is a lament or mourning over the woes that had fallen on sinful Judah and the pitiable destruction of the holy city and the temple. God's promised judgment for Judah's sin has come. A second theme flows out of this of judgment for sin. Thus the prophet appeals to the chastened nation that they recognize God was just and righteous in His dealings with them, and that they cast themselves upon His mercy in a spirit of repentance.

Yahweh has poured out His wrath, but in His mercy He will be faithful to His covenant promises. "Though the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. *They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness*" (3:22-23).⁶⁵

The special contribution of the prophet Jeremiah as seen in Jeremiah and Lamentations can be observed by a comparison of these two books:⁶⁶



Key Word:

In view of the theme and nature of the book, the key word is mourning or lamentations.

Key Verses:

2:5-6. The Lord has become like an enemy. He has swallowed up Israel; He has swallowed up all its palaces; He has destroyed its strongholds And multiplied in the daughter of Judah Mourning and

⁶⁵ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 208.

⁶⁶ Adapted from Wilkinson and Boa, p. 209.

moaning. And He has violently treated His tabernacle like a garden booth; He has destroyed His appointed meeting place; The LORD has caused to be forgotten The appointed feast and sabbath in Zion, And He has despised king and priest In the indignation of His anger.

3:21-24. This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him."

Key Chapters:

Surely **chapter 3** stands as a pinnacle in the midst of the other chapters of ruin and destruction for here the author expresses his faith and hope in God's mercy who will not reject His people forever.

Christ as seen in Lamentations:

Lamentations includes two elements that portray the Savior: (1) It portrays Him as the Man of Sorrows who was acquainted with grief, who was afflicted, despised, and scorned by His enemies (cf. 1:12; 3:19; 2:15-16; 3:14, 30). (2) Jeremiah's weeping over the destruction of Jerusalem is perhaps also a picture of Christ who wept over Jerusalem (see Matt. 23:37-38).

Outline:

- I. The Destruction of Jerusalem (1:1-22)
 - A. The Lament of the Prophet (1:1-11)
 - B. The Lament of the City of Jerusalem (1:12-22)
- II. The Lord's Anger Against His People (2:1-22)
 - A. The Anger of God (2:1-10)
 - B. The Author's Lament (2:11-22)
- III. The Distraught Prophet (3:1-66)
 - A. His Lament (3:1-18)
 - B. His Hope (3:19-42)
 - C. His Suffering (3:43-54)
 - D. His Prayer (3:55-66)
- IV. The Defeated People of Jerusalem (4:1-22)
 - A. The Siege of the City (4:1-12)
 - B. The Reasons for the Siege (4:13-20)
 - C. The Hope for the Future (4:21-22)
- V. The Prayer for Restoration (5:1-22)
 - A. Confession (5:1-18)
 - B. Petition (5:19-22)

EZEKIEL (They Shall Know That I Am *Yahweh*)

Author:

The author is Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi, who received his call as a prophet while in exile in Babylon (1:1-3). His ministry as a prophet demonstrates a priestly focus with his concern for the temple, priesthood, sacrifices, and the *shekinah* glory of God. What is known of Ezekiel is derived entirely from the book of Ezekiel itself. He was married (see 24:15-18), lived in a house of his own (cf. 3:24; 8:1) and, along with his fellow exiles, had a relatively free existence.

Date:

593-571 B.C.

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The book of Ezekiel contains many dates so that its prophecies can be dated with considerable precision. Twelve of the 13 dates in the book specify the times when Ezekiel received his message from the Lord. The other date is of the arrival of the messenger who reported the fall of Jerusalem (33:21). Receiving his call as a prophet in July, 593 B.C., Ezekiel was active for 22 years. His last dated oracle was received in about 571.

Title of the Book:

As with Isaiah and Jeremiah, the book of Ezekiel gets its name from its author, Ezekiel, which is the Hebrew *yehezkeal* and means “God strengthens” or “strengthened by God.”

Theme and Purpose:

Ezekiel’s focus is on condemnation (1-32) for Israel’s sin and consolation (33-48) in view of what God will do in the future. Archer summarizes the theme:

The theme of Ezekiel’s prophecy is that the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity are necessary measures for the God of grace to employ if He is to correct His disobedient people and draw them back from complete and permanent apostasy. But the day is coming when Jehovah will restore a repentant remnant of His chastened people and establish them in a glorious latter-day theocracy with a new temple.⁶⁷

Ryrie adds the following word that brings out another important element of his ministry:

Ezekiel’s ministry was to keep before the exiles the sins that had brought God’s judgment on them and to assure them of God’s future blessing in keeping with His covenant. Chapters 1-24 were written before the fall of Jerusalem to remind his fellow captives that God’s judgment on the city and Temple was surely coming. Chapters 33-48 contain prophecies of the still future restoration of Israel in the millennial kingdom.⁶⁸

Key Word:

While the key concept may be found in the word “restoration,” the words “shall know that I am the Lord” occurs some 63 times. Other distinctive phrases that are repeated are “the word of the Lord came” (50 times), and “glory of the Lord” (10 times).

Key Verses:

36:24-30. “For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land. “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. “And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. “And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. “Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you. “And I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, that you may not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations.

36:33-35. ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places will be rebuilt. 34 “And the desolate land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passed by. 35 “And they will say, ‘This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate, and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited.’

⁶⁷ Archer, Electronic Media.

⁶⁸ Ryrie, pp. 1261.

Key Chapters:

Chapters **36-37** speak of the blessings that will come to the mountains of Israel followed by the hope of restoration of Israel in the vision of the valley of dry bones, which outlines the clear process of restoration of Israel's future.

Chapters **38-39** anticipate the great global conflict that will occur on the mountains of Israel but with Israel's enemies defeated by God.

Key People:

Ezekiel, son of Busi, a priest called to be prophet to Israel before and after the Babylonian captivity.

Christ as seen in Ezekiel:

Christ, the Messiah, is pictured as a tender sprig that will be planted on a high and lofty mountain (17:23-24), a picture similar to that of the Branch in Isaiah (11:1), in Jeremiah (23:5; 33:15), and in Zechariah (3:8; 6:120). Ezekiel also speaks of Messiah as the King who has the right to rule (21:26-27) and who will minister as the true Shepherd (34:11-31).

Outline:

Again, because the great length of this book, only the major sections will be outlined.

- I. The commission and Call of Ezekiel (11:-3:27)
 - A. Ezekiel Beholds the Glory of God (1:1-28)
 - B. Ezekiel is Commissioned to the Word of God (2:1-3:27)
- II. Present Judgments on Jerusalem and Judah (4:1-24:27)
 - A. Four Signs of Coming Judgment (4:1-5:17)
 - B. Two messages of Coming Judgment (6:1-7:27)
 - C. Four Prophecies Through Visions (8:1-11:25)
 - D. The Certainty of Judgment With Their Causes Through Signs, Messages, and Parables (12:1-24:27)
- III. Prophecies Against Gentile Nations (25:1-32:32)
 - A. Against Ammon (25:1-7)
 - B. Against Moab (25:8-11)
 - C. Against Edom (25:12-14)
 - D. Against Philistia (25:15-17)
 - E. Against Tyre (26:1-28:19)
 - F. Against Sidon (28:20-26)
 - G. Against Egypt (29:1-32:32)
- IV. Prophecies of the Restoration of Israel (33:1-48:35)
 - A. The Return of Israel to the Land (33:1-39:29)
 - B. The Restoration of Israel in the Kingdom (40:1-48:35)

DANIEL (Israel's Ultimate Destiny)

Author:

As evident by Daniel's own claim (12:4) and by his use of the autobiographical first person from chapter 7:2 onward, Daniel is the author of this prophetic book. Archer points out:

Despite the numerous objections which have been advanced by scholars who regard this as a prophecy written after the event, there is no good reason for denying the sixth-century Daniel the composition of the entire work. This represents a collection of his memoirs made at the end of a long and eventful career which included government service from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar in the 590s to the reign of Cyrus the Great in the 530s. The appearance of Persian technical terms indicates a final recension of these memoirs at a time when Persian terminology had already infiltrated into the

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vocabulary of Aramaic. The most likely date for the final edition of the book, therefore, would be about 530 B.C., nine years after the Persian conquest of Babylon.⁶⁹

While a youth, Daniel was taken as a captive to Babylon in 605 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar. There he became a statesman in the court of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius. Though he did not occupy the office of a prophet, Christ identified him as a prophet (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14). As one who did not occupy the prophetic office, the book of Daniel is found in “the Writings,” the third division of the Hebrew Bible rather than in “the Prophets.”

Date:

537 B.C.

If Daniel is the author as the book claims, then it written after the Babylonian captivity when Daniel and other young men were taken captive to Babylon in 605 when Nebuchadnezzar subdued Jerusalem. But for various reasons, this date has been disputed with many critics arguing that Daniel is a fraudulent book which was written in the time of the Maccabees in the second century B.C. rather than the sixth century B.C. Concerning the arguments against the authorship of Daniel in the sixth century Ryrie writes:

The first attack on the traditional sixth century B.C. date for the composition of the book came from Porphyry (A.D. 232-303), a vigorous opponent of Christianity, who maintained that the book was written by an unknown Jew who lived at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.). This view was widely promoted by scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for the following reasons: it is alleged that Daniel could not have made these predictions, since they were accurately fulfilled and could therefore have been written only after the events occurred; Persian and Greek words used in the book would have been unknown to a sixth-century Jewish author; the Aramaic used in 2:4-7:28 belongs to a time after that of Daniel; and there are certain alleged historical inaccuracies. In answer, we observe that predictive prophecy is not only possible but expected from a true prophet of God. Since Daniel lived into the Persian period, he would have known Persian words. The presence of Greek words is easily accounted for, since one hundred years before Daniel, Greek mercenaries served in the Assyrian army under Esarhaddon (683) and in the Babylonian army under Nebuchadnezzar. Recent discoveries of fifth century B.C. Aramaic documents have shown that Daniel was written in a form of Imperial Aramaic, an official dialect known in all parts of the Near East at that time. Alleged historical inaccuracies are fast disappearing, especially with the information provided by the Nabonidus Chronicle as to the identity of Belshazzar (5:1) and with evidence that identifies Darius the Mede with a governor named Gubaru (5:31).

