

# — THE — BIBLE STUDY

**A One Year Study of the Bible and How It Relates to You**

**PART ONE: OLD TESTAMENT**

Zach Windahl



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# SHOUT OUTS

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And finally, shout out to YOU for helping make this dream a reality.

WELCOME TO

# INTRODUCTION

THE BIBLE STUDY

I know that God aligned our paths on purpose, and I couldn't be more excited about what He is going to do in your life during this year-long journey together through the Bible.

My prayer is not only for you to have a better understanding of the Word, but that you will also find a better sense of meaning for your life and really understand the heart of our Father. He loves you SO much. It's amazing.

Before we dive into Genesis I want to share a little bit about my testimony. Who knows, you and I might even share some things in common. We're in this thing called life together. Let's go!

## MY SEARCH FOR MEANING

Identity.

It's what makes you...you.

For many of us it takes years to figure out who we are and what we want to be. For some it comes easy, for others it takes a lifetime.

We have society, parents, teachers, friends, siblings, girlfriends, boyfriends, all telling us how we should live and act.

Why is it so easy for them to see it, but so difficult for us to figure it out?

If you're like me, I spent years trying to be the person that everyone else wanted me to be. Growing up, people would constantly tell me that I was going to be famous some day and that I should do this or that with my life. It all came from the fact that I was an entrepreneur

from an early age and had a pretty unhealthy work ethic to back it. But it didn't matter how unhealthy that work ethic was because I was going to be FAMOUS some day and be seen with the elite. Or at least that's what I was told.

So my head grew.

And grew. And grew.

And grew.

I believed the hype and did all that I could to live it.

You see, I'm a product of my society. I'm a Bachelor's Degree graduate with \$70k in debt from a Christian University that did anything but spark my interest in God, it actually pushed me farther away. Little did I know that the darkness inside of me at the time didn't like the Light inside of the students. Funny how that happens. So, after graduating, I had quite a bad taste in my mouth.

But, I kept talking the talk. I wrote two Christian books my senior year, but didn't have the nerve to promote them like I should have since I didn't even believe what was coming out of my mouth. I went on to run a clothing line and recording studio with some friends, which I left after a few years. I worked on some other entrepreneurial projects after that, but the hard work that I was putting into them was not lining up with the success (or lack thereof). Everything that I touched began to fail. I was "good" though. Or at least that's what I told myself.

In reality, I had no direction for where to go from there. I remember sitting in my car outside of Starbucks talking to my buddy Geoff about it. I had never felt so lost in my life. If you know me, you know I always

have a plan. But this time I didn't. I was at the bottom. Broken and lost. I had spent the last several years focusing on myself and trying to become the best person I could be. But, to tell you the truth, I'm weak when I try to live life on my own. From the outside, everything looked great but the inside was a whole different story. Even though I thought I was "the man", I was still lacking something. My pride was fully intact, but my heart desired more.

I started to contemplate what all of this was about. I grew up considering myself a Christian, but I had no idea what that truly meant. I hadn't been following God's call at all. I still believed in Him, I just wasn't pursuing Him. I hadn't been to church in over a year for the simple fact that I couldn't stand the majority of Christians that I met because I didn't trust them. They all seemed so fake. So I sat there thinking...

Is life really all about going to college, getting a job, getting married, having kids, buying new things, and then (hopefully) one day retiring so I can enjoy life?

Really? That's it?

That all seemed so shallow to me.

Then let's look at religion. Every religion outside of Christianity takes their faith so seriously, it's insane. And then there's us. Where only 30% of Christians even read the Bible and the fact that a ton of "Christian" ideals are pretty skewed from the Bible itself. I was fed up.

So I read the Bible. Front to back. In 90 days.

I was blown away by how different the Bible actually is, compared to how it's presented in America. But that's what makes us Christians, right? The fact that we believe and follow Jesus?

Nothing was lining up. I was confused.

So I went on my own "Search for Meaning" journey. I quit my job and moved to a little beach town on the Sunshine Coast of Australia for 9 months to study the Bible for twelve hours a day. That's a pretty big leap if you ask me. And at 27 years old it may not have been the wisest of decisions, but I wouldn't have changed it for anything.

My whole reason for this journey was to build a firm foundation in my faith. One that could not be crumbled by society. And that's exactly what I got. Plus more.

And that's what my hope is for you. That you are able to build a firm foundation in your faith over the next year. Especially in a time when understanding the Word is one of the most important things that you can do.

It doesn't matter what you have done in the past. What matters is now.

## **YOUR SEARCH FOR MEANING**

God loves you SO much and is SO delighted that you want to spend time getting to know Him through Scripture.

With all of that said, what are you hoping to get out of this study?

The Bible Study is a year-long journey through the Word of God. All

## THE LAYOUT

you need is this workbook and a Bible. The content is suitable for any believer, no matter what age or depth of your relationship with Jesus you have, it's for you.

Every week you will be studying 1-3 books of the Bible, depending on their size. Don't worry, I spaced them out so that it's manageable.

### **Weekly Rundown:**

At the beginning of the week, you will read the first page from the workbook in order to get the basics of what you're about to dive into.

During the week, you will read the selected book(s) for that week at your own pace, ranging anywhere from 1-4 hours of reading time. Then you will spend roughly an hour answering the questions from this workbook, digging a little deeper into the text and learning how to apply the books to your life.

That's it! That's all I got for you. Enjoy your first book!

