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## Session 15

### The Rescue

1. Old Testament History
  - A. Luke 15 – Jesus
  - B. Psalm 78 – David
  - C. Acts 7 – Stephen
  - D. Acts 13 – David
2. The Value of the Old Testament
  - A. Jesus revealed there (Luke 24)
  - B. An example for us (1 Cor 10)
  - C. Bereans understood the reality of the New covenant from the Old Testament

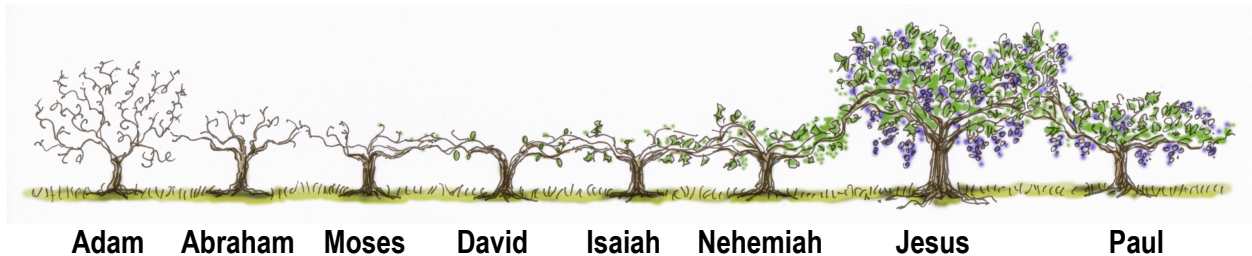
## Session 16

### Genesis & Job: Origins and Failures From Individuals Into a Tribe

#### Interpretive Keys: Interpreting the Old Testament

1. Introduction
  - A. The New Testament's Perspective on the Old
    1. Matthew 5:17
    2. Luke 24:44
    3. 1 Cor 10
  - B. A Time Line of the Old Testament – Revolves around two key events
    1. The Exodus
    2. The Exile

- C. Arrangements of the Old Testament
  - 1. 5 books of the Pentateuch
  - 2. 12 books of history
  - 3. 5 books of wisdom literature
  - 4. 5 books of the Major Prophets
  - 5. 12 books of the Minor Prophets



## The Book of Genesis

- 1. Background
  - A. Historical Context
  - B. Author
    - 1. Jewish tradition is strong
    - 2. Jesus attributes these books to Moses
    - 3. Might possibly have used other sources and scribes
- 2. Theme "Beginnings" or "Origins"
  - A. Of our world and how it became full of sin
  - B. Of God's dealing with humanity
  - C. God Chooses a People
    - 1. God's election and promise
    - 2. Faith and Righteousness
    - 3. The covenant – Difference between God's covenant with Abraham's and his covenant with Israel through Moses
- 3. Major Characteristics
  - A. The common content of the first three chapters of the Bible, with the last 3
  - B. God dealing with People other than the Israelites
    - 1. Pre-Abraham men of God: Adam, Methuselah, Enoch, Noah
    - 2. Melchizedek
    - 3. The full sin of the Amorites
    - 4. Job
- 4. Timeline
  - A. A Family
  - B. An Extended Family
  - C. Tribal Identity

## **The Book of Job**

1. Background
  - A. Historical Context: Unknown
    1. Possibly written after the exile to explain the exile
    2. But it seems job was from the patriarchal period: since no mention of Israel, or the covenant revealed through Moses
  - B. Author: Unknown. Probably an Israelite
2. Theme: When the Godly Suffer!
  - A. Human approach: Either God is not almighty, not fully just, or man never innocent
  - B. The answer here: God is bigger than all of that. Trust him!
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. A literary masterpiece: Artistic character, grandeur of language, depth of feeling and sensitivity to human pain.
  - B. Incredibly original, and unique approach to suffering matched by no other of its time
  - C. The power of God and intimate involvement he holds in his creation.
4. Content
  - A. The basis of interpretation
  - B. Job's Counselors were wrong
  - C. Job spoke where he had no knowledge- because God was too wonderful for him to understand
  - D. Elihu: You're all wrong. Look to God
  - E. God shows up – and demonstrates not only is great might, but also his intimate Involvement in creation. Stirs in Job again a heart of trust that holds on even where he can't comprehend.

## From a Tribe to a Kingdom: Exodus- Ruth



### The Book of Exodus

1. Background
  - A. Authorship
  - B. Historical Background: Abraham through Joseph
  - C. Delivery from Egypt and the trip to the Promised Land
2. Theme "The Redemption of God"
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. God reveals his name, his attributes, his redemption, his law and how he is to be worshipped
  - B. Attributes of God: justice, truthfulness, mercy, faithfulness and holiness
  - C. God's presence always associated with awesome glory
    1. Working wonders: burning bush, plagues, manna
    2. The pillar of cloud of day, the fire by night
    3. Thunder, lightning and earthquakes at Mount Sinai
  - D. The seeds for redemption
  - E. YHWH: The name of God

Resource: *Is God a Moral Monster* by Paul Copan

## **The Book of Leviticus**

1. Background
  - A. Name derived from the Levites
  - B. Jewish "And He said" and God spoke to Moses
2. Theme: Worshipping God
  - A. Major focus on God's holiness and how we approach him in light of our sinfulness
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Sacrifices Detailed
  - B. Sacred Days Detailed
  - C. The role of the Levites both as priests, teachers and civil authorities
  - D. Cleanliness and uncleanness
  - E. A mentality of perfection: sacrifices, priests, people who appear before God