In addition, how can the use of relatively few Greek words be explained if the book was written around 170 B.C., when a Greek-speaking government had controlled Palestine for 160 years? One would expect the presence of many Greek terms. Also, the Qumran documents (Dead Sea Scrolls), dated only a few decades before the alleged second-century writing of Daniel, show grammatical differences that indicate they were written centuries, not decades, after Daniel. Further, the scrolls of Daniel found at Qumran are copies, indicating that the original was written before the Maccabean era.⁷⁰

Title of the Book:

The book is named after its author. The Hebrew word for Daniel is Daniyyeál or Daniáel, which means either “God is Judge” or “God is my Judge.” The Greek form *Daniel* in the Septuagint is the basis for the Latin and English titles.

Theme and Purpose:

The theme of Daniel is God’s sovereign power as the one true God, who judges and destroys the rebellious world powers and will faithfully deliver His covenant people according to their steadfast faith in Him. Daniel was written to

⁶⁹ Archer, Electronic Media.

⁷⁰ Ryrie, p. 1342.

encourage the exiled Jews through revealing God's sovereign plan for Israel during and after the period of domination by the Gentile world powers. This is the time of the Gentiles which began with the Babylonian captivity but will end with the establishment of Messiah's kingdom as the stone, one cut out without hands, became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (2:34-35; see also 7:13-14).

Key Word:

Though the words "king" and "kingdom" occur over and over again, the key idea is the plan of God for Israel which will end in the establishment of God's Messiah King as ruler on the earth.

Key Verses:

2:20-22. Daniel answered and said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him. "And it is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men, And knowledge to men of understanding. "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him.

2:44. And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and *that* kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

7:14. "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

Key Chapters:

One of the greatest prophetic chapters in the Bible is Daniel 9, the prophecy of the 'seventy weeks' determined for Israel (9:24-27). These verses give us the chronological frame for the nation of Israel and her Messiah from the time Daniel to the establishment of Messiah's kingdom on earth.

Key People:

The key people are Daniel who was taken to Babylon as a youth, served in government and became God's special mouthpiece to Gentile and Jewish nations; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, three more youths who were chosen for special training along with Daniel (their former and Jewish names were Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah). Other important persons are Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon in 605 B.C., Darius who succeeded Belshazzar as king, Cyrus, the Persian monarch, and Michael, the archangel who ministered to Daniel in chapter 10.

Christ as seen in Daniel:

One of the key portraits of Christ in Daniel is that of the coming Messiah who will be cut off (a reference to the cross) (9:25-26). However, Christ is also portrayed as the great stone who will crush the kingdoms of this world (2:34, 45), the son of man (7:13), and the Ancient of days (7:22). The vision in 10:5-9) is most likely a Christophany, an appearance of Christ (cf. Rev. 1:12-16).

Outline:

- I. The Personal History of Daniel (1:1-21)
 - A. His Deportation to Babylon (1:1-7)
 - B. His Faithfulness in Babylon (1:8-16)
 - C. His Reputation in Babylon (1:17-21)
- II. The Prophetic Plan for the Gentile Nations (2:1-7:28)
 - A. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of the Great Image (2:1-49)
 - B. The Fiery Furnace: A Lesson in Faith (3:1-30)

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- C. Nebuchadnezzar's Vision of the Great Tree (4:1-37)
- D. Belshazzar's Feast and the Handwriting on the Wall (5:1-31)
- E. Darius' Foolish Decree or Daniel in the Lion's Den (6:1-28)
- F. Daniel's Vision of the Four Beasts (7:1-28)

III. The Prophetic Plan for Israel (8:1-12:13)

- A. Daniel's Vision of the Ram, the Goat, and the Small Horn (8:1-27)
- B. Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks of Year (9:1-27)
- C. Daniel's Prophetic Panorama of Israel's Future (10:1-12:13)

The Minor Prophets

Introduction

The Title

The common title for these twelve books of the English Bible is “minor prophets.” This title originated in Augustine’s time (late fourth century A.D.), but they are minor only in that they are each much shorter than the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel (called “major prophets”). In Old and New Testament times, the Old Testament was called “The Law and the Prophets.” This title looked at the Old Testament from the standpoint of its divisions, but it also included the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, which constituted a 24-book division.

The Origin of the Prophetic Office

Ultimately, the prophetic office found its origin in God’s purpose for Israel as a nation through whom all the nations could be blessed. When God gave Israel the Law, He promised them that if they would be obedient, they would become “My own possession” (a special treasure of His) for the purpose of becoming a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” among all the nations (Compare Ex. 19:5-6 with Deut. 4:6-8). This purpose could not happen, however, if they followed the beliefs and ways of the nations. In preparation for their entrance into the land just before the death of Moses, the illegitimate and demonic methods used by the nations to discern the future or the divine will, called divination, was thoroughly condemned by the Lord through Moses (Deut. 18:9-14). So how, then, was God’s will to be known? The true and legitimate means by which God’s will would be delivered to His people is given in the very next verses in Deuteronomy 18:15-22.

15 “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.16 “This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’17 “And the LORD said to me, ‘They have spoken well.18 ‘I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.19 ‘And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require *it* of him.20 ‘But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.’21 “And you may say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’22 “When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

This revelation forms the biblical origin and reason for the prophetic office. Freeman rightly contends: “... the origin of the prophetic institution in Israel is not to be found in Canaan nor in other Near Eastern cultures as negative criticism contends, but was itself established for the specific purpose of guarding Israel against Canaan’s superstitious practices, as well as those of her neighbors.”⁷¹

Furthermore, so that the nation might fulfill God’s purposes as stated in the Abrahamic Covenant (see Gen. 12:1-3), He gave them specific promises and warnings. These are spelled out in Deuteronomy 28-30 in the blessings and curses of these chapters (sometimes referred to as the Palestinian Covenant). For obedience there would be blessing and if disobedience, then cursing. So how did the prophets fit into the picture? They would come along and say, “Because you broke the covenant, the covenant curses have fallen upon you, or are about to fall upon you.” In other words, it has happened (or is about to) just as God warned you in Deuteronomy 28-30. The prophets’ messages of sin and judgment must be seen in the light of this background and understanding of the Old Testament.

However, the prophets did not just proclaim doom and gloom. They also proclaimed a message of salvation and coming glory. Modern scholars sometimes claim that these positive messages are later additions by some scribe, but God, remember, is the immutable and eternal God of all comfort and grace, so the prophets would usually give a message of doom and gloom, but coupled with this they would also tell the people about the light at the end of the

⁷¹ Hobart Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), p. 26.

tunnel to give them hope (cf. Isa. 12:1-2; 40:1-2). Ultimately, God’s purposes would be fulfilled by the sovereign work of God in the lives of His people. Sometimes these salvation messages were “crystal ball” like visions describing a particular event which they had seen in a vision (e.g. Dan 9: and the 70th week). Other times they were just claiming and proclaiming the promises of God to Abraham and David as given in the Davidic Covenant of 2 Samuel 7:12-16.

Literary Features of the Minor Prophets

When we study the prophets we find they all pretty much have the same basic ingredients: (1) warning of impending judgment because of the nations’ sinfulness; (2) a description of the sin; (3) a description of the coming judgment; (4) a call for repentance; and (4) a promise of future deliverance.

If you want to outline a prophetic book, how do you recognize where one unit begins and ends?⁷² They use an introductory or concluding formula like “This is what the Lord says...” They then use what is called “inclusio” (they begin and end a section with the same word or phrase). And they use several common literary forms:

1. Judgment speech which contains two parts: (a) Part One—The Accusation; (b) Part Two—The Judgment
2. A Woe oracle—like a judgment speech, except that it starts with “Woe...”
3. Exhortation/call to repentance—consists of appeal with motivation (in the form of a promise and or threat). (Amos 5:4-6; Joel 2:12-14)
4. Salvation announcement—often alludes to a lamentable situation and focuses on the Lord’s saving intervention (Amos 9:11-12)
5. Salvation oracle—introduced by the exhortation “fear not” (Isa 41:8-16)
6. Salvation portrayal—a description, often idealized and in hyperbolic terms, of God’s future blessings on his people (Amos 9:13).

Chronology Overview

Their Order in the English Bible

1. Hosea	4. Obadiah	7. Nahum	10. Haggai
2. Joel	5. Jonah	8. Habakkuk	11. Zechariah
3. Amos	6. Micah	9. Zephaniah	12. Malachi

Their Grouping According to the Exile and The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah

Group	Book	Approximate Dates
Pre-Exilic Prophets of Israel	Jonah (preached to Nineveh)	780-850
	Amos	765-750
	Hosea	755-715
Prophets of Judah	Obadiah	840
	Joel	835-796
	Micah	740-690
	Nahum	630-612
	Habakkuk	606-604
	Zephaniah	625

⁷² Notes taken from Hebrew class at Dallas Theological Seminary taught by Dr. Rober Chisholm, Spring 1993.

