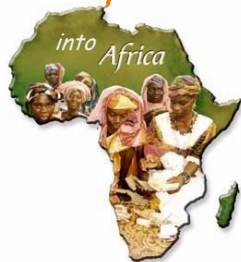
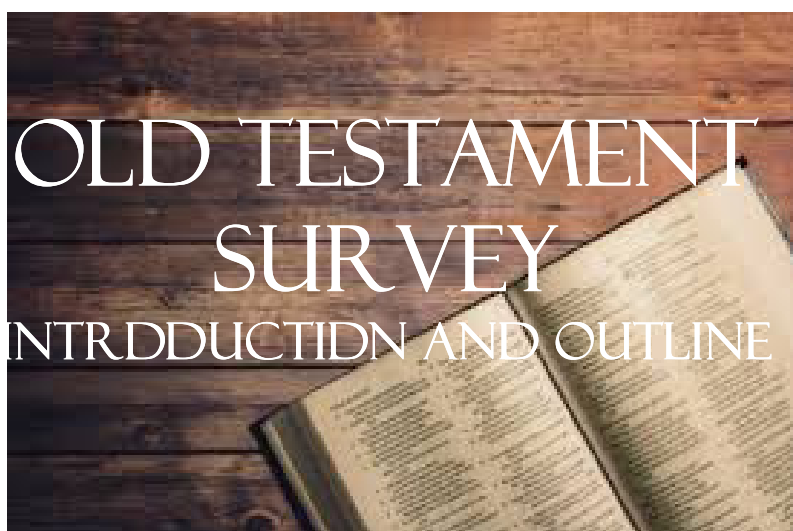


Footprints



CHRISTIAN RESOURCES



By: Bishop Warwick Cole-Edwardes

Footprints into Africa

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

GENESIS

Introduction

Genesis gives us the foundation for the whole Bible. Every other book will be built on the foundation of Genesis.

i) The Author and Date

We believe that Genesis was written by Moses, inspired by God – sometimes using different sources. And the final edition of the book was completed around 587 BC.

ii) The Background

Genesis means beginning/origin. It divides into 2 main sections.

Section 1 – Chapters 1-11 Primeval history

Section 2 – Chapters 12-50 Patriarchal history
AIII

The first section – origin of the world, creation of man and the fall.
The second – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph

iii) Theme

Genesis is an account of what God has done. And lays down the foundation for the Bible.

OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

EXODUS

Introduction

There are 3 points by way of introduction.

1) Author and Date

Both Jewish and Christian traditions teach us that Moses is the author of Exodus,
Exodus 17:14 "Write down in a scroll something to be remembered"

Luke 24:27, 44 "Moses the prophets and the Psalms"

The book was finalized in 587 BC. But the exodus itself took place in 1876 BC.

2) Background

The title "Exodus" is a Latin word that means "Exit/Departure. And the book describes the events, which led up to the Exodus, as well as the events of the Exodus until they arrived at Mt Sinai where they were given the land and the Tabernacle was built.

3) The Merge

The Book is the story of how God liberated His people. People who had been in bondage for 400 years and of how Israel became the Covenant nation of the land.

It is a wonderful story of God's grace, wonderfully illustrating how later Jesus would liberate us from the bondage of sin and make us His people.

OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

LEVITICUS

Introduction

1) Author and Date

Like with Genesis and Exodus we believe that Moses was the author of the book inspired by God's spirit. And it was intended mainly for the priests.

Although it was directed to the priests, it was also of great value to the people.

2) Background and Special Features

30 times in the book we read the phrase "the Lord said to Moses". In Exodus 24:4 it says Moses wrote all the words of the Lord.

Leviticus consists mainly of laws and of ritual.

The name "Leviticus" comes from the Greek word "Levitikon" which shows us it was mainly written for the Levites and the priests.

Why Leviticus is so very important is because it gives us the background to all the other books of the Bible. Especially all of the sacrifices which pointed to Christ, the Lamb of God.

This book will strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ in the sense that this sacrifice was perfect a once and for all sacrifice for our sins.

We cannot understand Hebrews unless we know Leviticus.

3) Theme and Merge

Leviticus is much more than just a collection of books. It tells us about God's character and His will. Summarized in a phrase "be holy for I am holy".

Great emphasis is placed on the holiness of God.

Therefore, the people in whose midst God lives are required to be holy.

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

NUMBERS

Introduction

i) The Author

There is no doubt that the book was written by Moses, who was the author of the 1st 5 books of the Old Testament. Known as the Pentateuch (5).

Ch 1:1: "The Lord spoke to Moses in the desert of Sinai on the first day of the 2nd month of the 2nd year after the Israelites come out of Egypt."

3:44 "he Lord said to Moses"

9:1 "The Lord spoke to Moses in the desert of Sinai in the first month of the second year after they had come out of Egypt".

33:2 "As the Lord commands Moses recorded the stages in their journey"

All these remind us of Moses authorship. See also

Deut. 31:9 So Moses wrote down the law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi who carried the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel.

ii) The Background

The English word "Numbers" goes back to the Latin word for Numbers "Numer".

The reason for this is that in the opening chapter, there were two numberings. (Ch 1 & Ch. 26).

The book also covers the time they spent in the wilderness. Wondering for 40 years, before God brought them into the Promised Land.

iii) The Message

The theme of obedience, disobedience and holiness are the common Themes throughout the book. It also tells us of God's faithful care of His people, in spite of their weakness.