## **The Book of Numbers**

1. Background
  - A. "Numbers" from census lists in Chapters 1 and 26
  - B. Hebrew name means "in the desert" – the time between Sinai and their preparations to enter the promised land
2. Theme: Learning Obedience to God
  - A. Of the people after the spies, of Balaam, of Aaron, and Moses, the people in Moab
  - B. The 38 years account of their time in the wilderness after their stay at Sinai
  - C. A generation dies out and a new one is formed
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Israel leaves Sinai in battle formation
  - B. Counting the people as a mustering for battle
  - C. Who is the Balaam, prophet of God, or a sorcerer?
  - D. Great historical narratives interspersed with clarifications on law, feasts
  - E. Two generations, two censuses, two journeying, two instructions
  - F. Problem with numbers of people

## **The Book of Deuteronomy**

1. Background
  - A. A dying leader exhorting his a new generation of people to pursue God's will in the land he had promised them
  - B. Name means "repetition from the law"
2. Theme: Total Commitment to God
  - A. Reflected in worship and obedience

- B. Undergirding its injunctions: a love relationship between a personal God and the people he has chosen
  - C. This book relates the ethical concepts underlying God's revelation at Sinai to the nationalistic aspirations, social responsibilities, and spiritual obligations of the Israelites
3. Major Characteristics
- A. The New Testament has almost 100 references to Deuteronomy
  - B. A blending of God's Word, the historical examples they had gone through in the wilderness
  - C. The *Shema* of Israel (Deuteronomy 6)
  - D. Strategies in the new land
  - E. See The Major Social Concerns of the Covenant
  - F. The promise of blessings and the threat of curses
  - G. Holds the most spiritual overtones
  - H. The foretelling of a king in Israel

## **The Book of Joshua**

- 1. Background
  - A. Author: Unknown
  - B. Name: After Joshua, it's leading character
  - C. Historical Context: Moving into Canaan
- 2. Theme: Possessing the Promised Land
- 3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Joshua's life – one who had witnessed all the events since Egypt. Chosen by God to succeed Moses because of his faithfulness
  - B. Israel failed to carry out the divine plan for their destiny
  - C. Establishment in the Hebrew mind of the concept of a divine kingdom established on earth
  - D. The reputation of the Israelites preceded them into Canaan
- 4. Content
  - A. Pattern – Divine Command and human obedience = victory
  - B. Difference between what was given and what was conquered

## **The Book of Judges**

- 1. Background
  - A. Author: Unknown, perhaps Samuel with Nathan and Gad's assistance
  - B. Time
    - 1. Events: 1380 – 1050 BC
    - 2. Writing: After the monarchy began

- C. Historical Context: After Joshua's Conquest and before the establishment of the monarchy
  - 1. The cycle: rebellion, judgment by enemies, deliverance by God
  - 2. Judges
  - 3. A Time for personal indulgence, not to follow God as king
- 2. Theme: God's Deliverance, despite the infidelity of Israel
- 3. Major Characteristics
  - A. The Holy Spirit moving on people as a divine source of power – "The spirit of the Lord came upon"
  - B. Repeated formulas
  - C. There was no king, so everyone did what was right in their own eyes.
  - D. The author champions the monarchy as a better time than the time of the judges
  - E. Symmetrical design – pointing to more a treatise than a history
  - F. Extent of sin in Israel: idolatry, immorality, homosexuality, mass abduction
  - G. The tabernacle was set up at Shiloh
- 4. Content
  - A. 1 -3 Prologue
  - B. 4 – 16 Major Judges
  - C. 17 – 21 Corruption of the Nation

### ***The Book of Ruth***

- 1. Background
  - A. Author & Date: Uncertain, probably some time during the reign of David, since he is mentioned
  - B. Historical Context: Written about the time of the Judges, when there was peace with Moab. She becomes the great grandmother of David
- 2. Theme: A woman redeemed, perhaps a type for Israel
  - A. An antithesis to judges which was filled with infidelity and unfaithfulness,
  - B. Ruth from Moab demonstrates just the opposite in difficult circumstances
  - C. The love of Boaz as kinsman redeemer
- 3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Hebrew word for redemption used 23 times
  - B. Transition from great pain and sorrow to redemption and joy
  - C. Rounds out the history of the house of David
  - D. A shining example of Hebrew story-telling: vivid, warm, dramatic

## **Session 18**

### **What Was God Thinking?**

- 1. Why 2500 (?) years of fallenness, 1500 years of law, before the cross?
- 2. Some Questions to re-examine:
  - A. What if God wasn't as offended at our sin, other than by the damage it does to us,

- than we thought he was?
- B. What if God gave Israel a better religion than the one they had, to hold them in check until he could take it from them?
  - C. What if sin's destruction is its own punishment?
  - D. Why do we fear judgment, when creation exults at its mention?
3. Redefining our terms for the New Testament context
- A. Judgment
  - B. Wrath
  - C. Obligation
  - D. Condemnation
  - E. Shame
4. Why do we still live old covenant realities, albeit with new covenant terminology
- |                          |                      |                    |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| A. Priesthood            | Clergy               | Everyone           |
| B. Temple (sacred space) | Sanctuary            | Everyplace         |
| C. Sabbath               | Sunday               | Every day          |
| D. Sacrifice             | Tithes and offerings | Generosity         |
| E. Law                   | NT principles        | Life by the Spirit |