Post-Exilic Prophets	Haggai	520
Prophets of the Returned Remnant	Zechariah	515
	Malachi	430

HOSEA (Persevering Love)

Author:

As declared in verse 1, the author is Hosea, the son of Beerī and the husband of Gomer (1:3), who was apparently a citizen of northern Israel since his concern was for the Northern Kingdom of Israel and called the king of Samaria “our king” (7:5). All we know about Hosea we learn from the book itself in its autobiographical sections.

Date:

According to 1:1, Hosea ministered during the days of Uzziah (767-739), Jotham (739-731), Ahaz (731-715), and Hezekiah (715-686), kings of Judah and during the days of Jeroboam II (782-752), king of Israel.

Hosea’s ministry spanned several decades, beginning near the end of the reigns of Uzziah of Judah (ca. 790-739 B.C.) and Jeroboam II of Israel (ca. 793-753 B.C.) and concluding in the early years of Hezekiah’s reign. The latter’s rule began around 715 B.C. after a period of vice-regency with his father Ahaz. Since Israel was Hosea’s primary audience, it seems strange that four Judean kings, but only one Israelite king, are mentioned in 1:1. The reason for the omission of the six Israelite kings who followed Jeroboam II is uncertain. Perhaps it suggests the legitimacy of the Davidic dynasty (cf. 3:5) in contrast with the instability and disintegration of the kingship in the North (cf. 7:3-7).⁷³

Perhaps also, the six other kings in Israel who followed Jeroboam II were omitted because of their relative insignificance, yet each of these continued in the sin of the Jeroboam I, son of Nebat. In essence, there were no good kings in the Northern Kingdom of Israel who instituted reforms as there were in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

Title of the Book:

The book is named after its author, Hosea and is identical to the last king of the Northern Kingdom, Hoshea. For purposes of distinction, the English Bible always gives the name of the minor prophet as Hosea. Interestingly, the names Hosea, Joshua, and Jesus are all derived from the same Hebrew word, *hoshea*, which means “salvation.” However, both Joshua and Jesus include the additional truth, “*Yahweh is salvation*.” As God’s messenger, Hosea offers salvation to the nation if they will turn from their idolatry and return to the Lord.

Theme and Purpose:

Hosea was written to demonstrate the steadfast or unflinching love of God for Israel in spite of her continued unfaithfulness. Through Hosea’s marital experience, the book shows us the heart of a loving and compassionate God who longs to bless His people with the knowledge of Himself and all that knowing God intimately can mean to man. In keeping with this purpose, the theme of Hosea is a strong testimony against the Northern Kingdom because it had been unfaithful to its covenant relationship with the Lord, as demonstrated in its widespread corruption in moral life both publicly and privately. Thus, the prophet seeks to get his countrymen to repent and return with contrite hearts to their patient and ever-loving God. This is presented from the standpoint of *Yahweh’s* love to Israel as His own dear children and as His covenant wife.

⁷³ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, Editors, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Victor Books, Wheaton, 1983,1985, electronic media.

Key Word:

In view of the analogy of Israel as the wife of *Yahweh* and the command given to Hosea to take a wife of harlotry which would illustrate Israel's behavior, the words "**harlot**" (10 times) and "**harlotry**" (9 times) are key words. In addition, *God's loyal love for Israel* in spite of Israel's unfaithfulness is a key concept of the book.

Key Verses:

3:1. Then the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the sons of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes."

4:1. Listen to the word of the LORD, O sons of Israel, For the LORD has a case against the inhabitants of the land, Because there is no faithfulness or kindness Or knowledge of God in the land.

4:6. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

11:7-9. So My people are bent on turning from Me. Though they call them to the One on high, None at all exalts Him. How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart is turned over within Me, All My compassions are kindled. I will not execute My fierce anger; I will not destroy Ephraim again. For I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst, And I will not come in wrath.

Key Chapters:

Chapter 4 is key in that in this chapter we see how in following the ways of idolatry, Israel left the knowledge of God's truth and became rejected as priest.

Christ as seen in Hosea:

In Hosea, Messiah is presented as the Son of God (cf. 11:1 with Matt. 2:15), as the only Savior of His people (cf. 13:4 with John 14:6), as the one who will ransom us from the dead (cf. 13:14 with 1 Cor. 15:55), as the one who loves us with great compassion (11:4), and as the one who heals those who will return to Him (6:1).

Outline:

- I. Superscription (1:1)
- II. Hosea's Marriage: A Portrait of God's Dealings with Israel (1:2-3:5)
 - A. The prophetic nature of Hosea's family (1:2-2:1)
 - 1. Hosea's marriage: Israel's unfaithfulness (1:2-3a)
 - 2. Hosea's children: Israel's judgment (1:3b-9)
 - 3. Israel's future: restoration (1:10-2:1)
 - B. Restoration through punishment (2:2-23)
 - 1. The Lord's punishment of Israel (2:2-13)
 - 2. The Lord's restoration of Israel (2:14-23)
 - C. Restoration of Hosea's marriage (3:1-5)
 - 1. The divine command (3:1)
 - 2. Hosea's obedient response (3:2-3)
 - 3. The illustration explained (3:4-5)
- III. Hosea's Message: The Judgment and Restoration of Israel (4:1-14:9)
 - A. The Lord's case against Israel (4:1-6:3)
 - 1. Israel's guilt exposed (4:1-19)
 - 2. Israel's judgment announced (5:1-14)
 - 3. Israel's restoration prophesied (5:15-6:3)
 - B. The Lord's case against Israel enlarged (6:4-11:11)

1. Israel's guilt and punishment (6:4-8:14)
 2. Israel's guilt and punishment restated (9:1-11:7)
 3. The Lord's compassion renewed (11:8-11)
- C. The Lord's case against Israel concluded (11:12-14:9)
1. A concluding indictment (11:12-13:16)
 2. A concluding exhortation (14:1-9)

JOEL (The Coming of the Day of *Yahweh*)

Author:

As indicated by 1:1, the author is "Joel," which means "*Yahweh* is God." We know nothing else about him other than the name of his father who is Pethuel (1:1).

Date:

Since the date is not specified within the book by any time references, we have to determine the date as much as possible from the internal evidences we find in the book, such as references to various nations, events, etc. People have suggested dates from 835-400 B.C., but determining the date is difficult. The difficulties with determining the date are clear from Chisholm's discussion of three common views of the dating of Joel.

1. *An early preexilic date.* Those who support an early date (ninth century B.C.) for Joel point to its position in the Hebrew Old Testament (between Hosea and Amos) and its references to Tyre, Sidon, Philistia, Egypt, and Edom as enemies (Joel 3:4, 19). Hobart Freeman writes, "The very naming of these particular nations is strong evidence for a pre-exilic date for the book, inasmuch as they were the early pre-exilic enemies of Judah, not the later nations of Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia" (*An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1968, p. 148; see also Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1974, p. 305).

Both of these arguments lack weight. The canonical position of the book is inconclusive, especially when one notes that the Septuagint places it differently in the canon. Even the Old Testament prophets in the Babylonian period delivered oracles against the nations mentioned (cf. Jer. 46-47; 49:7-22; Ezek. 27-30; Zeph. 2:4-7). One who contends for a late pre-exilic date could argue that Joel 2 pictures the Babylonians vividly enough to make formal identification unnecessary to a contemporary audience well aware of their ominous presence on the horizon.

Some seek to support an early date for Joel by appealing to the type of government reflected in the prophecy (elders, 1:2; 2:16; and priests ruling, 1:9, 13; 2:17, in view of Joash's crowning at age seven) and to verbal parallels in other prophetic books (Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, pp. 304-5). The inconclusive nature of these arguments is apparent as they are also used by proponents of a late date.

Several details of the text (cf. esp. 3:2, 6) seem to militate against an early date (in Joash's reign) for the prophecy (cf. S.R. Driver, *The Books of Joel and Amos*, pp. 14-15).

2. *A late preexilic date.* The view that the book comes from the late preexilic period has much to commend it. If one dates the prophecy between 597 and 587 B.C. (with Wilhelm Rudolph, *Joel-Amos-Obadja-Jona*. ⚡♦*♦⌘□•●□⚡⚡ ⚡♦*♦⌘□•●□⚡⚡⌘□ Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1971, pp. 24-8), Joel 3:2b (with its reference to scattering God's people and dividing the land) would refer to the Babylonian invasion of 597 B.C. when 10,000 of Judah's finest men were deported (cf. 2 Kings 24:10-16). This would also account for Joel's references to the temple (Joel 1:9, 13; 2:17), for it was not destroyed until 586 B.C. (cf. 2 Kings 25:9). At that same time such a dating would mean that Joel 1:15 and 2:1-11 anticipated the final destruction of Jerusalem (which indeed came in 586 B.C.; cf. 2 Kings 25:1-21).

Joel's prophecy would then fit nicely with several other passages which relate the "day of the LORD" (or "day of the LORD's wrath" or "day of the LORD's anger") to that event (cf. Lam. 1:12; 2:1, 21-22; Ezek. 7:19; 13:5; Zeph. 2:2-3). Joel's description (Joel 2:1-11) would also coincide with Jeremiah's description of the Babylonians (cf. Jer. 5:17). The reference in Joel 3:6 to slave trade between

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the Phoenicians and Greeks (or Ionians) harmonizes well with the late preexilic period. Ezekiel also referred to this economic arrangement (Ezek. 27:13). Arvid S. Kapelrud shows that Ionian trade flourished in the seventh and early sixth centuries B.C. (*Joel Studies*, pp. 154-8).

Despite the attractiveness of this view, problems arise in relation to Joel 2:18-19. This passage seems to record God's mercy to Joel's generation, implying they truly repented (see comments on those verses). If so, such a sequence of events is difficult to harmonize with the historical record of Judah's final days. Second Kings 23:26-27 indicates that even Josiah's revival did not cause the Lord to relent.

