

New Hope Missionary Baptist Church Of Southfield, Michigan
23455 W. Nine Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48033
Church Phone: (248) 353-0675
Church Fax: (248) 353-0217
Church Website: www.newhope-mbc.org
Dr. Aaron L. Chapman, Pastor

How to Read and Study the Bible

Lesson Three – Part 3: How We Got the Old Testament

Lesson Two Topics

- Reflection Questions
- Key Terms and Definitions
- Take Aways Concerning Translations
- Formation of the Old Testament
- The Stages of Collection
- Checking for Understanding Questions

Reflection Questions

- A. Many of us have sat around holiday dinner tables and listened to an elder relative tell stories about the family history, sometimes over and over again. Do you find value in these stories? If yes, how have you passed them on?
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- B. What biblical tests can faithful Christians use to protect themselves from the influence of questionable bible scholars or false teachers and prophets?
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Key Terms

Authoritative	Exile	Prophets/Former
Authorship	Formation	Prophets/Latter
Babylon	Hebrew Bible	Redactor
Canon - OT	J, E, P, D	Restoration
Collection	Law	Sermon on the Mount
Council of Jamnia	Moses	Translations
Editor	Oral Form	Versions
English Bible	Oral Tradition	Writings
Evidence/Internal	Functional Equivalent	Formal Equivalent

Take Aways Concerning Translations

A Bible translation or version is a scholarly attempt to render the stories and thoughts of people from the ancient cultures who spoke ancient languages into a modern language that is spoken by people who live in very different contemporary cultures.

Understandable – The priority of using a particular translation is so that you will ultimately pursue the fullness of the understanding of the word of God. When the translation is selected there must be a specific goal in mind and that is to create a space for you to become more like Jesus with every turn of the page.

User Friendly- The aim of selecting your Bible is how does it assist you in creating a strong devotional time with God; how does it give you what is necessary to create different teachings from the word of God that are filled with power and exude with precision. How does it help to proclaim and evangelize the word to persuade others that they too can become more intimately involved with the Lord Jesus Christ

Uniformity- We can use our translations in order to edify the body of Christ. There is a unique transaction when studying the word of God and everyone is on the same page. There are several aha moments that happen, reflection over life choices and commitments, then there is a consistency that is developed and confidence through the accuracy in the quoting of scripture.

Wide range of meaning vs a Limited range of meaning

Literary and rhetorical as well as historical, social and cultural.

Formal – equivalent translations emphasize the similarity in the linguistic forms such as vocabulary and grammatical structures. Between the source and the target.

Functional -equivalence translations, on the other hand, stress the similarity in linguistic function (meaning) between the two languages.

Formation of the Old Testament

OT Scholars are not sure when the 39 books of the Hebrew Old Testament canon were finished.

The Babylonian Captivity, also called the _____, and the subsequent restoration of the Jews to their homeland impacted the final form and collection of the Old Testament and the development of the Jewish Faith.

There is general agreement that the Old Testament was probably collected and put together in the form that it exists in the Hebrew Bible during the period of the _____.

The Restoration was a period during which the Jews returned to their _____ from the Babylonian Captivity/Exile.

Many of the original stories of the Hebrew people were generally told in oral form known as _____. They were told from generation to generation and then they were assembled into the final collection of books that we have today.

Checking Your Progress

1. Scholars are not sure about the exact dates that the books of the Hebrew Old Testament were completely finished. T or F
2. The Babylonia Exile was very crucial to the collection and codifying of the Old Testament Books, and the development of the Jewish faith. T & F
3. What method was used from generation to generation to convey the contents of the Hebrew Old Testament?

The Stages of Collection

Three stages

- ☐ The Torah or Law of Moses
- ☐ The Prophetic Writings
- ☐ The Writings

First Stage – The Torah or Law of Moses

The Law of Moses includes the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

- ☐ Authorship challenges
- ☐ Moses vs. JEPD (Jahwist/Yahwist, Elohist, Priestly, and Deuteronomist)
- ☐ Redactor/Editor for JEPD

The most powerful argument against the JEPD theory is the _____ itself.