## **Session 19**

# **The United Kingdom**

## **1 & 2 Samuel, I Kings 11, 1 Chronicles 1-9**

### **The Book of Samuel**

1. Background
  - A. Composition
    1. I & II Samuel and I & II Kings are four continuous volumes
    2. Writing: After the monarchy began
  - B. Author
    1. Unknown, perhaps in Solomon's Reign
    2. May be compilations of histories, public records from the courts of the kings
    3. A Time for personal indulgence, not to follow God as king
2. Theme: The Kings of Israel
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. A good, solid history book with attention to detail
  - B. Highlights the triumphs and failures of its leaders
  - C. The intermingling of prophets and kings
  - D. Medical interest – the plague and Saul's degenerating mental condition
  - E. The brutality of war
  - F. The movements of the Ark of the Covenant and the destruction it wrecked on God's enemies

## **The United Kingdom I: The Reigns of Saul and David**

1. Historical Background
  - A. I Samuel 9 – 2 Samuel
    1. Samuel and Kings are a four-part history from the time of the Judges, to the captivity of Israel
    2. Prophet
  - B. I Chronicles
    1. Background on I Chronicles
2. It's relationship to Samuel-Kings
  - A. Samuel/Kings was written to Israel in exile, Chronicles to the restored kingdom.
  - B. Chronicles emphasizes "all Israel" as an integrated kingdom in God's heart
  - C. Chronicles didn't appear to use Samuel Kings as a source, since often so much more detail than is found in Kings
  - D. Chronicles calls people back to a godly way of living, where Kings is more an historical overview of God's people with special attention given to their relationship with God/
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. 120 years of Saul, David, and Solomon as a United Kingdom
4. Content: 3 key events in Saul's Kingdom. Saul never in the offensive – but defensive
  - A. Chapter 13 – the offering at Gilgal
  - B. Chapter 15 – Rejected as King
  - C. Chapter 28 – The witch at Endor

## **Session 20**

### **Books of Wisdom: Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes**

#### **The Book of Psalms**

1. Background
  - A. Numerous authors
    1. 73 by David
    2. 12 by Asaph, the worship leader
    3. 10 by Korah, a Levite
    4. 2 by Solomon (72, 127)
    5. 1 each by Moses (90), Heman (88) and Ethan (89)
    6. 50 Psalms unidentified
  - B. Name: "Songs to the accompaniment of stringed instruments"
  - C. A song book compiled during the monarchy and through the exile and return
  - D. Includes great declarations of prayer—and heart-felt supplications, complaints and petitions
  - E. An overview of Israelite history, covenant, failure and victory
2. Theme: Worship the Almighty God
  - A. The nature of God-holy, awesome, and totally faithful in his love

- B. God reigns over all his creation
  - C. God's kindness toward people who fear and love him
  - D. Waiting on God and trusting him completely, our hunger for him
  - E. The forgiveness of God as response to a contrite heart
  - F. How God deals with us in trials and in the face of our enemies
  - G. The Judge will bring justice to the earth
3. Major Characteristics
- A. Experiential portraits of God, rather than systematic
  - B. Honest look at the joys and struggles of real people trying to walk with God
  - C. 5 Sections of Psalms, possibly to correspond to the Pentateuch
  - D. Many Messianic Psalms, detailing the coming of Jesus
  - E. Many of these songs became part of Jewish liturgy. Psalm 118 was used at the end of the Passover meal, and quite possibly was the hymn sung when the disciples left the upper room.
4. Reading the Psalms, separating God's heart from David's fear and shame (119, 109)

## **The Book of Proverbs**

1. Background
- A. Historical context: Varies
    - 1. Several sections were written at various times
    - 2. Solomon started the wisdom tradition
  - B. Author – Mostly Solomon
    - 1. Some at the end seem to be compilations (22ff)
    - 2. Some edited at the time of Hezekiah (25:1)
    - 3. Agur son of Jakeh, and King Lemuel also mentioned
2. Theme: the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and following his way will lead to successful living.
- A. The pursuit of wisdom as a treasure in the context of God
  - B. Correction, rebuke and being able to heed it is a key difference between the wise and the foolish
3. Content:
- A. Extended comparison of evil to a harlot, and wisdom to a virtuous woman
  - B. The mouth and the tongue
  - C. Money, finances and inheritance, and the value of giving
  - D. Kindness to others
4. Reading Proverbs – great wisdom to protect us, though you don't want to slip into living by principles alone. Shows us the goal, but not the process

## **The Book of Ecclesiastes**

1. Background
- A. Historical Context: to counteract the infallibility of wisdom
  - B. Author - tradition and the book itself ascribe it to Solomon, but possible that a subject, not a monarch wrote it from some of the language

2. Theme: Enjoy life to the fullest in the context of God's reality
  - A. The ever shifting seasons of life.
  - B. The futility of wisdom and doing good alone.

## **The Song of Songs**

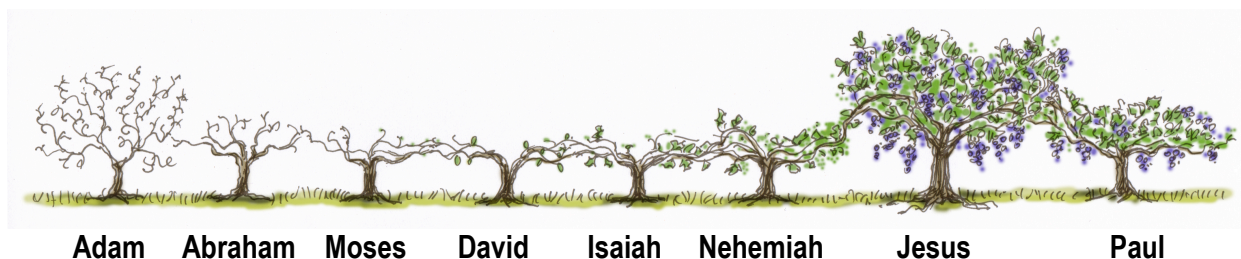
1. Background
  - A. Historical Context: unknown
  - B. Author
    1. Tradition and the book itself ascribe it to Solomon
    2. "Song of Songs" means "the finest song"
2. Theme: The beauty of romantic love
3. Literary Characteristics
  - A. Descriptive songs
  - B. Self-descriptions
  - C. Songs of admiration and yearning
  - E. Search narratives
  - F. Games of love