3. *A postexilic date.* Four arguments are used to suggest a postexilic date:

(1) Joel 3:1-2, 17 refer, it is argued, to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian Exile. In this case the references to the temple in 1:9, 13; 2:17 apply to the second temple, completed by the returning exiles in 515 B.C.

(2) The "elders" (cf. 1:2; 2:16), rather than the king, appear as the leaders of the community. This is more consistent with the postexilic period (cf. Ezra 10:14).

(3) Joel quotes other prophets, including Ezekiel (cf. Joel 2:3 with Ezek. 36:35; Joel 2:10 with Ezek. 32:7; Joel 2:27-28 with Ezek. 39:28-29).

(4) The reference to Greek slave trade (Joel 3:6) reflects the postexilic period.

Against these arguments the following responses may be made:

(1) Joel 3:1-2, 17 could refer to the deportation of 597 B.C., not that of 586 B.C. (but as noted previously under "2. A late preexilic date," this view poses problems). Some attempt to explain the language of Joel 3:1-2, 17 in light of the events recorded in 2 Chronicles 21:16-17 (Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, p. 305). However, the captivity of the royal sons and wives recorded there hardly satisfies the language of Joel 3:2.

(2) Though the omission of any reference to the monarchy is curious, it can carry little weight for it is an argument from silence. Also elders were prominent in Judean society *before* the Exile (2 Kings 23:1; Jer. 26:17; Lam. 5:12, 14; cf. Kapelrud, *Joel Studies*, pp. 187-9).

(3) In the case of literary parallels with other prophetic passages, it is often difficult to determine in any given case who quoted from whom.

(4) Kapelrud has shown, as noted earlier, that Ionian slave trade flourished in the seventh century B.C.

In conclusion, it is impossible to be dogmatic about the date of the writing of Joel. The language of Joel 3:2b seems to favor a postexilic date. This verse suggests that nations in the future will be judged for having continued the policies of ancient Babylon in scattering the Israelites and dividing their land. Such a view is consistent with (but not proved by) several other observations (such as the reference to Phoenician-Ionian slave trade, the form of government implied in the book, and the literary parallels with other prophets). If one accepts a postexilic date, the references to the temple necessitate a date some time after 516 B.C. However, all this must remain tentative. Understandably, conservative scholars differ on the date of Joel.⁷⁴

Title of the Book:

The Hebrew for Joel is Yoáel, which, as stated above, means *Yahweh is God*. This name is extremely appropriate in view of the message of Joel, which lays stress on God as the Sovereign One who has all creation and the nations under His power and control as the God of History.

⁷⁴ Walvoord/Zuck, Electronic Media.

Theme and Purpose:

Joel uses a recent drought and locust plague that strikes Judah without warning as an object lesson to warn of a future invasion of Israel in the Day of *Yahweh*. In just a very short time, a matter of hours, every piece of vegetation is stripped bare. If the nation will repent and return to the Lord, God will restore His relationship with her and bless her. This was true in the historical situation in which Joel was writing and will be true any time in the future.

For the ultimate blessings and restoration promised by Joel to occur, Israel will have to experience the judgments of the Tribulation and the outpouring of the Spirit of God. It is this combination that will cause them to return to the Lord.

Key Word:

The key word or words, in keeping with the warnings of the book, is the **Day of Yahweh**.

Key Verses:

2:11. And the LORD utters His voice before His army; Surely His camp is very great, For strong is he who carries out His word. The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it?

2:28-32. “And it will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. “And even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. “And I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire, and columns of smoke. “The sun will be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. “And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

Key Chapters:

Chapter 2 is the key chapter in that it promises that God will relent of the judgment to be poured out on Israel if she will only return to the Lord (vss. 13-14). This is then followed by the promise of the future deliverance of the nation through the outpouring of the Spirit of God, the display of wonders in the sky and on the earth, the coming of the day of the Lord, and the calling on the name of the Lord (vss. 28-32).

Christ as seen in Joel:

In Joel, Christ is presented as the one who will give the Holy Spirit (cf. 2:28 with John 16:7-15; Acts 1:8), who judges the nations (3:2, 12), and who is the refuge and stronghold of Israel (3:16).

Outline:

- I. The Historic Day of the Lord (1:1-20)
 - A. The Historic Occurrence of Locust (1:1-12)
 - B. The Historic Occurrence of Drought (1:13-20)
- II. The Prophetic Day of the Lord (2:1-3:21)
 - A. The Imminency of the Day of the Lord (2:1-27)
 - 1. The Prophecy of an Invasion of Judah (2:1-11)
 - 2. The Condition Needed for the Salvation of Judah (2:12-27)
 - B. The Ultimate Day of the Lord (2:28-3:21)
 - 1. The Final Events Before the Day of the Lord (2:28-32)
 - 2. The Events of the Day of the Lord (3:1-21)

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a. Judgment on the Gentiles (3:1-16)

b. Judgment on Judah (3:17-21)

AMOS (Judgment for Abused Privilege)

Author:

Unlike Isaiah (who was not a man of the court) and Jeremiah (who was a priest) this book was written by Amos, a herdsman and a tender of sycamore fruit (1:1; 7:14). He was from Tekoa, which was located near Bethlehem about ten miles south of Jerusalem. That Amos is the author is supported not only from the claim of the book (1:1; 7:14), but from the pastoral language (7:10f), and the contents which demonstrated his knowledge of an out-of-doors way of life (see 3:4-5, 12; 5:8, 9; 9:9). Though he was a farmer and rancher he was very familiar with the Word of God.

Date:

About 760 B.C.

According to verse 1, Amos tells us that he was a contemporary of Uzziah and Jeroboam II and prophesied “in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah (790-739 B.C), and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, King of Israel (793-753 B.C), two years before the earthquake” (1:1). Amos probably prophesied in the period from 767-753. We are also told that he prophesied “two years before the earthquake,” but the precise date of this event is not known.

Title of the Book:

The name *Amos* comes from the Hebrew *áa,mas*, “to lift a burden, carry.” His name means “burden” or “Burden-bearer,” which is entirely fitting for the burden given to him. Though from Judah rather than the Northern Kingdom of Israel, he was given the burden of carrying a message of warning against the greed, injustice, externalism, and self-righteousness of the Northern Kingdom. Amos should not be confused with Amoz, the father of Isaiah (Isa. 1:1).

Theme and Purpose:

The divine message given to Amos was primarily one of judgment, though it ends with words of hope. Amos warned that the Lord God, the sovereign Ruler of the universe, would come as a Warrior to judge the nations that had rebelled against His authority. Israel in particular would be punished for her violations against God’s covenant. Amos sought to bring the prosperous and materialistic northern tribes under Jeroboam to repentance as the only escape from imminent judgment. In the process, the book demonstrates God’s hatred of evil because of His holiness and that His justice must act against Israel’s sin for He cannot allow it to go unpunished.

However, even though the nation would be destroyed, God would still preserve a repentant remnant and one day this remnant would be restored to their covenant blessing and political prominence when the Lord would then also draw all nations to His Himself.

Key Words:

The words “transgress” and “transgression” occur 12 times. This highlights one of the key elements of the book, *the judgment of God on Israel* for her sinful ways. A key phrase of the book is “I will not revoke its punishment because . . .” (see 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6).

Key Verses:

3:1-2. Hear this word which the LORD has spoken against you, sons of Israel, against the entire family which He brought up from the land of Egypt, “You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth; Therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities.”

4:11-12. “I overthrew you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, And you were like a firebrand snatched from a blaze; Yet you have not returned to Me,” declares the LORD. “Therefore, thus I will do to you, O Israel; Because I shall do this to you, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel.”

8:11-12. 11 “Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord GOD, “When I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, But rather for hearing the words of the LORD. “And people will stagger from sea to sea, And from the north even to the east; They will go to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, But they will not find it.

Key Chapter:

Chapter 9 is a key chapter because of its focus on the restoration of Israel. Set in the midst of the harsh judgments of Amos are some of the greatest prophecies of restoration of Israel anywhere in Scripture. Within the scope of just five verses the future of Israel becomes clear, as the Abrahamic, Davidic, and Palestinian covenants are focused on their climactic fulfillment in the return of the Messiah.⁷⁵

Christ as seen in Amos:

Amos presents Christ as the One who will rebuild David’s dynasty (9:11) and as the one who will restore His people (9:11-15).

Outline:

- I. The Introduction: the Author and Theme (1:1-2)
- II. The Eight Judgments of Amos (1:3-2:16)
 - A. Concerning Damascus (1:3-5)
 - B. Concerning Philistia (1:6-8)
 - C. Concerning Tyre (1:9-10)
 - D. Concerning Edom (1:11-12)
 - E. Concerning Ammon (1:13-15)
 - F. Concerning Moab (2:1-3)
 - G. Concerning Judah (2:4-5)
 - H. Concerning Israel (2:6-16)
- III. The Sermons of Amos (3:1-6:14)
 - A. The Doom of Israel (3:1-15)
 - B. The Depravity of Israel (4:1-13)
 - C. A Dirge over Israel (5:1-6:14)
 - D. The ruin of Israel in coming judgment (5:1-17)
 - E. The rebuke of religious people (5:18-27)
 - F. The reprimand of the entire nation (6:1-14)
- IV. The Five Visions of Amos (7:1-9:15)
 - A. A Vision of Devouring Locusts (7:1-3)
 - B. A Vision of Fire (7:4-6)
 - C. A Vision of a Plumb Line (7:7-9)
 - D. An Historical Interlude: Opposition from the Priest of Bethel (7:10-17)
 - E. A Vision of a Basket of Summer Fruit (8:1-14)
 - F. A Vision of the Lord Judging (9:1-10)
- V. The Five Promise of Restoration for Israel (9:11-15)

OBADIAH (Poetic Justice)

Author:

The author is an unknown prophet of Judah by the name of Obadiah (1:1). A number of Old Testament men were named Obadiah. These include an officer in David’s army (1 Chron. 12:9), Ahab’s servant who hid God’s prophets (1 Kings 18:3), a Levite in the days of Josiah (2 Chron. 34:12), and a leader who returned from the Exile with Ezra

⁷⁵ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 246.