- ☐ Jesus (Mark 12:26/Exodus 3:1-3)
- ☐ Luke (Acts 3:22/Deut. 18:15)
- ☐ Paul (Romans 10:5/Leviticus 18:5)

Checking Your Progress—

4. What were the three stages of collection for the Hebrew Old Testament?

5. What was the challenge to the authorship of the books of the Law?

6. What is the best argument against the challenges to authorship of the books of the Law?

7. Explain the role of a redactor/editor.

The books of the Law were held in deepest _____ by the Jews prior to and after the Exile.

We can assume with some certainty that the Law had been collected in its final form sometime before _____.

Second Stage – The Prophetic Writings

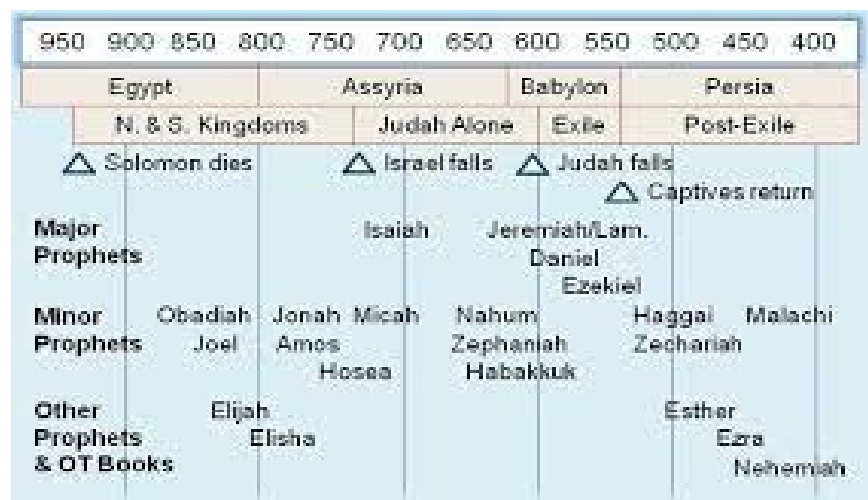
Christians are more drawn to the prophetic writings than to the books of the Law, believing the books of the Law have no applicability to them. On the contrary, the Law has much to teach us about how to live for God and how to reverence and _____ Him.

The Hebrew Old Testament prophetic writings are divided into _____ and _____ prophets.

There are writing and non-writing prophets. _____ was a notable non-writing prophet. In this lesson, we are primarily concerned with the writing prophets.

Scholars often debate and disagree on the exact dates that the various books of the Bible were written. The best way to determine when a book was written is to study the _____ in the books themselves.

We are not absolutely certain when several of the prophetic books were written. However, it is generally believed by most Bible scholars that all the prophetic books were written at some point between the _____ and _____ century BC.



Checking Your Progress

8. How are the Prophetic Writings in the Hebrew Old Testament divided?

9. Are all Old Testament prophets writing prophets? Explain.

10. What is the best way to determine the date that a book was written?

11. During what period is it believed that all the Prophetic Writings were written?

12. Are the books of the Law of Moses of use to Christians today? Briefly Explain.

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The Stages of Collection (continued)

Third Stage – The Writings

This is the final division of the Hebrew Old Testament to be collected and declared _____.

These writings were likely completed sometime after _____. [That is why Daniel is included in this stage of the Hebrew Old Testament rather than with the Former or Latter Prophets.]

In _____ a group of Jewish scholars met at the _____ and declared the Old Testament canon to be complete and closed.

There was a two-fold purpose for convening the Council of Jamnia—"It is generally considered the occasion whereby the Old Testament canon was publicly recognized" (*Moody Handbook of Theology*).

- 1) Jerusalem had been virtually destroyed by the Romans in AD 70 (as Jesus had prophesied), and
- 2) Many Jews felt the necessity to protect their _____ and preserve their _____ (and concerns about some folks believing in Jesus as the Messiah – John 9:22).

Christianity would not be what it is today without its deeply _____ and background. Judaism is the tree trunk and Christianity is the branches.