## **Session 21**

### **The Kingdom Divided** **I Kings 12-22; 2 Kings 1-17; 2 Chronicles 10-36**

1. Historical Background
2. Theme: For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Many sources drawn on for these books, even other Old Testament books
  - B. How the kingdom was divided
    1. Rebellion against Rehoboam
    2. To fulfill God's word to Jeroboam
4. A Kingdoms of Israel and Judah

Israel	Judah
<b>10 tribes</b> <b>Northern</b> <b>Capital in Samaria</b> <b>Timeline of Kings</b> Jeroboam I (922-901)  Nadab (901-900) Baasha (900-877) Elah (877-876) Zimri (876) Omri (876-869) Ahab (869-850) Ahzaiah (850-849) Jehoram (849-842) Athalia (842-837) Jehu (842-815) Jehoahaz (815-801) Jehoash (801-786) Jeroboam II (786-746) Zechariah (746-745) Shallum (745) Menahem (745-738) Pekahiah (738-737) Pekah (737-732) Hoshea (732-721)  <b>Conquered by the Assyrians in 722 BC</b>	<b>2 Tribes (Judah and Simeon)</b> <b>Southern</b> <b>Capital in Jerusalem</b> <b>Timeline of Kings</b> Rehoboam (922-915) Abijam (915-913) Asa (913-873)  Jehoshaphat (873-849)   Jehoram (849-842) Ahaziah (842)  Jehoash (837-800) Amaziah (800-783)  Uzziah (783-742)  Jotham (742-735) Ahaz (735-715)  Hezekiah (715-687) Manasseh (687-642) Amon (642-640) Josiah (640-609) Jehoahaz (609) Jehoiakim (609-598) Jehoiachin (598-597) Zedekiah (597-586)  <b>Conquered by Babylon in 586</b>





## Sharpening the Focus: The Role of the Prophets

1. "Seers" to "prophets", people with special sensitivity and calling to represent God's heart with his people.

2. Those who declared God's will to his people, but much more predictive in OT than today, because God dealt with his people through external means. Much of the prophecy was conditional on Israel's response or lack of it.
3. The nature of inspiration: God's Spirit through
  - A. Dreams
  - B. Visions
  - C. Words
  - D. Natural phenomena
  - E. Direct encounters with God
  - F. Their living situation
4. Methods of prophecy
  - A. Declarations
  - B. Demonstrations
  - C. Illustrations from every day life
  - D. Promises and warnings
5. Major and Minor Prophets: length of book, not priority or importance
6. Application both to their generation, and often Messianic or of the Millennium. Their lessons, however are applicable to all generations.
7. Historical origin of prophecy in Israel
  - A. Mosaic succession
  - B. Motivation for prophets
  - C. Function

## **The Book of Amos**

1. Background
  - A. Historical Context
    1. To Israel in the days of Jeroboam II
    2. Amos 7:10-17
    3. Prosperous reign: borders extended almost to those of David and Solomon
  - B. Author
    1. Amos 7:12-14: A herdsman and rancher
    2. From Judah
    3. Not part of the guild of prophets which were popular
2. Theme: "Prepare to meet your God"
  - A. The Day of the Lord as a terrifying prospect because of their rebellion against his ways
  - B. Material wealth had led to moral and religious depravity-overtaking the poor and a justice system so corrupt they couldn't find resource
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Five visions, four of common every-day things
  - B. Call to repentance
  - C. Theology
    1. Yawheh is Lord of the Nations

2. The Covenant
3. History in Amos

## **The Book of Hosea**

1. Background
  - A. Historical Context
    1. Prophesied to Israel in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel
    2. Assyria was pushing westward
  - B. Author
    1. Contemporary of Amos
    2. Chapter 1 tells us:
      - a. Time of prophecy
      - b. Marriage of Gomer
      - c. Name of his wife
      - d. Sexes of his children
      - e. Names of children
      - f. Order of min birthdays
    4. Chapter 3 tells us
      - a. Married
      - b. Bride-price paid for him
      - c. No consummation of marriage
      - d. Promiscuity of his wife
    5. Different wives
    6. Prophecy – to reinforce terms of the covenant
2. Theme: Faithlessness of his people: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge”
3. Major Characteristics — His life was a symbol

## **The Book of Jonah**

1. Background
  - A. The city of Ninevah
  - B. Jonah, Son of Ammittal
    1. who prophesied the restoration of the land of Israel to its ancient boundaries through the reign of Jeroboam II
    2. From Gath Hepher, about 3 miles
    3. c. 800 -750 BC
    4. The story of his own disobedience, and his anger at God’s compassion
  - C. Jesus used Jonah as the example of a call to repentance and a prefigure of the time between his death and resurrection
2. Theme: “Salvation Comes from the Lord”
  - A. First for Jonah in the raging sea
  - B. Then for the people of Nineveh, God’s heart for nonJews, which Jonah couldn’t understand
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Two parallel cycles offering comparison and contrast
  - B. Three miraculous incidents
    1. The storm

- 2. Life in the whale
- 3. The gourd vine growing up overnight
- C. Jonah's psalm 2:1-9