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(Ezra 8:9). Nothing is known of Obadiah's home town or family. The fact that his father is not named suggests that he was not out of a kingly or priestly line.

Date:

The shortest book of the Bible, containing only 21 verses, bears the distinction of being the most difficult of the minor prophets to date. Regarding the date Ryrie writes:

The question of date relates to which battle against Jerusalem the Edomites were associated with (vv. 11-14). There were four significant invasions of Jerusalem in Old Testament times: (1) by Shishak, king of Egypt, during Rehoboam's reign, in 926 B.C. (1 Kings 14:25-26); (2) by the Philistines and Arabians during the reign of Jehoram, from 848-841 (2 Chron. 21:16-17); (3) by King Jehoash of Israel during the reign of Amaziah, in 790 (2 Kings 14:13-14); (4) by Babylon during the years 605-586 (2 Kings 24-25). Obadiah prophesied against Edom either in connection with invasion #2 or #4. If the first, this book is the earliest of the writing prophets (see 2 Kings 8:20 and 2 Chron. 21:16-17; then see Joel 3:3-6 compared with Obad. 11-12 and the use of Obad. 1-9 in the extended passage in Jer. 49:7-22 as support for the earlier date).⁷⁶

Title of the Book:

The Hebrew name àObadyah means "servant or worshipper of *Yahweh*."

Theme and Purpose:

The theme of Obadiah is a reiteration of the truth that pride goes before a fall. Obadiah declares that Edom stands judged and under certain doom because of her pride in rejoicing over the misfortunes that befell Jerusalem.

Key Word:

Judgment on Edom. Combined, Edom and Esau occur nine times.

Key Verses:

1:10. "Because of violence to your brother Jacob, You will be covered with shame, And you will be cut off forever.

1:15. "For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head.

1:21. The deliverers will ascend Mount Zion To judge the mountain of Esau, And the kingdom will be the LORD'S.

Christ as seen in Obadiah:

Christ is seen in Obadiah as the judge of the nations (15-16), the Savior of Israel (17-20), and the Possessor of the kingdom (21).⁷⁷

Outline:

- I. The Prophecies of Judgment on Edom (1-9)
 - A. The Certainty of Judgment (1-4)
 - B. The Completeness of the Judgment (5-9)
- II. The Basis for the Judgment on Edom (10-14)
 - A. For an Absence of Brotherly Love (vs. 10)

⁷⁶ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Edition*, Moody, p. 1415.

⁷⁷ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 252.

- B. For Aloofness (11-12)
- C. For Aggressiveness (13-14)
- III. The Time of the Judgment (vs. 15)
- IV. The Results of the Judgment (16-18)
- V. The Deliverance of Israel (19-21)

JONAH (Fleeing From God's Will)

Author:

The author of the book is Jonah, the son of Amittai, a prophet from Galilee in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. This is evidenced by the book itself (1:1), the historical character of the book which names real places and persons, and by corroboration from other sources (2 Kings 14:25) including the testimony of Jesus in the New Testament (Matt. 12:40).

Date:

In 2 Kings 14:27 Jonah is connected with the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel (793-753). Jonah ministered after the time of Elisha and just before the time of Amos and Hosea. While no Assyrian inscription mentions a religious awakening such as that described in Jonah, during the reign of Ashurban III there was a swing toward monotheism which could have been related to the preaching of Jonah.

The repentance of Nineveh probably occurred in the reign of Ashurban III (773-755). Two plagues (765 and 759) and a solar eclipse (763) may have prepared the people for Jonah's message.⁷⁸

Title of the Book:

Jonah is from the Hebrew Yo,na,h, which means "dove." The Septuagint Hellenized this word into *Jonas*, and the Latin Vulgate used the title *Jonas*.

Theme and Purpose:

Jonah clearly demonstrates that the God of the Hebrews (1) has concern for the whole world, (2) is sovereign over nature and all human affairs. Jonah demonstrates that "salvation is of the Lord" (2:9), and that God's gracious offer of salvation extends to all who repent and turn to Him. The book also demonstrates how our prejudices like Jonah's warped sense of Jewish nationalism can hinder us from following the will of God.

Key Word:

A word that is repeated several times emphasizing God's sovereignty is the word "prepared." God prepared the wind, tempest, fish, gourd, worm, and an east wind. A key idea is *revival*.

Key Verses:

2:8-9. "Those who regard vain idols Forsake their faithfulness, But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD."

3:10. When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it.

4:2. And he prayed to the LORD and said, "Please LORD, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore, in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that Thou art a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity.

⁷⁸ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 257.

Key Chapters:

The third chapter stands out in that it records one of the greatest revivals of history.

Christ as seen in Jonah:

Through Jonah, Christ is portrayed in His resurrection (Matt. 12:40), seen as a prophet to the nations (though obviously not reluctantly like Jonah), and as the Savior of the nations. In Jonah's life, He is seen as the Savior and Lord (2:9).

Outline:

- I. The Fleeing of Jonah (1:1-17)
 - A. The Reason for His Flight (1:1-2)
 - B. The Route of His Flight (1:3)
 - C. The Results of His Flight (1:4-17)
- II. The Praying of Jonah (2:1-10)
 - A. The Characteristics of His Prayer (2:1-9)
 - B. The Answer to His Prayer (2:10)
- III. The Preaching of Jonah (3:1-10)
 - A. God's Command to Preach (3:1-3)
 - B. The Content of Jonah's Preaching (3:4)
 - C. The Consequences of Jonah's Preaching (3:5-10)
- IV. The Learning of Jonah (4:1-11)
 - A. Jonah's Complaint to God (4:1-3)
 - B. God's Curriculum for Jonah (4:4-11)

MICAH (Who Is Like God?)

Author:

Little is known about the author of this book other than what can be learned from the book itself and from Jeremiah 26:18. The name Micah is a shortened form of Micaiah, which means "Who is like *Yahweh*?" Micah suggests this truth in 7:18 when he said, "Who is a God like You?" In Jeremiah's day the elders referred to Micah and quoted Micah 3:12 in defense of Jeremiah's message of judgment on the nation (Jer. 26:18).

Micah was from Moresheth (Micah 1:1; cf. 1:14), a town in Judea about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem near the Philistine city of Gath. Moresheth was located in Judah's fertile foothills near Lachish, an international trading town.

Date:

Micah tells us he prophesied during the days of Jotham (750-732), Ahaz (736-716) and Hezekiah (716-687) (1:1). Micah speaks primarily to Judah, but since he also speaks to the Northern Kingdom of Israel and predicts the fall of Samaria (1:6), a good part of his ministry occurred before the Assyrian captivity in 722 B.C., probably around **700 B.C.**

Title of the Book:

The book takes its title from its author, Micah the prophet. The Greek and Latin titles for this book are *Michaias* and *Micha*.

Theme and Purpose:

Micah shows how the people had failed to live up to the covenant stipulations God had made with Israel in which there would be blessing for obedience (Deut. 28:1-14) and cursing for disobedience and eventually cast from the land

of promise (Deut. 28:15-68). In the process, Micah exposed the injustice of Judah and declared the righteousness and justice of *Yahweh* showing He was just in disciplining them. He indicts Israel and Judah for sins like oppression, bribery among the judges, prophets, and priests, and for covetousness, cheating, pride, and violence. Of course, this discipline on the nation demonstrated His love for them and that He would restore them.

The theme of judgment is prominent in each of Micah's three messages, but he also stressed the truth of restoration. Further, Micah referred to the principle of the *remnant* in each of his three messages (Micah 2:12; 4:7; 5:7-8; 7:18). He declared that in the future *Yahweh* would restore the people of Israel to a place of prominence in the world under the coming Messiah.

Key Word:

The concept of "hear" in Micah's challenge for the people to listen to the Lord is found some nine times. Then in keeping with the focus on judgment for failing to hear are key words like "desolation," "desolate," and "destruction," which combined together occur some four times. Finally, in keeping with the thrust of restoration, the concept of "gather" or "assemble" is seen some seven times.

Key Verses:

1:5-9. All this is for the rebellion of Jacob And for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the rebellion of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? What is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem? For I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the open country, Planting places for a vineyard. I will pour her stones down into the valley, And will lay bare her foundations. All of her idols will be smashed, All of her earnings will be burned with fire, And all of her images I will make desolate, For she collected them from a harlot's earnings, And to the earnings of a harlot they will return. Because of this I must lament and wail, I must go barefoot and naked; I must make a lament like the jackals And a mourning like the ostriches. For her wound is incurable, For it has come to Judah; It has reached the gate of my people, Even to Jerusalem.

6:8. He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?

7:18-20. Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love. 19 He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea. 20 You will give truth to Jacob And unchanging love to Abraham, Which You swore to our forefathers From the days of old.

Key Chapters:

Undoubtedly, chapters 6-7 are the key chapters of Micah. Wilkinson and Boa have an excellent discussion on the significance of these two chapters.

