

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE



RECAP

- ▶ After the fall of humanity & the restart with Noah, God promised to restore His **blessing** through Abraham's family. This people group, eventually known as the Hebrews or Israelites, have been shaped by God's **Law** & are defined by His **presence** as He leads them to the Promised Land.
- ▶ The Israelites are in the Promised Land & have demanded a king. God gave them a king, Saul, who was a failure. But then God graciously gave them a king after His own heart, meaning that he was a humble, God-centered individual.

1 & 2 KINGS

Genre: History • Written by ??? Prior to 586 BC

- ▶ God is the God of **Israel**
- ▶ Summary Verse >> 1 Kings 3:9 | Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?"
- ▶ God used His **wisdom** working through Solomon to increase the wealth & prosperity, which culminated in the building of the Temple.
- ▶ In the end, Solomon resembled **Pharaoh** more than he resembled his father, David. After his death, the united kingdom of Israel split.
- ▶ Northern Israel was known as Israel or Ephraim. It was led by Jeroboam first, & then out of 20 kings, **none** of them followed God. The capital was **Samaria**.
- ▶ Southern Israel was known as Judah & was led by Rehoboam. Out of 20 kings, **8** followed God. The capital remained Jerusalem.
- ▶ In 2 Kings 17, Northern Israel falls to **Assyria** in 721 BC. Then in chapters 24-25, Southern Israel falls to **Babylon** in 586 BC.

EZRA/NEHEMIAH

Genre: History • Written by Ezra between 457-444 BC

- ▶ God is the God of the **Temple & Wall**
- ▶ Chronicles God delivering Israel from the clutches of its enemies once again, which had been prophesied **200** years prior in Isaiah 44:28
- ▶ Summary Verse >> Ezra 1:1-2 | In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: 2 "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

- ▶ These books relate three returns from Babylon:
 - ▶ Zerubbabel (538 BC) >> came back to rebuild the **Temple** in Ezra 1-6.
 - ▶ Ezra (81 years later; 457 BC) >> chapters 7-10; focuses on rebuilding the **spiritual condition** of the people.
 - ▶ Nehemiah (12 years later; 445 BC) >> Nehemiah 1-13; focuses on rebuilding the **wall** around the city & its political & geographical restoration.
- ▶ In the Book of Nehemiah, everything in Judea was restored – The Temple is rebuilt, Jerusalem is reconstructed, the covenant is renewed, the people are reformed, & the Messianic line is intact – everything except the **king**. The next king would be the **Messiah**.

1 & 2 CHRONICLES

Genre: History • Written probably by Ezra between 450-430 BC

- ▶ God is the God of **Judah**
- ▶ Summary Verse >> 1 Chronicles 17:20-21 | There is none like you, O LORD, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 21 And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, making for yourself a name for great and awesome things, in driving out nations before your people whom you redeemed from Egypt?
- ▶ Chronicles retells the story of the entire Old Testament to the **remnant** who returned from Babylon, highlighting the future hope of the Messianic King & a restored Temple.
- ▶ Since so much of 2 Chronicles has to do with the Temple, it is no wonder that the book concludes with Cyrus' edict to rebuild it. Ezra wanted the people to see that they had been used by God to fulfill His **promises** (2 Chronicles 36:23).

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