## **The Book of Isaiah**

- 1. Background
  - A. Author: Isaiah, son of Amoz (740-700 BC)
  - B. To the southern kingdom 100 years before the fall to Babylon
  - C. Historical Context: A nation in sin, heading for God's judgment
    - 1. Under Hezekiah, saw the Assyrian's rebuffed
    - 2. Also saw Judah taken captive to Assyria and uses that as the platform to promise comfort to Israel after their captivity
- 2. Theme: God's coming judgment and eventual restoration of his people
- 3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Eschatological themes: The coming Messiah-both first and second comings, the millennial reign, Babylonian captivity and the restoration under Cyrus
  - B. Of interest: Judgment and Comfort
  - C. God depicted as the "Holy One of Israel" the all-powerful God
  - D. Quoted 66 times in New Testament by Matthew, John the Baptist, Jesus, Paul, John, Ethiopian eunuch
  - E. Use of many literary features – eloquent poetry, personification, imagery, word plays
  - F. Key passages:
    - 1. Isaiah's calling
    - 2. Fasting
    - 3. Restoration to God's joy
  - G. Rest and peace marking the fruit of God's restoration

## **The Book of Zephaniah**

- 1. Background
  - A. Historical Context
    - 1. When? During the reign of Josiah, king of Judah, probably early before Josiah reforms: refurbishing the temple and reinstating the Torah. But there were too little too late for Judah's mad rush to ruin.
  - B. Author
    - 1. All we know is what is here. Probably of royal birth, fourth generation from Hezekiah
    - 2. A perspective more of from the upper class than any other prophet
    - 3. Probably used parts of Isaiah and Amos, and was a contemporary with the young Jeremiah
- 2. Theme: The coming of the Day of the Lord
  - A. Fulfillment in Judah with the Babylonian captivity
  - B. But seen by Matthew and John as a greater prophecy of the last day
- 3. Major Characteristics

- A. Style very plain and direct. Every sentence is a direct and forceful assertion, whether it is an accusation, judgment or promise
- B. Theology
  - 1. The inclusion of other nations in God's judgment and purification
  - 2. A different slant on the oppression of the poor by turning values upside down, indicating that the poor and humble would be blessed while the prideful would be damned and mocked. Also, the vanity of trusting in wealth.
- C. The holiness and grace of God even in the midst of his judgment.

## **The Book of Micah**

- 1. Background
  - A. Historical Context
    - 1. When? During the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah
    - 2. About what? A vision concerning Jerusalem and Samaria
    - 3. To both kingdoms
  - B. Author: Who? Micah of Moresheth
    - 1. See Jeremiah 26:16-19, What he prophesied and how he was received
    - 2. Contemporary of Isaiah, though more among the people, Isaiah had greater access to the king and his court
    - 3. Evidenced deep concern for his nation, even though it's judgment was inevitable.
- 2. Theme: Walk humbly with your God! Micah: 6:8
  - A. God's favor cannot be assumed just because we are his chosen people
  - B. The covenant of God had been replaced by Canaanite idolatry and sensual worship
- 3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Poetry, with numerous use of sound-alike words
  - B. Amos and Hosea talked about idolatry and immorality, Micah exclusively dealt with social injustices upon the peasantry, where the rich deprived them of their land and possessions.
  - C. Theology
    - 1. God as an active force in history- the other nations are only his tools
    - 2. The developing thought of a remnant of faithful people, that God would protect and lead to victory
- 4. Content
  - A. Three units perhaps over the span of his ministry; the first before the fall of Samaria, the other two after
  - B. His pattern in each unit: A summons to hear, followed by statements of doom, and concluding with statements of hope

## **The Book of Habakkuk**

1. Background
  - A. Historical Context
    1. After the fall of Nineveh and before the assault by Babylon, probably around 600 BC, during the end of Josiah's reign or the beginning of Jehoiakim's
  - B. Author, nothing is known about him except what is in this book which is very little
2. Theme: The Lord is my strength.
  - A. Contrast verses 1:11 with 3:19
  - B. How could God use a more wicked nation to destroy his people? Some of the most penetrating questions in all literature
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Poetically rich and powerful in imagery
  - B. Not just the words of God, but the inner anguish of the prophet is seen.
  - C. The just shall live by faith. Quoted 3 times in the New Testament
  - D. The unique third chapter
    1. How it fits with the first two
    2. Not just the words of God, but the inner anguish of the prophet is seen
    3. Habakkuk's prayer begins with a appeal for revival
    4. One of the greatest passages of faith in God, regardless of circumstances
4. Content
  - A. A dialogue between God's people and God, wondering at his ways and resulting in a renewed faith

## **The Book of Joel**

1. Background
  - A. Historical Context – Nothing known about this book except the information in it
    1. The plague of locusts (could it be figurative of an invading army?)
    2. Concerned primarily with Judah and Jerusalem
    3. Arguments made both pre- and post-exile. We don't know and it really doesn't matter.
  - B. Author
    1. Nothing known about him in other books, and little in this.
    2. Probably lived in Jerusalem
    3. Though familiar with the temple and its procedures, but doesn't identify himself as one of the priests when he addressed them
2. Theme: Rend your hearts... and return to the Lord your God.
  - A. The cycle: Destruction, followed by repentance, followed by restoration for God's people and punishment for his enemies
  - B. A type for the future day of the Lord. It is near, so make your choice
  - C. The restoration of God – beauty, abundance, safety
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Two parts:
    1. The plague of locusts and call to repent
    2. The salvation God promises from their immediate disaster, and future eschatological blessings

- B. The promise of the Holy Spirit, fulfilled at Pentecost in Acts 2
- C. Striking number of verbal parallels to other Old testament books, especially Ezekiel, Isaiah, Zephaniah, Amos and Obadiah
- D. Used in the New Testament, by Jesus, Paul and others
- E. Theology
  - 1. The character of God
  - 2. I am the Lord and that there is no other.