The Lord would now have His people enter into the Promised Land, to fulfill the Promise, which he gave to Abraham in Genesis 12.

OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

DEUTERONOMY

Introduction

The book of Deuteronomy is sometimes described as the most important book of the Old Testament. It covers the final messages, which were given by Moses just before they entered the Promised Land.

i) The Author and Date

Traditionally the book of Deuteronomy has been scribed to Moses, the author of the first 5 books of the Bible.

Nehemiah 8:1 – “All the people assembled as one man in the square before the water gate”. They told the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had amended for Israel.

Deut.31:9 – “So Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the Ark of the Covenant, and to all the elders of Israel”.

Mat 19:7, 8 – “Why then they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?”

Jesus replied, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.

The date is 1406 BC.

ii) Background and Special Features

The name Deuteronomy “Deutero Nomos” (names) The 2nd law

The generation who came out of the Promised Land had all now died in the desert.

So Moses has to go over the Law for the new generation. And as Moses goes over the law, he exhorts them to obey. There will be blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience.

iii) The theme is God's love for his chosen people

He has saved them, and blessed them, and now in return they have to love and obey Him.

The New Testament quotes Deuteronomy in 17 of the 27 books. It is quoted a total of 80 times.

The most well known is when Jesus was tempted. He quoted from Deuteronomy.

8:3 “He humbled you causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you “do not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord”

6:16 “Do not test the Lord your God”

6:13 “Fear the Lord your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name”

In a sense, we could say that Deuteronomy was the favourite book of Jews..

OLD TESTAMENT STUDY

JOSHUA

Introduction

1) Author & Date

There is no doubt that Joshua is the author but because of the record of his death d.24:29-30 there were also others involved in the final completion of the book.

The book would have been written about the year 1000 BC.

2) The Background

The book received its name from its principal character and the reason for the writing of this book, was the covenant between God and his people, and of how God led them into the Promised Land where under the leadership of Joshua the land was conquered, and then allocated to the different tribes.

3) The Theme and the Merge

The theme that runs through the book is the relationship between Obedience and Blessing.

Although Israel had received the land as an unmerited gift and because of God's promise to Abraham, they will remain in the land and enjoy its fruits so long as the people are faithful to the covenant.

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

JUDGES

Introduction

1) Author and Date

The author of Judges is unknown, although Jewish tradition tells us it was Samuel. But we are not sure.

It was written after the year 1000 BC.

ii) Background and Special Features

Judges has been called the dark ages of Israel's history. And it covers the period after the death of Joshua, up to the assertion of Saul being made king.

Dates – 1250 – 1050 BC

It covers a period of 350 years.

It is called "Judges" because there were 15 judges who ruled over Israel during that period.

iii) Message

The book of Judges teaches us that love and obedience to the Lord always leads to blessing. But dishonesty brings disaster.

And yet when God's people repent, God sends a deliverer. The greatest deliverer being Jesus (Grace belongs to God).

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

RUTH

Introduction

i) Author

The author of this book is unknown, but Jewish tradition tells us that it was written by the prophet Samuel.

In the Hebrew Bible Ruth is included in the writings, and every year the Jewish people read the book of Ruth during the feast of weeks.

ii) The Background

The story happens in the time of the Judges. There was a time of peace between Israel and Moab. As we read through the book we will never read of God speaking, or performing miracles.

But, certainly God is directing all the affairs.

iii) The Message

There are a number of suggestions.

1) It gives us the family tree for the greatest King of Israel, King David.

Ruth was David's great grandmother.

2) Others see it as a political tract, dealing with the subject of mixed marriages.

Certainly, Ruth was a Moabitess, the descendant of Lot, and they were regarded by the Jews as pagans.

iii) Providence

But when God was establishing the family that was to produce Jesus, He chose a beautiful heathen girl, Ruth, led her to Bethlehem where she married Boaz.

And Boaz was the son of Rehab - Matthew 1:5.

Therefore, David's great grandmother was a Moabite.

It is a book that teaches us to care well for our families.

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

1 SAMUEL

INTRODUCTION

Royal history beginning with the book of Samuel. The long and dark period of the Judges is now over. This book of 1 Samuel begins the 500 years of the Kings of Israel.

The book of 1 Samuel will cover a period of 75 years, from the childhood of Samuel, through the troubled years of Saul up to the reign of David.

i) The Author and Date

Samuel was the last and the greatest of the Judges and although his name is throughout his book, we are not sure if he was the author, just because in Chapter 25 we have a record of his death. But he is the leading character of the book and certain he wrote some of it.

1 Samuel 10:25

The date should be 1105 – 1015 BC

ii) The Background

Originally, in the Hebrew text, the two books of Samuel were in fact 1 book – the division into 1 and 2 Samuel came later.

iii) The Theme

1 Samuel begins with an account of the birth of Samuel and it explains the origin of the Davidic Monarchy. The Monarchy was seen as a divine institution.

The theme of the book is that:

Faithfulness and obedience to God will bring blessing.
Unfaithfulness and disobedience will bring disaster.

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

2 SAMUEL

Introduction

i) Author and Date

Samuel could not have been the author of the entire book because it contains details concerning his death. It becomes clear that 1 & 2 Samuel do not come from a single author, but he certainly was the major figure.

2 Samuel will cover the period of 1011 BC to 971 BC.

ii) Background

Originally 1 & 2 Samuel were 1 book, only later was there a division. So 2 Samuel is merely a continuation from where 1 Samuel ended.