The closing section of Micah describes a court-room scene. God has a controversy against His people, and He calls the mountains and hills together to form the jury as He sets forth His case. The people have replaced heartfelt worship with empty ritual, thinking that this is all God demands. They have divorced God's standards of justice from their daily dealings in order to cover their unscrupulous practices. They have failed to realize what the Lord requires of man. There can only be one verdict: guilty.

Nevertheless, the book closes on a note of hope. The same God who executes judgment also delights to extend mercy. "Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy" (7:18). No wonder the prophet exclaims, "Therefore I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me" (7:7).⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 263.

Christ as seen in Micah:

Micah presents Christ as the God of Jacob (4:2), the Judge of the nations (4:3), and the Ruler who would be born in the city of Bethlehem (cf. 5:2 with Matt. 2:1-6). The priests and scribes quoted Micah 5:2 in answer to Herod's question about the birthplace of Messiah.

Outline:

- I. The Superscription or Introduction (1:1)
- II. First Message: Judgment for Samaria and Judah (chaps. 1-2)
 - A. Prediction of coming judgment (1:2-7)
 - B. Lament over the people (1:8-16)
 - 1. Micah's lament (1:8-9)
 - 2. Micah's call for others to mourn (1:10-16)
 - C. Sins of Judah (2:1-11)
 - 1. Sins of the people (2:1-5)
 - 2. Sins of the false prophets (2:6-11)
 - D. Prediction of future regathering (2:12-13)
- III. Second Message: Doom followed by Deliverance (chaps. 3-5)
 - A. Judgment on the nation's leaders (chap. 3)
 - 1. Judgment on the rulers (3:1-4)
 - 2. Judgment on the false prophets (3:5-8)
 - 3. Judgment on all the naive leaders (3:9-12)
 - B. Kingdom blessings for the nation (chaps. 4-5)
 - 1. Characteristics of the kingdom (4:1-8)
 - 2. Events preceding the kingdom (4:9-5:1)
 - 3. The Ruler of the kingdom (5:2-15)
- IV. Third Message: Denunciation for Sin and a Promise of Blessing (chaps. 6-7)
 - A. An indictment by the Lord (6:1-5)
 - B. The response of Micah for the nation (6:6-8)
 - C. The Lord's judgment because of sin (6:9-16)
 - 1. The sins (6:9-12)
 - 2. The punishment (6:13-16)
 - D. Micah's pleading with the Lord (chap. 7)
 - 1. Micah's bemoaning of the nation's sins (7:1-6)
 - 2. Micah's confidence in the Lord (7:7-13)
 - 3. Micah's prayer that God would again shepherd His flock (7:14)
 - 4. The Lord's promise to show miraculous things to His people (7:15-17)
 - E. Micah's affirmation that God is unique (7:18-20)

NAHUM (The Doom of Nineveh)

Author:

Other than what Nahum tells us in 1:1, that the book is of the vision of Nahum, the Elkoshite and that it is an oracle about Nineveh, we know nothing about this prophet. Nahum means "consolation," but his message was certainly not one of comfort to the wicked Assyrians who occupied Nineveh. It would, however, bring comfort to Judah. He may have been a prophet of Judah in view of 1:15, and though the exact location of Elkosh is uncertain, most conservative scholars believe this city was located somewhere in southern Judah.

Date:

Nahum speaks of the fall of Thebes as already past in 3:8-10 and Thebes fell in 663 B.C.. Further, in all three chapters Nahum predicted Nineveh's fall and this occurred in 612. Nahum therefore gave his oracle somewhere between 663 and 612, probably close to the end of this time because he represents the fall of Nineveh as imminent (2:1;

3:14, 19). This would place his ministry sometime during the reign of Josiah and makes him a contemporary of Zephaniah and Jeremiah.

Title of the Book:

As with all the minor prophets, the book gets its name from the prophet who spoke the prophecy. The title used in the Greek and Latin Bible is *Naoum* and *Nahum*.

Theme and Purpose:

Nahum's theme is the fall of Nineveh as the retribution of God against the wicked Assyrians of Nineveh. What Jonah wanted to see, namely God's judgment on the Assyrians, was later predicted by Nahum approximately one hundred and fifty years later. The conversion of the Ninevites in response to the preaching of Jonah was evidently short lived because they soon became ruthless, returning to their former wicked ways. Sargon II of Assyria destroyed Samaria and took the Northern Kingdom of Israel into captivity, scattering the ten tribes in 722. Later, Sennacherib of the Assyrians almost captured Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah in 701 B.C. But regardless of its power and prominence, Nineveh is clearly judged as doomed by a Holy God through the prophet Nahum. Assyria's cruelty, power, and pride would come to an end by the power of God. Though the book focuses on Assyria's fall and judgment, it is written to bring comfort to Judah.

Key Word:

The key word or idea is simply the judgment of Nineveh, but the words that stand out in this connection are "avenging" and "vengeance" occurring three times in the opening chapter (1:2).

Key Verses:

1:7-8. The LORD is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble, And He knows those who take refuge in Him. 8 But with an overflowing flood He will make a complete end of its site, And will pursue His enemies into darkness.

3:5. "Behold, I am against you," declares the LORD of hosts; "And I will lift up your skirts over your face, And show to the nations your nakedness And to the kingdoms your disgrace. 6 "I will throw filth on you And make you vile, And set you up as a spectacle. 7 "And it will come about that all who see you Will shrink from you and say, 'Nineveh is devastated! Who will grieve for her?' Where will I seek comforters for you?"

Key Chapter:

Because it sets forth the basis of God's judgment against Nineveh as retribution of a Holy God who, though slow to anger, is also great in power and reserves wrath for His enemies, **chapter one** stands out as a key chapter.

Christ as seen in Nahum:

While there are no direct Messianic prophecies in Nahum, in keeping with the basic christological spirit of all prophecy, Nahum sees Christ as the jealous God and avenger of His adversaries (1:2f).

Outline:

- I. The Introduction (1:1)
- II. The Prophecy and Certainty of God's Judgment on Nineveh (1:2-15)
 - A. God's Holy Wrath Against Nineveh (1:2-8)
 - B. Nineveh's Scheming Against *Yahweh* Will Come to an End (1:9-11)
 - C. Judah's Affliction Will End Because of Nineveh's Judgment (1:12-15)
- III. The Description of God's Judgment on Nineveh (chap. 2)
 - A. The Assault Described (2:1-6)

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B. The Defeat Declared (2:7-13)

IV. The Cause for God's Judgment on Nineveh (chap. 3)

A. Because of Her Violence and Deceit that Leads to Shame (3:1-7)

B. Her Treatment of Thebes (No-amon) Results in Her Own Defeat (3:8-11)

C. Her Defenses to be Useless (3:12-19)

HABAKKUK (Solution to Perplexity)

Author:

The author is identified as Habakkuk in 1:1 and 3:1. He clearly identifies himself as a prophet and the fact that his prayer and praise is concluded with the statement, "For the choir director, on my stringed instruments" suggests he had a priestly background.

Date:

Because the book anticipates the coming Babylonian invasion and shows an awareness of the fame of the Babylonians, Habakkuk probably ministered during the reign of Jehoiakim of Judah. It appears that Babylon had not invaded Judah, though it was imminent (see 1:6 and 2:1), which suggests Habakkuk prophesied shortly before Babylon's invasion in 605 B.C. around **606**.

Title of the Book:

The book gets its title from the name of the author. Habakkuk comes from a Hebrew word, *hē'abaq*, which means "embrace." But how is this to be understood? We should probably understand this in an active sense, "one who embraces or clings," rather than the passive, "one who is embraced," for in spite of his perplexity over the coming invasion, the prophet finally clings to *Yahweh* as the God of his salvation and strength.

Theme and Purpose:

The theme of this prophecy flows out of Habakkuk's perplexity over the coming invasion of the wicked Babylonians. It concerns the problems of his faith in the face of two apparent difficulties: (1) Why did God permit the increasing evil in Judah to go unpunished (1:2-4)? And how could a Holy God (1:13) use sinful nations like Babylon as His source of judgment (1:12-2:1)? Habakkuk grapples with these difficulties which are solved in the light of God's continuing revelation, and the prophet closes in a psalm of joyous trust. The book is thus a theodicy, a defense of God's goodness and power in view of the problem of evil.

Key Word:

Two words are key not because of their repetition but because of the content of the book. One is "why" as Habakkuk struggled with the issues here and the other is "**faith**" as declared in 2:4, "the just shall live by faith."

Key Verses:

2:4. 4 "Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.

3:17-19. Though the fig tree should not blossom, And there be no fruit on the vines, Though the yield of the olive should fail, And the fields produce no food, Though the flock should be cut off from the fold, And there be no cattle in the stalls, 18 Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. 19 The Lord GOD is my strength, And He has made my feet like hinds' feet, And makes me walk on my high places. For the choir director, on my stringed instruments.

Key Chapters:

The book of Habakkuk builds to a triumphant climax reached in the last three verses (3:17-19). The beginning of the book and the ending stand in stark contrast: mystery to certainty, questioning to affirming, and complaint to confidence. Chapter 3 is one of the most majestic of all Scripture and records the glory of God in past history and in future history (prophecy).⁸⁰

Christ as seen in Habakkuk:

Again in the light of the christological nature of prophecy, Christ is portrayed as the Savior. The word “salvation,” which appears three times in 3:13 and 18, is the root word from which the name “Jesus” is derived (see Matt. 1:21). He is also seen as the Holy One (cf. 1:12 with 1 John 1:9), the one who justifies the righteous by faith (2:4), and the one who will one day fill the earth “with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (2:14).

