

OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW

What follows represents the unedited lecture notes of Pastor Merritt's teaching of an overview of the Old Testament. Please feel free to reproduce all or part for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lesson 1 Old Testament Overview Introduction

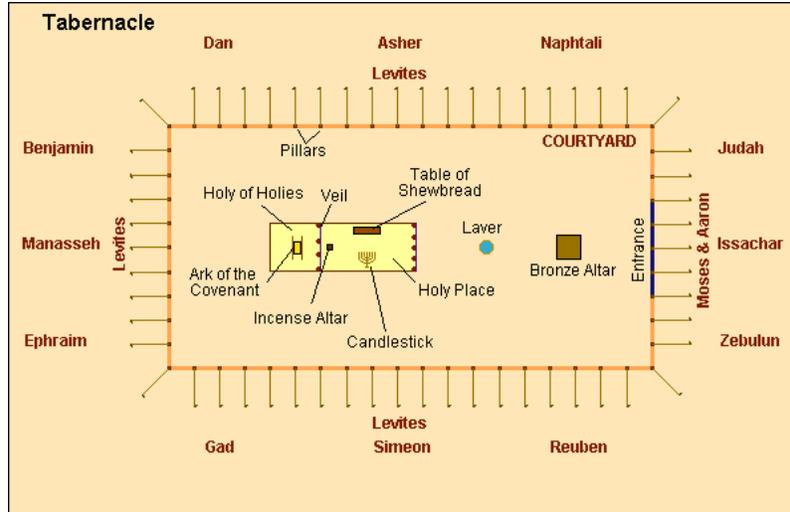
1. Genesis was written by Moses in 1450 B.C. It covers the creation, fall, restoration, flood, selection of Abraham and the exile to Egypt.

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Gen 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Isa 45:18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.

2. Exodus was written by Moses in 1450 B.C. Here we have the study of the Exodus and the revelation of grace, redemption, and construction of the Tabernacle and the use of its various training aids.



3. Leviticus was written by Moses in 1450 B.C. The book tells of God in the midst of His people instructing in the sacrifices and worship practices for the redeemed. There are also many practical rules concerning how to live and the penalties for violations.

4. Numbers was written by Moses in 1450 B.C. It represents a scenario featuring God numbering His people, their service and testing in the wilderness. Much, if not most, of the numbering concerns a military census.

Num 1:2 Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls;

Num 1:3 From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

5. Deuteronomy was written by Moses in 1450 B.C. It is a story of God gathering His people around Him and repeating again the Law of Moses. He adds a more detailed account of their blessing in the land. Stressed in Deuteronomy is compliance brings blessing and non-compliance brings discipline.

Deu 29:9 Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.

6. Joshua was written by Joshua and some unknown writer after Israel entered the land. It was written during the judgeship of Othniel (1370-1330). Othniel earned the hand of Caleb's daughter by capturing Kirjath-sepher. The Lord used him to deliver the Israelites from eight-years of oppression by Cushites. Othniel may have been the anonymous writer" of the book. Joshua is a tale of Moses's death, Joshua as his replacement and the victories and occasional defeats. The book was written, in the main, from somewhere in Canaan about 1427 B.C. It is a story of God demanding trust, Israel's need to learn war, their need to follow His rules and fight for their land.

6.1 The importance of doctrine is stressed as a source of success.

Jos 1:7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

Jos 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

7. Judges was written somewhere around 1100 B.C. by an unknown, most of the events recorded in the book occurred between 1400-1100 B.C. According to Jewish tradition the book was written by Samuel. It is a story of tribal rights under a Theocracy and the success of the system even amidst terrible personal failures on the part of individual Judges.