1 Samuel records the failure of King Saul who was man's king, but 2 Samuel describes God's king. King David and the establishment of the house of David through which the Messiah our Lord Jesus Christ would later come.

The entire book focuses on David.

iii) Message

2 Samuel begins where 1 Samuel ends, and gives us the history of David's Reign.

Under David, the nation prospered, and the enemies were defeated.

We will also read in 2 Samuel 7, of the Lord's promise that David's line would continue forever.

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

1 KINGS

i) Author and Date

The author is not named in the Bible thus we do not know.

However, Jewish tradition tells us that it was Jeremiah.

He was the contemporary of King Josiah, and also the remaining Kings of Judah, right up to the fall of Jerusalem.

But the problem with this suggestion is that at the end of 2 Kings it shows familiarity with the events in Babylon and Jeremiah never went to Babylon.

Therefore we must say we are not sure who it was, and it was written around 550 BC.

ii) Background

1 & 2 Kings were originally 1 book, only divided by the Greek translation called the Septuagint (70) scholars.

The purpose is not just to write History, but rather to show that Israel is called to obey God's law.

Each King is evaluated not on political grounds, but on religious grounds.

The religious evaluation of each King, concerning his reign, and his relationship to God.

As far as the National success is seen, it depended on the King's loyalty to God.

iii) Theme

Both Samuel & kings record the history of the Monarchy.

From its rise under the ministry of Samuel, up to its destruction at the hands of the Babylonians.

Beginning with Solomon's reign, 1 Kings gives us the history of Israel, through the divided kingdom, up to the death of King Ahab.

971 BC – 840 BC

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

2 KINGS – Sin sends God's judgement

i) Author and Date

We must remember that the author of 1 & 2 Kings is not clear it probably was not written by a single author, but was probably composed by a scribe or a group of writers.

ii) Background

Originally 1 & 2 Kings was one work. Only later was it divided into 1 & 2 Kings (Septuagint) which was the Greek translation of 70 scholars (LXX). Both the book of Kings tells the story of Israel from the last day of David +- 970 BC up to the closing days of Jehoidin in 562 BC.

They record the events which took place during the reign of King Solomon as well as the succeeding kings of Judah and Israel.

iii) Theme

Together with 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings give us the history of the Monarchy, from its beginning under Samuel up to its destruction by the Babylonians.

2 Kings particularly takes up the story where 1 Kings finished.

It records the stories of Elijah & Elisha and the history of the two kingdoms, until they were both finally conquered.

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

1 CHRONICLES

Author and Date

At first sight, 1 Chronicles appears to be nothing more than a boring list of names, but behind these names the author is concerned to give us a record of the divinely appointed monarchy. And in that sense, Chronicles is a history of the true Israel, and he makes no mention of the Northern Kingdom.

1 & 2 Chronicles called “historical books”, written by the Chronicler.

The events take place between 1004 – 971 BC.

Background

Large sections of Chronicles is a retelling of events, which took place in the books of Samuel & Kings.

During the book, the faithfulness of God is stressed, the true ordering of worship also the place that music plays. And also it gives us the responses of the Kings to the prophets.

Theme

Chronicles was written for the exiles. They had returned from exile, and they were reminded that they were still God's chosen people, but that God was raising up a new Israel under David's king, who would part the way to the coming of Jesus.

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

2 CHRONICLES

SOLOMON'S FORTUNE – JUDAH'S FALL

Introduction

We now come to the end of Old Testament History.

i) Author and Date

1 & 2 Chronicles are both history books written by one author.
2 Chronicles focuses on Solomon and the Kings of Judah between
971 BC and 538 BC.

ii) Background

A large selection of the material is a re-telling of the events which took place in
the books of Samuel & Kings.

iii) Theme

2 Chronicles will begin when 1 Chronicles ends. It records the events from the
beginning of Solomon's reign that is in 970 BC to the beginning of the Babylonian
captivity in 586 BC.
Particular emphasis is placed on Solomon's reign Chronicals 1-9.
And then all the following kings who ruled over Judah 10-36.

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

EZRA

i) Author

The book of Ezra and Nehemiah were originally considered as one book.

We are not sure who wrote the book, it is unclear.

ii) Background

The date written was about the year 400 BC.

The book of Ezra is a continuation of the history of Israel describing the return to Israel after 70 years in Exile.

Ezra came back in the year 458 BC.

iii) Theme

The book tells us not only of the return of the Jews from exile in Babylon, but also of the rebuilding of the temple. Ezra goes further to teach the people the Word of God and as a result the reforms which he instituted.

The book would have been written around 400 BC.

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

NEHEMIAH

I) Author

As we saw with Ezra, we are not a hundred percent certain who wrote Nehemiah. In the Hebrew Bible, Ezra & Nehemiah were one book; and they give us a record of the amazing leadership of Nehemiah, who led the third exile from Babylon, rebuilt the walls, and renewed the people.

II) Special Features

The book of Nehemiah records the events which took place in his life after the return. Most of this book comes out of Nehemiah's memoirs (diary).

III) Theme

The book gives us a wonderful insight into his strong faith; he was a man of prayer, and of action.

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

ESTHER

I) Author & Date

We do not know who wrote Esther. It does not take place in Palestine or in Babylon, but it takes place in the capital of the Persian Empire, throughout which the Jews had been scattered after the exile. Their king, King Cyrus allowed them to return home. Darius followed him, who was succeeded Ahasuerus in this book. The events in this book took place between 483-473 BC.