Jesus and the Old Testament

The _____ was the Bible of the early Christian church.

Jesus read and quoted from it in his public ministry—

- The Prophetic Writings of Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1-3/Luke 4:18-19)
- The Sermon on the Mount (references to the Law of Moses)
- He taught people to respect and love it as God's Word (Matt. 12:1-8)
- He observed the Jewish religious holy days and frequently taught in the Temple
- He exercised High Priestly duties by healing and declaring people with leprosy clean (Matt. 8:1-4/Leviticus 13:1-3)
- Jesus is the fulfillment of the prefigurement of Christ in the Old Testament

Peter quoted extensively from the Old Testament on the Day of Pentecost (Joel Acts 2:17/Joel 2:28)

Paul quoted from the Old Testament frequently and used it as the basis of his preaching to show that Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham (Acts 17:1-4). See also Romans 15:4.

Checking Your Understanding

13. In which Hebrew Old Testament Stage of Collection is the Book of Daniel included, and why?

14. When and where was the Old Testament canon declared complete?

15. Besides Jesus, what other individuals quoted from the Hebrew Old Testament in the New Testament church.
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BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS—

Comparison between the Testaments- We are able to identify the messages and the materials of each testament when we make a healthy comparison of the two. While gleaning a better understanding of the meanings conveyed in the Texts.

Completing (Fulfillment) Between the Testaments- The fulfillment of the promise and the prophesy are very important in elevating our abilities to understand the carrying over we experience from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

Commonality between the Testaments- There are parallels that are evident in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Making these parallels allows for us to make a direct transfer of these principles into our daily lives.

Conformity to the Testaments- The principles of the Bible should lead to our performance or proper behavior toward the God of the Bible. Paul spoke of this in Romans Concerning Circumcision. Circumcision of the heart instead of just the circumcision of the flesh in Genesis.

Sections of the Canon - The Holy Scriptures

The Hebrew and English Classifications

HEBREW NAMES FOR THE BOOKS	<u>HEBREW</u> ARRANGEMENT AND CLASSIFICATION	<u>ENGLISH</u> ARRANGEMENT AND CLASSIFICATION	APPROXIMATE DATES CONCERNED
In the beginning These are the names, And He called In the wilderness These are the words	TORAH Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy LAW (Pentateuch)	The Beginning to 1406 B.C.
Joshua Judges Ruth I Samuel II Samuel I Kings II Kings	FORMER PROPHETS Joshua Judges I Samuel II Samuel I Kings II Kings	Joshua Judges Ruth I Samuel II Samuel I Kings II Kings I Chronicles II Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther HISTORY	1406-1380 B.C. 1380-1050 B.C. 1200-1150 B.C. 1100-1010 B.C. 1010-971 B.C. 971-853 B.C. 853-560 B.C. 1010-971 B.C. 971-539 B.C. 539-450 B.C. 445-410 B.C. 483-474 B.C.
Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah	LATTER PROPHETS Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon POETRY and WISDOM	No specific historical period covered.

Sections of the Canon - The Holy Scriptures

The Hebrew and English Classifications

Haggai Zechariah Malachi	Haggai Zechariah Malachi		
Praises Job Proverbs Ruth Song of Songs The Preacher How! Esther Daniel Ezra Nehemiah I The Words of the Days II The Words of the Days	THE WRITINGS (Hagiographa) Psalms Job Proverbs Ruth Song of Solomon Ecclesiastes Lamentations Esther Daniel Ezra Nehemiah I Chronicles II Chronicles	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel MAJOR PROPHETS	739-700 B.C. 627-580 B.C. 586 B.C. 593-570 B.C. 605-530 B.C.
		Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	MINOR PROPHETS 760-730 B.C. 500 B.C. 760 B.C. 500 B.C. 770 B.C. 737-690 B.C. 650 B.C. 630 B.C. 627 B.C. 520 B.C. 520-518 B.C. 433 B.C.

NOTE: The gray shaded area is associated with the English Bible.

[Source: Walton, John H. 2019. [*Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic. Accessed through LOGOS Bible Software 4-17-2023]