## **Session 22**

### **The Collapse of the Kingdom and Exile**

#### **The Book of Jeremiah**

1. Background
  - A. Date and Historical Context: During the last 5 kings of Jerusalem before the Exile
  - B. Author: Jeremiah, born about 640 BC, just outside Jerusalem in Anathoth, a priest
2. Theme: National sin and judgment, and hope of a new covenant
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Jeremiah's personality clearly outlined
    - 1. Felt his own inadequacies quite strongly
    - 2. Penitent sections where we see the conflict between his natural inclinations and his divine calling. We see him empowered by God to resist his personality and obey God.
    - 3. Depth of love demonstrated for the people he prophesied to, even though his message was filled with warning, violence and destruction. He prayed for the people even when God told him not to.
    - 4. Demonstrated great mood swings from despondent to exultant, but through it all an intimate touch with the Holy one
    - 5. Always maintained his integrity, never compromising God's word in the face of danger
    - 6. Forbidden to marry or to enter house of feasting, because of the desperate times
  - B. Many predictions fulfilled in the short-term, some for the long term
  - C. Arrangement is not chronological, but topical
  - D. His teaching – marked by an understanding of the new covenant
    - 1. Taught a personal obedience to God that transcended the rituals and rules of the temple
    - 2. Link of idolatry with immorality, and denounced them both on equal terms
    - 3. Repentance was their only hope to stave off God's judgment and restore his presence among them
    - 4. Hope in the glorious future. After 70 years in captivity God would bring the back and plant them in their land and rule over them. Part of this was fulfilled historically, but much of it also looked forward to the new covenant.
  - E. Jeremiah dictated to his secretary, Baruch, who was also his close companion
  - F. His counsel of submission to Babylon branded him a traitor to many
  - G. Longest book in the Bible

- H. Filled with quality poetry, powerful imagery and symbolic actions to convey his prophetic word
- I. Theology: God as Creator of all that exists, all-powerful, everywhere present, the Lord of all the nations

## **The Book of Lamentations**

1. Background
  - A. Historical Context: The fall of Jerusalem
  - B. Author: anonymous, but traditionally ascribed to Jeremiah
    1. The laments of 2 Chronicles 35:25, but not this one for it came after the fall of Jerusalem
    2. Style similarities/dissimilarities
    3. An eyewitness to the fall of Jerusalem
  - C. Hebrew title: How
2. Theme: Weeping at God's Judgment, a plea of repentance
  - A. A commonly used genre of literature when great cities fell
  - B. The personal pain of the devastation brought by God on his people
  - C. Ends in repentance and a prayer for restoration
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Literary arrangement
  - B. The complete destruction of a society
  - C. Conveys deep sorrow and a chastened spirit
  - D. Theology: Even in the midst of pain God's faithfulness and goodness shine forth
  - E. Read weekly at the Western Wall early at the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem

## **The Book of Obadiah**

1. Background
  - A. Historical Context: Contemporary of Jeremiah, refers to Babylonian attacks (11-14)
  - B. Author: a common name throughout Kings, Chronicles and Nehemiah
    1. The laments of 2 Chronicles 35:25, but not this one for it came after the fall of Jerusalem
2. Theme: The destruction of Edom for gloating in Israel's troubles
3. In the end Edom will be destroyed and Israel restored.

## **The Book of Nahum**

1. Background
  - A. Historical Context: Samaria had already fallen to Assyria, now Nineveh would get its turn on God's judgment seat. Since Thebes had already fallen in Egypt and is referred to in 3:3-10, so written after its fall in 663 BC. Nineveh fell to the Babylonians and Medes in 612 BC.
  - B. Author

1. No reference to Nahum outside this book
  2. Of Elkoosh, though unsure where that would be
2. Theme: Nineveh's Destruction
    - A. A comfort to an oppressed people, and as example of God's judgment against sin.
    - B. The seeds of destruction inherent in Assyria's conquering posture as a nation, and even it, used by God to judge his people, would submit to him in humility and shame for their arrogance.
3. Major Characteristics
    - A. Rich poetry, much of it acrostic in nature
    - B. Relationship to Jonah: God doesn't judge without warning and opportunity for repentance, theirs was obviously short-lived
    - C. God's power over history reaffirmed, demonstrating to Israel and Judah that they were not innocent victims in a world over which God had lost control
    - D. Even though the ungodly seem to prosper for a time, their end in God's judgment is sure
    - E. Theology
      1. The intermingling of God's goodness and his sternness; ready to administer justice with a vengeance as well as his loving care.
      2. God sovereignty: He was still in control of history.