II) Background

The book is about a beautiful young lady called Esther, a Jewish heroin who was going to become the wife of the Persian king. God raised her up for that position in order to save the Jewish race from being exterminated.

III) Message

The name of God does not appear in the book. But, the finger of God is directing every little event, so that God's will would be done.

Not only do we learn of the providence of God, but also we will learn of the origin and the observance of the Jewish feast of Purim

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

JOB

Introduction

We have now finished with all the historical books of the O.T.
The Book of the Law; The Books of History;
And now we turn to the books called the Writings of Wisdom: Job Psalms, Proverbs,
Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs

I) Author & Date

The Author is not known to us, although Jewish tradition tells us that Moses wrote it.
We are given a wonderful picture of the man Job. The writer of this book was a very
wise man; skilled in the use of proverbs with a thorough knowledge of nature.

II) Background

Job is a poetic book, part of the Wisdom Literature.
It describes Job as a very godly man, but then gives us an account of his sufferings, and
of the three debates, which took place between Job and his friends, concerning the
reasons for his suffering.

III) Theme

The book tries to explain the mystery of suffering, especially undeserved suffering. It
reminds us, that God is a sovereign God, and He was in total control of all that
happened, and therefore we can trust Him, even in the difficult times.

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

PROVERBS

Introduction

Proverbs is the third book in the Poetry or Wisdom Writing.

1. Author & Date

Although the book begins with a title ascribing the proverbs to Solomon, it is clear from later chapters that he was not the only author of the book. This book is a collection of moral and religious teachings in the form of proverbs and sayings, coming from various periods of Israel's history. While the final edition of the book was made after the exile, probably in the fifth century B.C., much of the material within the book is earlier and some of it is even premonarchic.

2. Background and special Features

This book consists of short sayings regarding practical everyday concerns. It is considered part of the wisdom literature. The two other books, which are usually included in this category, are Job and Ecclesiastes. These books represent a human search for knowledge that enriches life or makes existence bearable. A prominent feature of the sayings within the book of Proverbs seems to be "comparison". Brief proverbial sayings set one image over against another, making an explicit or implicit comparison.

3. Theme and Message

Proverbs treat such themes as wealth, poverty, wisdom, folly, sin, goodness, pride, humility, justice, vengeance, love, lust, gluttony, respect for the poor, loyalty to friends, etc. This book begins with the reminder, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Chapter 1:7).

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

PSALMS

Introduction

I) Author & Date

Of all the psalms, 73 were written by David. Others were written by Moses, Solomon, Asaph, Korah, and nearly all of the Psalms begin with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet – and it was written over a long period of time.

II) Background

Psalms is a collection of religious songs. They are divided into 5 books, and each book closes with a doxology.

So we could call the book of Psalms, “God’s hymn book of praise,” written between 1410 B.C. – 430 B.C.

III) Theme

They are a record of what God has done, and our response to that.

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

PROVERBS

Author and Date of Writing

Although the book begins with a title ascribing the proverbs to Solomon, it is clear from later chapters that he was not the only author of the book. This book is a collection of moral and religious teaching in the form of proverbs and sayings, coming from various periods of Israel's history. While the final edition of the book was made after the exile, probably in the fifth century B.C., much of the material within the book is earlier and some of it is even premonarchic.

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Outline of Contents

- a. Prologue: Purpose and Theme (1:1-7)
- b. The Superiority of the Way of Wisdom (1:8-9:18)
- c. The Proverbs of Solomon (10:1-22:16)
- d. Sayings of the Wise (22:17-24:34)
- e. More Proverbs of Solomon (25:1-29:27)
- f. The Words of Agur and Lemuel (30:1-31:9)
- g. Various sayings (31:10-31)

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

ECCLESIASTES

Introduction

The book of Ecclesiastes is one of the most relevant books for today. It shows us how to find a life worth living. The writer will explain to us, that the world cannot give us a life worth living. This is only possible when the Lord Jesus Christ is at the centre of our lives – everything else is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

I) Author & Date

It has been traditionally believed that Solomon is the author of this book, describing to us his own life. Although he had everything that the world can offer, he found it to be a chasing after the wind; until God was at the centre of his life. Although Solomon is taken to be the author, it is not stated that he was.

II) Background

In the Hebrew the title of this book is KOHELETH, which led to the Greek translation ECCLESIASTES, meaning, “Preacher.”

III) Theme

The preacher of the book is searching for the key to the meaning to life. And so he will look where satisfaction can be found. And he finds that life not centred on God is meaningless.

He will preach four sermons, and then in Ch.12 he will give us his conclusion (i.e. fear God, keep His commandments, and remember the day of judgement).

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

SONG OF SONGS

Introduction

The Song of Songs has been called the Christian's Love Song.

6: 3 I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine; he grazes among the lilies.

The book is a song of love that flows in a marriage relationship, and it uses Middle-Eastern language and imagery. It has three important introductory issues.

I) Author & Date

In Ch.1:1 it says "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.", and so the author has been traditionally been assigned to Solomon.

II) Background

This book is made up of a number of love songs between a husband and his wife.

E.J. Young – "God has placed this song in the Canon, in order to teach us the purity and the sanctity of marriage, which God Himself has established."