Outline:

- I. The Perplexities of Habakkuk: faith is tested and taught (1:1-2:20)
 - A. The First Problem: Why Does God Allow Wicked Practices to Continue in Judah? (1:2-4)
 - B. God’s First Answer (1:5-11)
 - C. The Second Problem: Why Will God Use Wicked People to Punish Judah? (1:12-2:1)
 - D. God’s Second Answer (2:2-20)
- II. The Praise of Habakkuk: faith is triumphant (3:1-19)
 - A. Praise for God’s Person (3:1-3)
 - B. Praise for God’s Power (3:4-7)
 - C. Praise for God’s Purpose (3:8-16)
 - D. Praise for Faith in God (3:17-19)

ZEPHANIAH (Blessing Through Judgment)**Author:**

As seen in 1:1, the book was written by Zephaniah, the son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah. In tracing the prophet’s ancestry through four generations, this heading is unique. Usually only the prophet’s father is identified (cf. Isa. 1:1; Jer. 1:1; Ezek. 1:3; Hos. 1:1; Joel 1:1) when the author provides genealogical information. Such a long genealogy suggests the noble birth of the prophet, his great-great-grandfather being the good King Hezekiah.

Date:

630-625 B.C.

According to the introduction (1:10), Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of Josiah (640-609 B.C.). His prophecy preceded the fall of Nineveh in 612 and the reforms of Josiah in 622-621. This seems evident since the book of Zephaniah presupposes the existence of pagan idolatry in Judah (1:4-6) which was pretty much eliminated by Josiah’s reforms. All this suggests a date of between 630 and 625 B.C.

Title of the Book:

The book takes its name from the prophet Zephaniah (σῆφανια from σῆφα, “hide, treasure up, store,” and a shortened form for *Yahweh*. It means “hidden of *Yahweh*.” See 2:3. The Greek and Latin title is *Sophonias*.

⁸⁰ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 274.

Theme and Purpose:

The prophet speaks to the people of Judah whose moral and spiritual life had been dulled by the evil influence of the reigns of Manasseh and Amon (see 3:1-7). Consequently, in keeping with the warnings of cursing for disobedience in Deuteronomy 28, the central theme is that of judgment or the coming of the day of the Lord. In view of *Yahweh's* holiness, He must vindicate and demonstrate His holiness against sin by calling the nations of the world into account before Him. But God is also a God of mercy and blessing so there is also a strong emphasis and call for repentance with the promise of blessing. Thus, Zephaniah clearly divides into three sections: retribution or judgment for sin, a call for repentance, and a promise of future redemption or blessing.

Key Word:

The key words are “day of the Lord,” “that day,” the day,” which combined occur some twenty times. The key idea is that of judgment and restoration in the day of the Lord.

Key Verses:

1:7. Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near, For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, He has consecrated His guests.

1:12. “And it will come about at that time That I will search Jerusalem with lamps, And I will punish the men Who are stagnant in spirit, Who say in their hearts, ‘The LORD will not do good or evil!’”

1:14-15. Near is the great day of the LORD, Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. 15 A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness,

2:3. Seek the LORD, All you humble of the earth Who have carried out His ordinances; Seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden In the day of the LORD’S anger.

Key Chapters:

The day of the Lord involves two distinct aspects: judgment followed by blessing. **Chapter three** clearly records these two distinct aspects of this awesome day. After Israel repents and returns to the Lord, they will be restored under the righteous rule of Messiah.

Christ as seen in Zephaniah:

Though not specifically mentioned in this book, Messiah is presented as the Righteous One within the nation of Israel (3:5) who is also their King (3:15).

Outline:

- I. Introduction (1:1)
- II. The Judgment of the Day of *Yahweh* (1:2-3:8)
 - A. Judgment on the whole earth (1:2-3)
 - B. Judgment on Judah (1:4-2:3)
 - 1. The causes of judgment (1:4-13)
 - 2. The description of judgment (1:14-18)
 - 3. A summons to the nation: Repent and Seek God (2:1-3)
 - C. Judgment on the surrounding nations (2:4-15)
 - 1. On Philistia (2:4-7)
 - 2. On Moab and Ammon (2:8-11)
 - 3. On Ethiopia (2:12)
 - 4. On Assyria (2:13-15)
 - D. Judgment on Jerusalem (3:1-7)

1. The prophet's indictment (3:1-5)
2. The Lord's judgment (3:6-7)
- E. Judgment on all the earth (3:8)
- III. The Restoration of the Day of *Yahweh's* (3:9-20)
 - A. The restoration of the nations (3:9-10)
 - B. The restoration of Israel (3:11-20)

HAGGAI (Encouragement)

With Haggai, we come to the only three post-exilic prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, all of whom spoke to the returned remnant. Their objective was to encourage their spiritual and moral life of this remnant, now back in their home land, as they sought to rebuild the temple and the nation. Haggai and Zechariah dealt mostly with the spiritual needs as they related to the rebuilding of the temple and Malachi dealt primarily with the moral and social needs involved with the reconstruction of the nation itself.

Author:

Haggai's name means "festal" or "festive, suggesting to some that he was born on one of the major feast days, though there is nothing in the text to support this. Haggai is known only from this book (mentioned 9 times) and the mention of him in Ezra 5:1-2 and 6:14. Little is known about him. He refers to himself as "the prophet Haggai" (1:1), but nothing is known about his parents or genealogy. He was a contemporary of Zechariah the prophet and Zerubbabel the governor. His authorship is uncontested.

Date:

520 B.C.

Under the policies of Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, almost 50,000 Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem. Among these were Zerubbabel (Ezra 1:2-4; cf. Isa. 44:28), Joshua the high priest and the Prophets Haggai and Zechariah. The decree allowing the Jews to return to their land and rebuild their temple occurred in 538 B.C.

Levitical sacrifices were soon reinstated on a rebuilt altar for burnt offerings (Ezra 3:1-6), and in the second year of the return the foundation of the temple was laid (Ezra 3:8-13; 5:16). However, Samaritan harassment and eventual Persian pressure brought a halt to the rebuilding of the temple. Then spiritual apathy set in; and for about 16 more years—until the rule of the Persian king, Darius Hystaspes (521-486 B.C.)—the construction of the temple was discontinued. In the second year of Darius (520 B.C.) God raised up Haggai the prophet to encourage the Jews in the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 5:1-2; Hag. 1:1).

As stated by Haggai in 1:1, his first message was given on the first day of Elul (Aug.-Sept.) in the second year of Darius. This was in 520 B.C.

Title of the Book:

As is normal with the writing prophets, the book gets its name from the prophet himself. The title in the Septuagint is *Aggaïos*, and in the Vulgate it is *Aggaeus*.

Theme and Purpose:

The Book of Haggai is the second shortest book in the Old Testament; only Obadiah is shorter. The literary style of Haggai is simple and direct. The content of the book is a report of four messages by a seemingly insignificant postexilic prophet whose ministry was apparently of limited duration.

Though Haggai is the second shortest book in the Old Testament, we should not underestimate the power of Haggai's four messages in his role in encouraging the rebuilding of the temple. "The truth is that few prophets have succeeded in packing into such brief compass so much spiritual common sense as Haggai did" (Frank E. Gaebelien, *Four Minor Prophets: Obadiah, Jonah, Habakkuk, and Haggai*, p. 199). One outstanding feature of Haggai's message is his strong awareness that his messages had their origin in God. Some 25 times he affirmed the divine authority of

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his messages. He consistently introduced his messages with, “This is what the LORD Almighty says,” and concluded them with a similar focus (“declares the LORD Almighty”).

Haggai wrote to encourage and exhort the returned remnant to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. In the process of this he taught (1) God blesses His people when they put Him first, (2) that we should not grow weary in the service of the Lord, and that (3) God’s promises for tomorrow become the foundation for our confidence for today.

Key Words:

The repetition of the term “house” as it is used in relation to the Temple focuses the readers attention on the *reconstruction of the Temple* as the key focus of the book.

Key Verses:

1:7-8. Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Consider your ways! “Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified,” says the LORD.

1:14. So the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God,

2:7-9. ““And I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations; and I will fill this house with glory,” says the LORD of hosts. ‘The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,’ declares the LORD of hosts. ‘The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘and in this place I shall give peace,’ declares the LORD of hosts.”

Key Chapters:

The Messianic nature of 2:6-9 with its prophecy regarding the future glory of the temple makes **chapter two** the key chapter.

Christ as seen in Haggai:

Here Messiah is portrayed as the Restorer of the Temple’s glory (2:7-9) and the Overthrower of the kingdoms of the world (2:22).

Outline:

- I. The First Message: A Call to Rebuild the Temple (1:1-15)
 - A. The Introduction (1:1)
 - B. The First Rebuke (1:2-6)
 - C. The Remedy (1:7-8)
 - D. The Second Rebuke (1:9-11)
 - E. The Response to the Prophet’s Message (1:12-15)
- II. The Second Message: A Call to Find Courage in God’s Promises (2:1-9)
 - A. The Introduction (2:1-2)
 - B. The Promises of Enablement and Future Glory (2:3-9)
- III. The Third Message: A Call to Cleanness of Life (2:10-19)
 - A. The Introduction (2:10)
 - B. The Problem: The Disobedience of the Remnant (2:11-14)
 - C. The Solution: The Obedience of the Remnant (2:15-19)
- IV. The Fourth Message: A Call to Confidence in the Future (2:20-23)
 - A. The Introduction (2:20-21a)
 - B. A Promise of the Future Defeat of the Gentile Kingdoms (2:21b-22)
 - C. A Promise of the Restoration of the Davidic Kingdom (2:23)

ZECHARIAH (the Jealousy of *Yahweh*)

Author and Title:

Zechariah the prophet was the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, the priest who led the Levites (Neh. 12:4), and a contemporary of the previous prophet (Ezra 6:14). His name (Zekarya,h) means “*Yahweh* remembers” or “*Yahweh* has remembered.” This is a theme that runs like a thread through the whole book. In the Greek and Latin version Zechariah is *Zacharias*.