## **The Book of Ezekiel**

1. Background
  - A. Historical Context
  - B. Author
2. Theme: I am Yahweh
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Chronology of Prophecies and dates
  - B. Allegories and Actions
  - C. Son of man
  - D. Set Your Face Against
  - E. I am Yahweh
  - F. Theology
  - G. Eschatology
  - H. Though most prophetic books were poetry, Ezekiel's is mostly prose
  - I. His teaching emphasized holiness, and how Israel had defiled God's holiness by their disregard of his covenant and indulgence of their own desires

## **The Book of Daniel**

1. Background
  - A. Historical Context
    1. Date: From 6<sup>th</sup> century to December 17, 167 BC
    2. Language: Aramaic is closer to Ezra 5<sup>th</sup> century than Qumran
    3. Exile in Babylon
  - B. Author: Chapters 1- 6 are largely historical in content with Daniel speaking in the third person

2. Theme: The Kingdom of God
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. First half of the book is historical; the second half is apocalyptic prophecy
  - B. Contains an Aramaic section
  - C. Incredibly accurate prophecies
  - D. Apocalyptic Prophecy
  - E. Theology: The interaction between stories and visions
  - F. Concept of the resurrection introduced in Daniel
  - G. Daniel's use of Jeremiah

## **Session 23**

## **The Return to Israel**

### **The Book of Haggai**

1. Background
  - A. Historical Context – Ezra 5:2 and 6:14 After the return of Zerubbabel
  - B. Author
    1. Probably of humble birth since his father's name is not given
    2. Might have seen the original temple and if so then his ministry would have come in his late 70's and 80's
    3. All his prophecies recorded prophecies came in a four month period: August 29 – December 18, 250 BC, though his ministry was longer
    4. His ministry was successful, well-received and the temple was completed in 516
    5. Mention of Haggai in the headings of the Septuagint to Psalm 137 and 145–148
2. Theme: Give careful thought to your ways.. and build the house
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Zerubbabel a key player, and future type of Christ
  - B. Promise that the rebuilt temple will be of greater glory than Solomon's
  - C. Theology
    1. I am with you
    2. Connection between obedience and blessing

### **The Book of Zechariah**

1. Background
  - A. Historical Context – Ezra 5:2 and 6:14. Same historical context as Haggai
  - B. Author
    1. Like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, this prophet was also a priest
    2. Born in Babylonia and returned with Zerubbabel in 538 BC
    3. Succeeded his grandfather Iddo to head of the priestly family which may indicate an early death of his father
    4. Began prophecy as a young man in Oct/Nov of 520 BC and gave most of his prophecies through chapter 8 in a two year period. The rest probably after 480 BC.
    5. His name means, Yahweh remembers

2. Theme: Return to me declares the Lord Almighty and I will return to you
  - A. To inspire the Jews to finish the temple in prophecies over a two-year period
  - B. To call for a renewal of spiritual life in the returned captives
  - C. The Lord's jealousy for his people
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Extremely detailed and accurate prophecies
  - B. More about Jesus' coming than any prophet except Isaiah
  - C. 41 times, quoted or alluded to in the New Testament, 20 of those times in Revelation
  - D. Much of his prophecies are apocalyptic in nature, encouraging the believers because of the glorious future that awaits them

## **The Book of Malachi**

1. Background
  - A. Historical Context – After completion of the temple during the time of Persian rule. After 515 BC
  - B. Author
    1. Lived in or near Jerusalem with intimate knowledge of the worship practices of the temple
    2. Concerns about the name of the author
2. Theme: Behold he shall come
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. First prophecy to the priests, the second to the people
  - B. Use of dialogue to make points. Prophetic disputations. Assumes rhetorically the thoughts of the people and addresses them from God's perspective. Similar to the structure of the book of Romans.
    1. An initial statement
    2. A supposed objection from the people
    3. A substantiation of the statement and ends with a promise, threat or encouragement
  - C. Prophecies against:
    1. Priests for offering marred offerings, and not faithfully teaching the law
    2. People for taking advantage of God by cheating their brothers, intermarriage, immorality, insincerity, robbing God of his tithe, by their speaking against the Lord
  - D. Prophecy of the messenger that will prepare the way for Christ, applied to John the Baptist

## **The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah**

1. Historical Context: The restoration from exile
  - A. Cyrus - The Lord moved him to restore Israel to her land
  - B. The three-stage return from exile
    1. 538 return under Zerubbabel
    2. 458 return under Ezra
    3. 432 return under Nehemiah

- C. After the restoration from Babylon, idolatry not ever a problem again in Israel, it was replaced by false religion as the form of rebellion against God
- D. Common elements between Ezra and Nehemiah
  - 1. Originally both Ezra and Nehemiah were probably one book
  - 2. Use of official documents and lists
  - 3. Focus on the religious festivals
  - 4. The Main Characters
    - a. Zerubbabel
    - b. Ezra
    - c. Nehemiah

## **The Book of Ezra**

- 1. Author - Ezra
- 2. Theme: The rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem- Reviving the spiritual life of Israel
- 3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Rough discourse, more a compilation of facts with bridging narrative
  - B. The problem of intermarriage - divorced compelled
  - C. Haggai and Zechariah's role outlined in Ezra 5:14
  - D. Theology
    - 1. The law is re-established as a guiding light for God's people
    - 2. After repentance, they sought to capture a method of staying pure
    - 3. The temple – a sign of their spiritual life
- 4. Application
  - A. Restoration begins in worship
  - B. Not letting things we do be as empty
  - C. Keeping God's word before us
  - D. Faced opposition, but did not get up

## **The Book of Nehemiah**

- 1. Author – probably Ezra
- 2. Theme: The rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls – Reviving the community of Israel
  - A. Protection against the enemy
  - B. A seat of power to extend from
- 3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Two halves
    - 1. First, the rebuilding of the wall
    - 2. Second, the rebuilding of the people prophets
  - B. Theology
- 4. Application
  - A. Dedicated to doing the job
  - B. Importance of keeping God's guard around us