III) Theme

The Song of Songs illustrates the beauty and the purity of a marriage love, and it is a reminder that God intends for such love to be the norm of every life. The question sometimes asked is, "how do you interoperate this book?"

- 1) Some say it is a Jewish allegory describing God's love for Israel.
- 2) It is a collection of love songs.
- 3) It is a beautiful picture of love in a marriage.
- 4) It is a picture ultimately of Jesus and His church.

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

ISAIAH

Introduction

Isaiah has been called the Evangelical Prophet of the O.T. It is a book which beautifully speaks of Jesus.

I) Author & Date

Isaiah was the son of Amoz who lived in Jerusalem; and Amoz was the uncle of King Uzziah. This meant that Isaiah came from a very privileged background. He later married and had two sons; Maershalhazpath and ...
He was a man of boldness and sincerity, and he preached during the reign of four kings. He would have written this book about the year 700 B.C.

II) Background

Not only did he come from a very privileged background, but he also preached at the time of the Assyrian Crisis, which was going to destroy the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C.

III) Theme

His name means, "The Lord saves," and that are the major theme of Isaiah. Even politically, he told King Hezekiah not to be afraid of the Assyrians, but to put their trust only in God; but more than that, he portrays the coming Messiah as the One who would bring true salvation.

In Ch.9, he is called "Wonderful Counsellor," The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.

In Ch.7:14, He would be born of a virgin.

7: 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

From Ch.49, we have the Servant Songs. The most famous of which is the fourth one which describes the Lord Jesus and His suffering on the cross:

*53: 3 He was despised and rejected by men;
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, was asked by Augustine, "which book he should read after his conversion?" And Ambrose replied, "Nowhere else in the O.T. have we so clear a view of the grace of God."

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

JEREMIAH

AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

The book is named after the prophet whose ministry it records. It was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (605 BC) that Jeremiah was specifically instructed to commit his messages to writing (Jer 36 : 1-8). Jeremiah dictated this message to his scribe Baruch who recorded it in a roll or book. Some scholars believe that the present text of the book of Jeremiah reflects several editorial additions subsequent to Jeremiah's times. Others believe that Baruch himself completed and arranged the final edition subsequent to Jeremiah's death.

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES

We are better informed of the personal life and struggles of Jeremiah than for any other prophet. Jeremiah was still a child when he was called to the prophetic office. He did not marry as a sign that children would not survive (16:1-4). His prophetic ministry (which began in 626 BC) and ended sometime after 586) aroused much hostility. Scholars agree that the material in the book of Jeremiah falls into three categories: poetic, material consisting of oracles, biographical narratives recounting key incidents in the life of the prophet, and prose passages in the form of sermons and speeches attributed to Jeremiah.

THEME AND MESSAGE

Throughout the book we find prophecies of judgment that insist that Jerusalem must be destroyed. But there are words of hope of a new future beyond disaster. Jeremiah also teaches that individual responsibility is the foundation of spiritual life, and that individuals are to be punished for their own sins, not for those of their fathers.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A The Call to Jeremiah (1:1-19)
- B Warnings and Exhortations to Judah (2:1-29, 32)
- C Promises of Restorations (30:1-33:26)
- D Historical Insertion (34:1-35:19)
- E The Sufferings of Jeremiah (36:1-38:28)
- F The Fall of Jerusalem and its Aftermath (39:1-45:5)
- G Prophecies against the Nations (46:1-51:64)
- H Historical Appendix (52:1-34)

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

LAMENTATIONS

AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

Although one very ancient tradition ascribes Lamentations to Jeremiah, most modern scholars hold the book to be anonymous. There is no evidence outside the book itself that helps us to date its composition. The most plausible view is that Lamentations as a whole was completed not long after the siege and destruction of the city of Jerusalem in 586 BC by the Babylonians.

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES

Lamentations consists of a series of five poems, each being a separate and individual unit. Each chapter has twenty two verses, except chapter 3, which has sixty six verses arranged in twenty two groups of three. In chapters 1, 2 and 4 the first word in each verse begins with the successive letter of the alphabet.

THEME AND MESSAGE

The book of Lamentations poetically depicts the horrible atrocities that struck the city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants when the city was invaded by the Babylonian army. The catastrophe was brought on by the sins of the people in spite of the mournful nature of most of the book; there is also a note of trust in God and hope for the future. God's covenant love and purpose have not failed.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A The Misery and Desolation of Jerusalem (1:1-22)
- B The Lord's Anger against his people (2:1-22)
- C Punishment and Hope (3:1-66)
- D The Contrast between Zion's Past and Present (4:1-22)
- E A Prayer for Mercy (5:1-22)

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

EZEKIEL

AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

The Author of this book is Ezekiel, the son of the priest Busy. Ezekiel began his work in 593 AC and continued until at least 571 AC.

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES

Ezekiel lived during the greatest crisis in the history of ancient Israel: the final destruction of Judah and Jerusalem, and the exile of all the leading citizens to Babylonia. The book falls into four major parts: Chapters 1-24 contain oracles of judgment against Israel which date prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 587. Chapters 25-32 consist of a collection of oracles against foreign nations. Chapters 33-39 comprise oracles of restoration and hope, intended to console the people following the destruction of Jerusalem. In chapters 40-48 we find a description of the future restoration of the temple, Jerusalem, and Israel.