8. Ruth - The author of Ruth is unknown, most think the book was written in approximately 900 B.C. and again Jewish tradition tells us Samuel was the author. It represents a beautiful love story and account of God's purpose for Israel. Here we read of the joys and sorrows of a Godly family from Bethlehem. Ruth, the Moabitess, became a worshiper of Jehovah. After the sorrow of losing her first husband, Ruth returned to Bethlehem with her mother-in-law, and was happily married to Boaz. In this way she became an ancestress of King David and in the line of Christ. Biblical scholars find some clues to the time of composition within the book itself. Since David is mentioned in the book (Rth 4:17), it could not have been written before the tenth century B.C. How much later than the time of David is a matter of conjecture?

Rth 4:17 And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

9. First Samuel Chapters 1-24 probably were written by Samuel and Chapters 25-31 were most likely written by Nathan. The book was written around 1020 to 950 B.C. It is a story of Israel's rejection of God, His prophet and his Theocratic system and their selection of a King. The book is replete with consequences for their poor choice—a King rather than a theocracy.

10. Second Samuel was written at least in part by Nathan and an unknown writer around 1020- 950 B.C. Some think Abiathar may have been one of the contributing authors. The story of David and his Kingdom, a scenario replete with successes and failures, triumphs and defeats is the message of Second Samuel.

11. First Kings was written between 588 to 536 B.C. by some Jewish captive living in the area of Babylon. This book is a history of several Kings of Israel. It begins with the death of David and the contest between Adonijah and Solomon; it ends with the death of Ahab. Jewish tradition tells us the author was Ezra.

12. Second Kings was written between 588 and 536 B.C. by some Jewish captive living in the area of Babylon. Again Jewish tradition regards Ezra as the author. Both 1st and 2nd Kings are a public history of 19 Kings of Israel, although other Kings are mentioned. It begins with Ahab's death and ends with Zedekiah's painful exile to Babylon.

13. First Chronicles, based on the internal evidence found in the Book indicates it was written somewhere between 500 B.C. and 450 B.C. by Ezra. The book begins with a genealogy of Israel and ends with the death of David.

14. Second Chronicles begins with an account of Solomon's reign and ends with Cyrus' authorization for the Jewish exiles to return to the land. Based on internal evidence we can reasonably conclude it was written somewhere between 500 B.C. and 450 B.C. by Ezra.

15. Ezra was written by Ezra sometime between 456 B.C. and 444 B.C. from the land of Persia. It is a history of the remnants of Judah from their dispersion and return to the land after the Babylonian captivity. The Book of Ezra records the fulfillment of God's promise to the nation of Israel that their captivity in Babylon would last only 70 years.. The first six chapters of the book cover events during the first two or three years of the reign of Cyrus (538-530 B.C.) and the first six years of the reign of Darius I (521-486 B.C.)

16. Nehemiah was written by Nehemiah from Palestine in approximately 440 BC. The book is a history of the Jews on their return from Babylon. It also covers certain ecclesiastical matters related to their return.

17. The author of Esther must have been a Jew who lived in Persia at the time of the events narrated. He must have had access to the official chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia. Many believe it was Mordecai. The time of the writing was somewhere around 475 B.C. The book is a record of the history of some of those who elected to remain in Persia instead of returning under the edict of Cyrus.

18. The author of the book of Job is unknown and the time of the writing is arguably around 1550. There are many who think Moses wrote the book. Job is a story of the testing of a righteous man over against the perfection of God.

19. The book of Psalms was written by David and others over a period of 550 years with the last being completed around 450 B.C. Ezra was the compiler and the author of several of later psalms. Many subjects are covered both in poem and prose, certainly to include the prophetic future of Israel and the coming of the Messiah. Information regarding the authorship and dating of the Psalms is problematic.

20. The book of Proverbs covers the path of divine wisdom for earthly relationships and circumstances. The book is a collection of pithy sayings spoken or written in the main by Solomon over a period of his 40 year reign sometime in the 10th century B.C. There were other contributors, however, their names and contributions cannot be identified.

21. Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon in about 975. The world, its wealth, wisdom, pleasures, and boundless resources are listed by Solomon, only their possession clearly are said to be empty. The theme of the book seems to be: material objects will not satisfy the heart of man. Solomon at the time of writing was in the throes of deep reversionism.

22. The Song of Solomon was written from Judah in roughly 1000 B.C. by Solomon. The book covers subjects such as love, marriage, and the need to consistently metabolize the Word. The book contains significant symbolism of Christ and his bride and the temptations of the world. It is a great love story replete with advice to young men and women in search of their spouses.

23. Isaiah was written by Isaiah in about 700 B.C. from Judah. The grandest of all the Hebrew prophets, Isaiah speaks to the southern Kingdom and its immediate needs while prophesying of the sufferings of Christ and His ultimate victory at the Second Advent including specifics concerning His reign during the Millennium.

24. Jeremiah was written from either Judah or Egypt in about 580 B.C. by the prophet himself. The prophet rebukes Judah urging their return to the Lord, he also urges no reliance on the power of alliances, particularly Egypt predicting the victory of Babylon. He also prophesied of Judah's exile to Babylonia and their return after 70 years. He is active during the reigns of the last four Kings of Judah.

25. Lamentations was written by Jeremiah in about 585 B.C. from Judah. This book deals with the desolation by the Chaldeans and the associated pain.

26. Ezekiel was written by Ezekiel from the banks of the Chebar River in Mesopotamia in about 597 B.C. The prophet provides first a prediction of a further exile to Babylon, details of the exile and several prophesies about the return and later eschatology relating to the Millennium. The prophet Ezekiel, from his Babylonian locale, envisaged the fall and restoration of the house of Israel.

27. Daniel was written by Daniel from Babylon in about 534 B.C. Daniel from Babylon tells of the struggles of the exile while providing remarkable prophesies of four world empires and their relationship to Israel. There is a great deal about the latter day circumstances of Israel in their future land.

28. Hosea was written by the prophet himself in about 725 B.C. from Israel in the north. He prophesied to the Northern Kingdom (Israel, or Ephraim) during the time that Isaiah was prophesying in Judah. His prophetic vision looked beyond exile to restoration, when a chastened people would again acknowledge the exclusive claims of the Lord. The remorse of God toward Israel "gone a whoring" is symbolically communicated in the relationship of Hosea to his wife Gomer.

29. Joel was authored by Joel himself in about 800 B.C. from Judah. The prophet deals with the judgment of God on both Jew and Gentile and the coming blessing on Israel when the Messiah will reign on planet earth.

30. Amos from Judah authored the Book of Amos in about 775 B.C. Although Amos was a native of Judah, he prophesied in the Northern Kingdom. His preaching aroused such antagonism, however, that he returned to Judah, where he committed his message to writing. The prophet reveals the spiritual corruption under the religious formalism and material prosperity of the time. He castigates the leaders for the deterioration of social justice and morality and predicts dire judgment if they refuse to repent.

31. Obadiah was written by Obadiah himself from Judah in about 580 B.C. The emotional tone of Obadiah's prophecy against Edom is strong. The intense mood of the book is undergirded by a keen sense of justice. The Edomites had violated the bonds that hold related tribes together, and had committed terrible crimes against Judah. They had participated in the sacking of Jerusalem with the Babylonians. Their sins, he said, had to be punished!

31.1 The prophecy of Obadiah alludes to a historical situation in which the Edomites were allied with the enemies of Israel and participated in the sack of Jerusalem (Oba 10-14). It is known that Edom was allied with the Babylonians and others at the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., and participated in the plunder of the city. Probably the prophecy of Obadiah is best dated in that period.

32. Jonah was written by the rebellious prophet himself in c. 800 B.C. Jonah was a prophet who did not want to take the Gospel to Assyria, God intervenes with a sea monster and Jonah reluctantly announces the gospel to Nineveh and many are saved.