## The Book of Esther

1. Background
  - A. Historical Context
    1. The setting is Susa, winter capital of Persia
    2. Daniel had one of his visions in Susa and Nehemiah served here
    3. It begins in the court of Ahasuerus
    4. Jews were left from the Babylon empire and extra-biblical evidence rose to prominence in Susa
  - B. Author:
    1. Maybe Mordecai, otherwise unknown
2. Theme: God's deliverance of his people
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. A great story of the passions, luxury, intrigue and the political and social structure of Persia
  - B. No reference to God, Torah, prayer, Jewish feasts
  - C. Explains the Feast of Purim
  - D. Theology
    1. The Doctrine of Providence

## The Time Between the Testaments

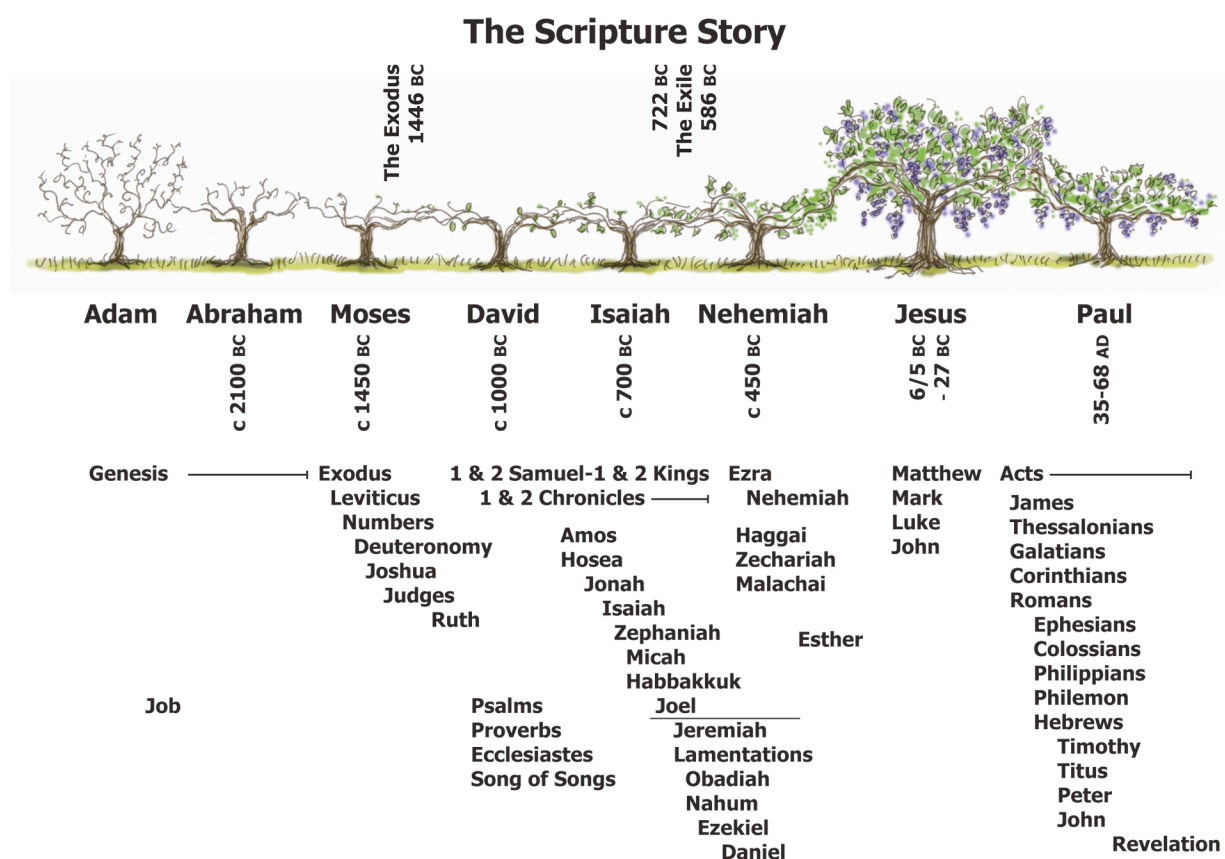
1. History
  - A. Persian Rule, where high priest emerged as the political leader and synagogue as the focal point of their religious life
  - B. Alexander the Great (332-301), where the Jewish culture was Hellenized
  - C. Syrian (198-167) Antiochus Epiphanies
  - D. Maccabean Revolt (167-63)
  - E. Roman Rule (63- )
2. The Books of the Apocrypha
 

15 books of Jewish literature written during the intertestamental period. Come of them have historic value, but all are spurious, of unknown authorship, and without claim of inspiration or authority. Some are legendary and fantasy.

Wisdom of Solomon	30 B.C.	Didactic
Ecclesiasticus	32 B.C.	Didactic
Tobit	c. 200 B.C.	Religious Novel
1 Esdras	c. 150 B.C.	Historic & Legendary
1 Maccabees	c. 110 B.C.	Historic
2 Maccabees	c. 100 B.C.	Historic & Legendary
Judith	c. 150 A.D.	Romantic Novel
Baruch	c. 100 A.D.	Prophetic
Letter of Jeremiah	c. 200 B.C.	Prophetic
2 Esdras	c. 100 A.D.	Prophetic
Additions to Esther	c. 130 B.C.	Legendary
Prayer of Azariah*	c. 100. B.C.	Legendary
Suzanna (Daniel 13)	c. 100 B.C.	Legendary
Bel & the Dragon (Daniel 14)	c. 100 B.C.	Legendary
Prayer of Manasseh		

\*The "Prayer of Azariah" is also called the "Song of the Three Hebrew Children," and follows after Daniel 3:23.

# Let the Conversation Continue



1. Let the Journey Continue
2. Personal Reading and Study
3. The ongoing conversations (God & others) to receive insights, wrestle with questions
4. Interacting with Scripture