THEME AND MESSAGE

Ezekiel stresses the transcendence of God, and that his omnipotence cannot be limited by the failure of his people. Ezekiel condemns Israel's infidelity to God. The people defile themselves and the land when they reject the God of Israel for other gods. But God will purify the land and restore its boundaries. He emphasizes the contrast between what Israel had done and the faithfulness of God, who maintains the holiness and glory of His divine Name. Ezekiel also teaches the need for inner renewal of the heart and spirit, and the responsibility of each individual for his own sins.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A Ezekiel's call (1:1-3:27)
- B Judgment against Judah and Jerusalem (4:1-24:27)
- C God's Judgment of the Nations (25:1-32:32)
- D Preparation for Restoration (33:1-39:29)
- E A Vision of the future Temple and Land (40:1-48:35)

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

DANIEL

AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

According to Jewish-Christian tradition, Daniel wrote this book during the exile in the sixth century AC. Some other scholars believe that this book reached its present canonical form approximately in the middle of 164 AC, and that it is a composite work composed by an author compiler.

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES

The book consists of two main parts: Stories about Daniel and some of his companions, and a series of visitors seen by Daniel.

THEME AND MESSAGE

The book of Daniel is a source of comfort for all the world's oppressed of any age. It constantly confirms that God rules and that his purposes will be vindicated.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A History of Daniel (1:1-6:28)
 - 1. Daniel's youth and education (1:1-1:21)
 - 2. Nebuchadnezzar's image dream (2:1-2:49)
 - 3. Faithfulness of Daniel's companions (3:1-3:30)
 - 4. Nebuchadnezzar's tree dream (4:1-4:37)
 - 5. Balthazar's banquet (5:1-31)
 - 6. Daniel's Deliverance (6:1-6:28)
- B Visions of Daniel (7:1-12:13)
 - 1. Vision of the four beasts (7:1-7:28)
 - 2. Vision of the ram and the he-goat (8:1-8:27)
 - 3. Daniel's Prayer: Vision of the 70 weeks (9:1-9:27)
 - 4. Daniel's last vision (10:1-12:13)

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

HOSEA

AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

All we know about this prophet is that his father was named Beery. Hosea's ministry probably began about 750 BC and ended about 723 BC, during the troubled times before the fall of Samaria in 721 BC.

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES

The book of Hosea falls into two parts. The first section (chapters 1-3) functions as a preface for the entire book. God commands Hosea to marry Gomer the harlot. Hosea's family life then becomes a symbolic action to convey the message Hosea had from the Lord for His people. Yahweh is depicted as the faithful husband, and Israel as the adulterous wife. Hosea reveals the love of God for the sinful and apostate nation. The apostasy of Israel and her enslavement to pagan Canaanite traditions evoked from Hosea a strong plea for repentance and spiritual renewal. The major portion of this book (chapters 4-14) juxtaposes oracles of hope with oracles of judgment.

THEME AND MESSAGE

Hosea has been characterized as a prophet of love. His ministry was dominated by one major concern, namely Israel's breach of covenant with God. On the other hand God's love of Israel is as passionate as the love of a man for a woman.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A The Unfaithful Wife and the Faithful Husband (1:1-3:5)
- B The Unfaithful Nation and the Faithful God (4:1-14:9)
 - 1. Israel's Unfaithfulness (4:1-6:3)
 - 2. Israel's Punishment (6:4-10:15)
 - 3. The Lord's Faithful Love (11:1-14:9)

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

JOEL

AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

We know nothing about the person of Joel other than that he is the son of an equally unknown Pothole. The name Joel means "Yahweh is God". It seems that the book of Joel was written by a late post-exilic prophet. It was probably written after 515 BC.

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES

The first part of this book is concerned with a terrible invasion of locusts. The remainder of the book focuses on the day of the Lord which Joel says is at hand. It is a day of affliction when the Lord will punish those who oppose his will.

THEME AND MESSAGE

The prophet calls upon the people to mourn, and to repent and cry unto the Lord. He sees a glorious future for those who will return to the Lord. Noteworthy also is the promise of God. "I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy; your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions". (2:28).

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A A Foretaste of the day of the Lord (1:1-2:17)
 - 1. A Call to Mourning and Prayer (1:2-14)
 - 2. The Announcement of the Day of the Lord (1:15-2:11)
 - 3. A Call to Repentance (2:12-17)
- B Salvation in the Day of the Lord (2:18-3:21)
 - 1. The Lord's Restoration of Judah (2:18-27)
 - 2. The Lord's Renewal of His People (2:28-32)
 - 3. The Coming of the Day of the Lord (3:1-21)

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

AMOS

AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

Amos was not a professional prophet, but he spoke in obedience to a divine vocation. Though he lived in Judah, he was called by God to prophecy to the Northern Kingdom. In all likelihood, Amos returned to Judah after having proclaimed God's judgment. He then resumed his normal life as a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore fig trees (7:14). His ministry took place between 760 and 750 BC.

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES

The period in which Amos prophesized was a time of peace and great prosperity for both Judah and Israel. However, it was also a time of great excess as well as social and religious decay. Prosperity was accompanied by an almost unprecedented degree of social corruption. It is to this that the book of Amos is addressed.

