



Season 1, Episode 1

WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT?

- Hebrew Scriptures
- 39 books written across 1500 years
- God-inspired
- Record of mankind's origin, created purpose, rejection of God, God's activity to redeem his world
- Genres: history, law, wisdom/poetry, prophetic

MYTHS OR COMMON BELIEFS ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT

- "We live under grace, not law."
- "We are a New Testament church."
- The Old Covenant has been set aside, so we don't need to study it anymore.
- The OT God is angry and violent, unlike the NT God who is kind, loving, and forgiving of everybody.
- All of those sacrifices, lists of names, and poetry make no sense.
- It doesn't relate to modern life today.
- Most of those stories didn't really happen.
- The Jews made it all up to help explain where they all came from
- It is not real history, but a record of how these beliefs evolved among the people over the centuries.

WHY STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT?

- It is the foundation and beginning of our faith: the beginning of God's story and of ours
- It is 2/3^{ds} of God's divine revelation

- Jesus and the apostles looked to it as authoritative Scripture
- The NT writers assumed knowledge of the Old Testament
- The NT only makes complete sense when studied in light of the Old
- Major doctrines such as holiness, mercy, love, covenant, justification, atonement, redemption are all introduced and explained

MAJOR THINGS TO STUDY ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT

- How it developed
- Historical events, cultures, geography, stories & people
- Theology & belief systems
- Overarching theological message
- Message, author, background of each book

TIME PERIOD

Adam – Abraham: debatable, 3 major views

Old Earth – evolutionary timeline, millions of years

Young Earth – less than 8,000 years, 6000 is common

Middle Earth – not evolutionary, but tens to ~100,000 years

Genesis 12 – Malachi: approximately 2200 BC to 400 BC

Bronze Age

Middle Bronze Age (2100-1550)

Abraham

Late Bronze Age (1550-1200)

Moses,

Exodus, Joshua

Iron Age (1200 BC – 500 AD [Middle Ages])

David, Israel,

Judah, Exile, NT

HISTORICAL PERIODS IN ISRAEL

- 1) **Patriarchs** – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; Egypt under Joseph
- 2) **Exodus & Conquest** – Joshua, 12 tribes settle land
- 3) **Judges** – Gideon, Samson; Samuel
- 4) **United Monarchy (1000 – 930)** -- Golden Age of Israel under Saul, David, Solomon
- 5) **Divided Monarchy (930-586 BC)**
 - a) Solomon's death led to the fall of Jerusalem
 - b) Judah – southern kingdom, Rehoboam (Solomon's son)
 - c) Israel – northern kingdom, Jeroboam (army commander)
- 6) **Exile**
 - a) 722 BC - Northern kingdom (Israel)
 - b) 586 BC - Southern kingdom (Judah)
- 7) **Restoration - (539-440 BC)**
 - a) Freeing of the exiles by Cyrus the Persian

- b) Ezra & Nehemiah
- c) Temple rebuilt (2nd Temple Period)
- 8) Servile state (440 BC – 135 AD) [after OT]**
 - a) Non-political entity; no king, no nation
 - b) Ptolemy (Greeks), Romans
 - c) Intertestamental period (440 – 30 BC)
 - d) New Testament & Early Church

GENRES

Historical Writings

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Joshua, Judge, Ruth, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah

Wisdom / Poetic Literature

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes

Major Prophets

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel

Minor Prophets

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

- “major” and “minor” refers to the length of the writings, not to their significance of message or historical setting
- There are *no inconsequential* prophetic books in the Old Testament!

Law

Pentateuch – The Five Writings of Moses

Torah (Hebrew)

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, mix of stories & commands detailing the nature of God’s people

DIVISIONS & BOOKS

Hebrew

- 39 books – *Tanak (Heb)*
- Torah
- The Writings (Poetic/Wisdom)
- The Prophets (includes Judges-2 Kings)

Typical Christian arrangement

- Septuagint, Greek translation (50 books)
- Pentateuch, Historical, Poetic, Major > Minor Prophets
- Protestant (39 books)
- Roman Catholic (46)
- Eastern Orthodox (49)
- Ethiopian Orthodox/Coptic (50)
- Other books here known as “Apocrypha”