33. Micah was written from Judah by Micah in about 735 B.C. Both Micah and Isaiah, though addressing their prophecies primarily to Judah, make it clear that God's judgment will also fall on the Northern Kingdom. Micah also prophesies about the mercy of God on Israel in the latter times.

34. Nahum was written by Nahum from Judah in about 650 B.C. The prophet predicts Nineveh will fall. The prophecy came true somewhere between 625 B.C. and 612 B.C.

34.1 From archaeological research it is believed that Nineveh fell in 612 B.C. The prediction of Nahum was penned probably shortly before the destruction of the city. In Nahum 3:8 the prophet mentions the captivity of No (No-Amon or Thebes, the capital of Upper Egypt) as a historical event. Ashurbanipal of Assyria (668-626 B.C.) brought about the downfall of the Egyptian city in the year 663, ergo, the book may be dated between 663 B.C. and 612 B.C., probably closer to the latter date.

35. Habakkuk was written in 626 B.C. by Habakkuk from Judah. The prophet identifies himself with the condition and circumstances of the people of God. It is Habakkuk who wonders why the evil prosper and the righteous suffer. God rebukes him for his self-serving message even if it is meant on behalf of the entire nation of Judah.

35.1 The exact time of the writing of the prophecy has been as much a subject of conjecture as has the person of the prophet. Competent scholarship has suggested dates ranging from 650 B.C. to 330 B.C. For various reasons the first date seems to be somewhat too early, since it occurs in the time of Assyrian domination of Judah; while the latter date is closely associated with the opinion that the invading hosts described in the first chapter of the prophecy are not the Chaldeans but the Greek under Alexander.

35.2 The most satisfactory conclusion seems to be that the prophecy was written at a time when the Chaldeans or Babylonians were beginning to become restive against the Assyrian power. The best conclusion seems to be somewhere between 640 and 610 B.C.

36. Zephaniah was written in 630 B.C. by the prophet himself from Judah. The Prophet prophesied during the reign of Josiah between the fall of Nineveh and the Babylonian attack upon Judaea. Zephaniah pinpoints the cause of God's judgment as the moral degeneration of the people.

36.1 He makes clear, however, that the door of mercy is open for those who will repent. The prophet sees the meaning of all this in the light of God's purpose to send his Son, the Lord Jesus, as Israel's Messiah and the Savior of all mankind.

37. Haggai in 520 B.C. wrote the book from Judah. The indifference of a returned Israel from the Babylonian exile, their failure in particular to rebuild the Temple and the glory of his future kingdom are the subject of the prophet's discourse.

38. Zechariah wrote the book in about 520 B.C. from Judah. The prophet wrote of the future restoration of Israel and the wonders of the Messiah's Kingdom. He was a contemporary of Haggai and spoke primarily to Judah after their return. He was specifically called to motivate the people to rebuild the Temple.

39. Malachi closes out the Old Testament in about 420 B.C. by urging Judah, who had just returned from captivity, to return to the Lord or suffer a great tribulation. There are many rebukes in the book for Israel's failure and there are specific prophecies about our Lord.

40. Let me summarize the books of The Prophets, their authors and their chronological order:

The Pre Exilic

Joel - c. 850-700

Jonah - c. 800

Amos - c. 780-755

Hosea - c. 760-710

Micah - c. 740

Isaiah - c. 740-680

Nahum - c. 666-615

Zephaniah - c. 630-620

Habakkuk - c. 627-586

Jeremiah - c. 626-580

The Exilic

Daniel - c. 606-534

Ezekiel - c. 597-570

Obadiah - c. 585

The Post Exilic

Haggai - c. 520

Zechariah - c. 520-516

Malachi - c. 450-400

41. All prophets except for Jonah and Hosea were residents of Judah. Only Hosea lived and worked out of the Northern Kingdom; Jonah may very well have lived in Israel but certainly his main prophesy was uttered in Nineveh to the Assyrians.