THEME AND MESSAGE

With courage Amos proclaims that God will punish the nation. He calls for social justice as the indispensable expression of true piety. Amos condemns all who make themselves powerful or rich at the expense of others. Repentance and obedience are imperatives, the only escape from imminent judgment.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A Judgment on Israel's Neighbors (1:1-2:5)
- B Judgment on Israel (2:6-16)
- C Oracles against Israel (3:1-5:17)
- D Announcements of Exile (5:18-6:14)
- E Visions of Divine Retribution (7:1-9:10)
- F Restoration of Israel (9:11-15)

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

OBADIAH

AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

The title gives us no information about the author except a name. Obadiah means “servant of the Lord”. It gives no help in dating the book, though internal references imply that the destruction of Jerusalem of 586 BC had already occurred.

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES

Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah and reduced Jerusalem with its temple to ruins. The inhabitants of Jerusalem were carried into captivity. The prophet foretells the destruction of Edom, and the reason for it, namely Edom’s unbrotherly attitude toward the children of Jacob. The prophet warns Edom not to exult over the people of Judah in their distress.

THEME AND MESSAGE

At first reading, this book appears to be nothing but a vengeful and nationalistic testimony to Judah’s hatred of Edom for its calumny. Such a view of Obadiah is narrow and does not take into consideration the wider context of the prophecy. The downfall of Edom is seen as a morally motivated act of providence. This short book is a powerful witness to the sovereignty of Yahweh.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A. The Doom of Edom (1-14)
- B. The Day of the Lord (15-21)

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

JONAH

AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

The narrative in the book of Jonah has been variously regarded as history, myth, legend, fiction and parable. Those who accept the historicity of Jonah, usually assume that Jonah was the author of his own story, and that the book was probably written before 745 BC. Those who deny the historicity of the book believe that an anonymous author committed it to writing, and they date the work between 500 and 333 BC.

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES

The book of Jonah is different from all other books. It does not consist of prophetic oracles, but it is a story about a man named Jonah, who is never called a prophet in the book.

THEME AND MESSAGE

The book portrays God's absolute sovereignty over the elements of nature and historical events. It also portrays God's love and mercy. God would rather forgive and save the enemies of his people, than punish and destroy them.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A. Jonah Flees His Mission (1:1-2:10)
 - 1. Jonah's Commission and Flight (1:1-3)
 - 2. The endangered Sailor's Cry to their Gods (1:4-6)
 - 3. Jonah's Disobedience Exposed (1:7-10)
 - 4. Jonah's Punishment, Deliverance and Prayer of Thanksgiving (1:11-2:10)
- B. Jonah reluctantly fulfills His Mission (3:1-4:11)
 - 1. Jonah's renewed Commission and Obedience (3:1-4)
 - 2. The endangered Nineties' Repentant Appeal to the Lord (3:5-9)
 - 3. The Nineties' Repentance Acknowledged (3:10-4:4)
 - 4. Jonah's Deliverance and Rebuke (4:5-11)

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

MICAH

AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

The author of this book is Micah, who lived at Foresheet (a town in Judah). The name Micah means. "Who is like the Lord? Micah's prophetic career may have begun about 725 BC.

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES

Micah witnessed the increasing might of the Assyrian Empire. Assyria had destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel (5:5 full.), and Micah also witnessed the fall of Samaria in 722 AC, and the dispersal of the northern tribes. Micah himself stemmed from the poorer class, and was acutely aware of the injustice and avarice of the rich.

THEME AND MESSAGE

The message of Micah alternates between oracles of doom and oracles of hope. The historic covenant relationship between Yahweh and his chosen people underlies Micah's prophecies. Because the people have forsaken their obligations, God must execute judgment upon Israel. But Yahweh will still uphold his covenantal responsibility to foster his children.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A. Judgment against Israel and Judah (1:1-3:12)
- B. Restoration and Peace (4:1-5:15)
- C. The Lord's Case against Israel (6:1-16)
- D. Gloom turns to Triumph (7:1-20)

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

NAHUM

AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

Nahum, the author, came from Elko's, but the precise location of this town is uncertain. The name Nahum is probably a shortened form of Nehemiah, meaning "Yahweh comforts". Nahum prophesied Nineveh's fall, which was fulfilled in 612 BC. He probably uttered his prophecies between 663 and 612 BC, perhaps near the end of the period.

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES

During the first half of the seventh century Assyria dominated the international scene. But the hour of Assyria's fall was drawing near. Babylon laid siege to Nineveh and finally destroyed it in 612 BC. A small Assyrian army escaped the city, but was finally destroyed in 609 BC when the mighty Assyrian empire vanished from the map.

THEME AND MESSAGE

Nahum describes the majesty of God, and pronounces judgment upon Nineveh. The theme that pervades Nahum's prophecy is the absolute sovereignty of Yahweh. Israel's God rules over the history and gods of Israel's enemies.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A. The Lord's Vengeance against Nineveh (1:1-15)
- B. Nineveh's fall (2:1-13)
- C. Woe to Nineveh (3:1-19)

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

HABAKKUK

AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

Nothing is known of the life and person of Habakkuk. Scholars believe that Habakkuk prophesied during the reign of Jehoiakim (609-598 BC). The prophecy is generally dated in the early part of that reign, a little before or after the battle of Carchemish (605 BC).

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES

Habakkuk prayed and prophesied in times of national and international crisis. Internally, the people of God were also caught up in the crisis of religious and moral bewilderment. Habakkuk was written as a dialogue or conversation between God and the prophet.