Date:

520-518 B.C.

The first verse presents Zechariah as the son of Berechiah and the grandson of Iddo, who was undoubtedly the same priest as the one mentioned in Neh. 12:4 as a contemporary of Zerubbabel. In Zech. 2:4 the prophet is spoken of as a youth (naàar). He would probably have been a young man at the time he cooperated with Haggai in the rebuilding campaign of 520 B.C. His last dated prophecy (chap. 7) was given two years later, in 518; yet chapters 9-14 show every appearance of having been composed some decades after that, possibly after 480 B.C. in view of the reference to Greece (9:13). As Unger points out (IGOT; p. 355), the successful resistance of the Greek nation to the invasion of Xerxes would naturally have brought them into a new prominence in the eyes of all the peoples of the Near East. We have no further information concerning Zechariah’s personal career, except the reference in Matt. 23:35, which seems to indicate that he was martyred by mob action in the temple grounds (since the Zechariah that Christ mentions is said to be the son of Berechiah rather than of Jehoiada, who however met his end in a like manner back in the days of King Joash, according to 2 Chron. 24:20-21).⁸¹

Theme and Purpose:

Zechariah was written to encourage the returned remnant to complete their work in rebuilding the temple. The prophet also showed that God was at work in the world restoring Israel to their spiritual inheritance in preparation for the coming Messiah. Doctrinally, Zechariah demonstrates the prominence of the temple in God’s spiritual restoration of Israel; shows the providence of God in bringing back His people to their land, and it highlights the preeminence of the Messiah in the future spiritual restoration of the Nation.

Key Word:

“The Word of the Lord” (13 occurrences) and “The Lord of Hosts” (53 occurrences) are two prominent expressions that lay stress on the divine nature of Zechariah’s message, but the prominent idea of the book *preparing for the coming Messiah* in both of His advents.

Key Verses:

8:3. “Thus says the LORD, ‘I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain.’”

9:9-10. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.

⁸¹ Gleason Archer, Electronic Media

Key Chapters:

Zechariah builds to a tremendous climax in chapter 14 where he discloses the last siege of Jerusalem, the initial victory of the enemies of Israel, the cleaving of the Mount of Olives, the Lord's defense of Jerusalem with His visible appearance on Olivet, judgment on the confederated nations, the topographical changes in the land of Israel, the Feast of Tabernacles in the Millennium, and the ultimate holiness of Jerusalem and her people.⁸²

Christ as seen in Zechariah:

Perhaps no Old Testament book is more Messianic than Zechariah.

In an often-quoted statement, George L. Robinson has called the Book of Zechariah "the most Messianic, the most truly apocalyptic and eschatological of all the writings of the Old Testament" (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956, 5:3136). The messianic emphasis of Zechariah accounts for its frequent citation by New Testament authors.⁸³

Zechariah presents Messiah or Christ in both of his advents and as both Servant and King, as Man and God, as the Angel of the Lord (3:1), the Righteous Branch (3:8), the Stone with the seven eyes (3:9), the Crucified Savior or the pierced One (12:10), the coming and humble King (9:9-10), the smitten Shepherd who will be abandoned (13:7), and the coming Judge and righteous King (14).

Outline:

- I. The Call to repentance (1:1-6)
- II. The Eight Visions of Zechariah (1:7-6:8)
 - A. The Vision of the Horses and Riders (1:7-17)
 - B. The Vision of the Four Horns and Four Craftsmen (1:18-21)
 - C. The Vision of the Surveyor (2:1-13)
 - D. The Vision of the Golden Lampstand (4:1-14)
 - E. The Vision of the Flying Scroll (5:1-4)
 - F. The Vision of the Woman in the Ephah (5:5-11)
 - G. The Vision of the Four Chariots (6:1-8)
- III. The Crowning of Joshua (6:9-15)
- IV. The Questions Concerning the Fasts (7:1-8:23)
- V. The Oracles Concerning the Future (9:1-14:21)
 - A. The First Oracle: The Rejection of Messiah (9:1-11:17)
 - B. The Second Oracle: The Reign of Messiah (12:1-14:21)

MALACHI (Repent and Return)

Author and Title:

Malachi is only mentioned in Malachi 1:1 as the author of this prophecy. However, though there is an unsubstantiated Jewish tradition that claims it was written by Nehemiah (interpreting the word *Malachi* as a designation of an unnamed messenger),⁸⁴ the authorship, date, and unity of the book has never been effectively challenged. Malachi (Ma'áa,chi,) means "My Messenger" and may be a shortened form of Mal'áak Ya,h, "Messenger of Yahweh." This is fitting for the book anticipates the coming of the "messenger of the covenant" (cf. 3:1), a prophecy of John the Baptist (Matt. 11:10). The Septuagint has *Malachias* and the Latin uses *Maleachi* for the title.

⁸² Wilkinson and Boa, p. 290.

⁸³ Walvoord/Zuck, Electronic Media.

⁸⁴ Geisler, p. 297.

Date:

450-400 B.C.

Concerning the date of Malachi, Gleason writes:

Judging from internal evidence, it seems clear that his prophecies were given in the second half of the fifth century, probably around 435 B.C. We come to this conclusion from the following indications: (1) The temple had already been rebuilt and Mosaic sacrifice reinstated (1:7,10; 3:1). (2) A Persian governor (or *peh£ah* mentioned in 1:8) was in authority at that time; hence it could not have been during either of Nehemiah's governorships (in 445 and 433). (3) The sins which Malachi denounces are the same as those Nehemiah had to correct during his second term, namely, (a) priestly laxity (1:6; Neh. 13:4-9), (b) neglect of tithes, to the impoverishment of the Levites (3:7-12; cf. Neh. 13:10-13), (c) much intermarriage with foreign women (2:10-16; cf. Neh. 13:23-28). It is reasonable to assume that Malachi had already protested against these abuses in the years just preceding Nehemiah's return; hence a fair estimate would be about 435 B.C.⁸⁵

Theme and Purpose:

Under the leadership of Nehemiah, there had been a period of revival (Neh. 10:28-39), but the priests and the people had grown cold in their walk with God and had become external and mechanical in their observance of the law. Though they were guilty of the sins Malachi denounced (priestly laxity, neglect of the tithes, and intermarriage with foreign women), the people acted bewildered over why God was dissatisfied with them. Malachi wrote to answer the questions of the priests and people, to reveal and rebuke them for their sins, their backsliding, and poor attitudes, but to also encourage them by ending on a note of encouragement through the coming of the Lord's messenger who would clear the way for Messiah.

Thus, Malachi rebuked the people for their neglect of the true worship of the Lord and called them to repentance (1:6; 3:7). Gleason summarizes the theme as follows:

The theme of Malachi is that sincerity toward God and a holy manner of life are absolutely essential in the Lord's eyes, if His favor is to be bestowed upon the crops and the nation's economic welfare. Israel must live up to her high calling as a holy nation and wait for the coming of the Messiah, who by a ministry of healing as well as judgment will lead the nation to a realization of all her fondest hopes.⁸⁶

Key Word:

Twelve times in Malachi we read either "you say" (11 times) or "you also say" (once). Also, the word curse or cursed occurs seven times in four verses. In answer to their questions and their failure to understand God's judgment, Malachi answers and shows them why. The key idea that prevails is Malachi's answer and appeal to the wayward remnant that had returned.

Key Verses:

2:17. 17 You have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet you say, "How have we wearied Him?" In that you say, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and He delights in them," or, "Where is the God of justice?"

3:1. "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts.

⁸⁵ Gleason Archer, Electronic Media.

⁸⁶ Gleason Archer, Electronic Media.

4:5-6. “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. 6 “And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse.”

Key Chapters:

In that they anticipate or prophesy of the coming of the Messenger of the Lord who will precede the coming of Messiah Himself, **chapters 3 and 4** together are the key chapters of the book, for it is the Messiah Himself who is the answer to our sin as is so illustrated in the sins of the returned remnant.

Christ as seen in Malachi:

Regarding the Messianic focus of Malachi, Wilkinson and Boa have an excellent summary:

The Book of Malachi is the prelude to four hundred years of prophetic silence, broken finally by the words of the next prophet, John the Baptist: “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). Malachi predicts the coming of the messenger who will clear the way before the Lord (3:1; cf. Is. 40:30. John the Baptist later fulfills this prophecy, but in the next few verses (3:2-5) jump ahead to Christ in His second advent...⁸⁷

Outline:

- I. The Privilege Place of Israel (1:1-5)
 - A. God’s Love Declared (1:1-2a)
 - B. God’s Love Doubted (1:2b)
 - C. God’s Love Demonstrated (1:3-5)
- II. The Pollution of Israel (1:6-3:15)
 - A. Cheating (1:6-14)
 - B. Unfaithfulness (2:1-9)
 - C. Spiritually Mixed Marriages (2:10-12)
 - D. Divorce (2:13-16)
 - E. Impiety and Impertinence (2:17)
 - F. Parenthesis: The Coming of John the Baptist (3:1-6)
 - G. Robbery (3:7-12)
 - H. Arrogance (3:13-15)
- III. The Promises to the People (3:16-4:6)
 - A. The Promise of the Book of Remembrance (3:16-18)
 - B. The Promise of the Coming Christ (4:1-3)
 - C. The Promise of the Coming of Elijah (4:4-6)

⁸⁷ Wilkinson and Boa, p. 296.