THEME AND MESSAGE

The prophet cried to God because of the violence and injustice he sees around him. He cannot understand why a righteous God should tolerate this. But then God indicates to him that the Chaldean invaders will bring judgment on Judah. In response, Habakkuk challenges God's motives in employing wicked and unbelieving people to chasten his own chosen people. In a prayer the prophet then appeals to God that in his wrath he should remember mercy. He also expresses his praise and thanksgiving to God.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A. Habakkuk's first Question and God's Answer (1:1-11)
- B. Habakkuk's second Question and God's Answer (1:12-2:20)
- C. Habakkuk's Prayer of Confidence and Praise (3:1-19)

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

ZEPHANIAH

AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

Zephaniah was a descendant of Hezekiah, the great reforming king of Judah. He prophesied during the reign of King Josiah (640-609 BC). Most scholars place this work in the years shortly before the great reform carried out by King Josiah in 621 AC.

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES

Zephaniah proclaimed that the coming of the Lord was imminent. God would then judge all nations. Scholars believe that the background to this belief lay in the invasion from the north by a fierce nomadic nation of horsemen called the Scythians. They dominated western Asia in the last quarter of that century. Though the Scythians were threatening Judah, there is no evidence that they attacked or passed through Judah.

THEME AND MESSAGE

Two themes dominate Zephaniah's ministry, namely judgment and hope. He proclaims the coming of the Day of the Lord, when God will severely punish both the heathen nations and God's chosen people. Though God's actions will be drastic, they will also have a positive effect. Zephaniah makes it clear that God will be merciful to his people.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A. Introduction (1:1-3)
- B. The Day of the Lord coming on Judah and the Nations (1:4-18)
- C. God's Judgment on the Nations (2:1-3:8)
- D. Redemption of the Remnant (3:9-20)

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

HAGGAI

AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

The Book of Haggai consists of a collection of messages that came from the Lord through the prophet Haggai in 520 BC. All these prophecies were delivered within the space of four months. Some scholars believe that this collection comes from the hand of the contemporary of Haggai who wrote down the outlines of his sermons. We know nothing about the life and person of Haggai, except that he prophesied after the return from Babylon.

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES

The Jews returned to Jerusalem from exile in 538 AC after Cyrus had issued a decree allowing them to rebuild the Temple. They had now lived in Jerusalem for some years, but the Temple still lay in ruin.

THEME AND MESSAGE

Haggai urges the leaders to rebuild the Temple, and challenges the community about their priorities. Their response is that they are too poor to rebuild the temple, but Haggai says that it is because they have not rebuilt it that they are so poor.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A. First Message: The Call to rebuild the Temple (1:1-11)
- B. The Response of Zerubbabel and the people (1:12-15)
- C. Second Message: Potential of greater Glory in the new Temple (2:1-9)
- D. Third Message: A Defiled People Purified and Blessed (2:10-19)
- E. Fourth Message: A special Promise to Zerubbabel (2:20-23)

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

ZECHARIAH

AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

Many scholars believe that this is a composite work, which falls into two main divisions, namely chapters 1-8 and chapters 9-14. The first part has been attributed to Zechariah. He delivered the prophecies between 520 and 518 AC. Many scholars view the second section as a later addition. It is difficult to determine the date of these later chapters. It is often argued that they should be dated about the fifth or fourth century or even as late as the third.

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES

The first part (chapters 1-8) consists of a series of eight visions. The second part (chapters 9-14) is largely apocalyptic in nature, and is concerned with the Day of the Lord, the end of the current age and the final judgment. The conditions of apathy and despair, which the prophet Zechariah encountered among the repatriated exiles, furnished the occasion of the prophecy.

THEME AND MESSAGE

Zechariah is concerned with the rebuilding of the temple. He urges the people to listen to God's message through the prophets. Messiahism is a dominant theme this book. The prophet says that the time of messianic salvation is near. The rebuilding of the temple is a sign of its coming. Zechariah is regarded as the prophet of comfort, hope and glory.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A. A Call to Repentance (1:1-6)
- B. Eight Visions (1:7-6:8)
- C. The Crowning of Joshua the High Priest (6:9-15)
- D. Fasting and the Future (7:1-8:23)
- E. The Advent and Rejection of the Messiah (9:1-11:17)
- F. The Advent and Redemption of the Messiah (12:1-14:21)

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

MALACHI

AUTHOR AND DATE OF WRITING

The name Malachi in Hebrew means “my messenger”. Some scholars have therefore argued that the name Malachi is not a proper name, but the title of a prophet. According to them, the book is an anonymous prophecy. However, there is a strong presumption that Malachi was the actual name of the author. Most scholars date this book about 430 BC.

BACKGROUND AND SPECIAL FEATURES

The temple had been rebuilt, but times of prosperity had not come. The people were suffering drought and famine. They had also forgotten God, and treated Him with dishonor. They married foreign women; adultery, perjury and oppression of the poor were rife.

THEME AND MESSAGE

A prominent theme in this book is the covenant. This book begins with a declaration of God’s love for Israel. However, Israel has been unfaithful in her response. The prophet calls upon the people and priests to renew their faithfulness to their covenant with God. The Lord will come to judge and purify his people. The prophet also promises that the Lord will send ahead of Him his messenger to prepare the people for the final day of the Lord.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- A. God’s Covenant Love for Israel (1:1-5)
- B. Israel’s Unfaithfulness (1:6-2:16)
 - 1. The Unfaithfulness of the Priests (1:6-2:9)
 - 2. The Unfaithfulness of the People (2:10-16)
- C. The Coming of the Lord (2:17-4:6)