Z

P.S. Just like you, I want to know truth so I spend a lot of my time soaking in the Word of God and researching views of scholarly believers around the world. I love studying, really. It brings me to life. With that said, this study is a collaboration of material that I have gathered over the last few years and translated into modern-day terms to help better your understanding of the text (and mine). I am by no means an expert or a scholar. I just love helping people further their faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

STUDY PLAN

# ONE YEAR

STUDY PLAN

Week 1: Introduction	Week 27: Nehemiah
Week 2: Genesis	Week 28: Esther
Week 3: Exodus	Week 29: Haggai
Week 4: Leviticus	Week 30: Zechariah
Week 5: Numbers	Week 31: Malachi
Week 6: Deuteronomy	Week 32: BREAK
Week 7: Joshua	Week 33: NT Overview + Matthew
Week 8: Judges	Week 34: Mark
Week 9: Ruth	Week 35: Luke
Week 10: Samuel	Week 36: John
Week 11: Kings	Week 37: Acts
Week 12: Chronicles	Week 38: Romans
Week 13: Job	Week 39: Corinthians
Week 14: Psalms + Proverbs	Week 40: Galatians
Week 15: Ecclesiastes	Week 41: Ephesians
Week 16: Song of Solomon	Week 42: Philippians
Week 17: Joel + Obadiah	Week 43: Colossians
Week 18: Jonah	Week 44: Thessalonians
Week 19: Hosea + Amos	Week 45: Timothy + Titus
Week 20: Isaiah + Micah	Week 46: Philemon
Week 21: Nahum + Zephaniah	Week 47: Hebrews
Week 22: Jeremiah + Lamentations	Week 48: James
Week 23: Habakkuk	Week 49: 1 Peter
Week 24: Ezekiel	Week 50: 2 Peter + Jude
Week 25: Daniel	Week 51: Letters of John
Week 26: Ezra	Week 52: Revelation + Conclusion

# OLD testament

G E N E S I S — M A L A C H I

EIGHT MONTHS

39 BOOKS

25 AUTHORS

CREATION—400BC



## TORAH

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

## HISTORICAL

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

1 Samuel

2 Samuel

1 Kings

2 Kings

1 Chronicles

2 Chronicles

Ezra

Nehemiah

Esther

## PROPHETIC

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Lamentations

Ezekiel

Daniel

Hosea

Joel

Amos

Obadiah

Jonah

Micah

Nahum

Habakkuk

Zephaniah

Haggai

Zechariah

Malachi

## WISDOM

Job

Psalms

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Song of Songs

## THE TORAH BOOK ONE OF FIVE

### AUTHOR

The author of Genesis and the Torah (the first five books of the Bible) as a whole were written by Moses.

### DATE

We know that Genesis was written sometime between the Exodus out of Egypt in 1446 BC and the conquest into the Promised Land in 1406 BC. 1 Kings 6:1 gives us great insight into those dates by saying that the time was 480 years after the exodus, which we know Solomon reigned in 970 BC and it was the 4th year of his reign, making it 1446 BC.

### AUDIENCE

Genesis was written to God's chosen people, the Israelites. They were in slavery for 400 years so their entire history had been wiped out and they were force-fed Egyptian history instead.

### REASON

Moses teaches them their heritage and redirects their view of who God really is.

### THEME

Creation, the Flood, the Patriarchs, and God's plan of redemption.

### KEY VERSE

"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (12:2-3 NIV)

### SECTIONS

Creation (Ch 1-2), The Fall (Ch 3-5), The Flood (Ch 6-10), Abraham (Ch 11-20), Isaac (Ch 21-26), Jacob (Ch 27-36), Joseph (Ch 37-50)

### KEY WORDS

Covenant, Bless, Sin, God Said

## THE BOOK

Genesis is the starting point for all of humanity. This book is required reading material for understanding the rest of the Bible. It introduces characters and topics that depict our entire history.

Genesis is the first part to a five-part section of the Bible called the Pentateuch (Greek for five books) or Torah (meaning “instructions”). The Torah is the basis for all of Judaism and is many times considered to be “the Law” in the New Testament. The Law was their go-to guide...their life manual.

The book of Genesis starts off at the very beginning. Before the stars, sea, and human race. But, in the beginning, God was present. He was there and His Spirit was hovering over the waters.

The Hebrew word for God that is used in verse one is “Elohim”, the plural version of “Eloah”, meaning that there is more than one present. So God is already made up of multiple parts in the first sentence. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were there before anything ever happened.

Then, God began to speak things into existence. Bringing order into chaos. Speaking life.

What did God create/do each day? (Gen 1:1-2:3)

**DAY ONE:**

**DAY TWO:**

**DAY THREE:**

**DAY FOUR:**

**DAY FIVE:**

**DAY SIX:**

**DAY SEVEN:**

Why do you think God created all of this in the first place?

Moses states that man was made in God's image. What do you think that means?

God saw that everything He had created was good, but when He created Man He said that it was "very good". God gave Adam dominion over the earth and all that was in it. That doesn't mean we are allowed to purposefully destroy what God created as good, but it does mean that humans are more important than the earth and animals.

**Why do you think that God rested on the seventh day?**

Whereas Chapter 1 uses the name “Elohim” for God, there is a shift in 2:4 where His name becomes “YHWH Elohim” or “Lord God” in English. Lord God is the covenant name of God, showing that He is personal and has a relationship with the people He created.

God could tell that Adam was getting bored being all by himself, so He allowed Adam to name all of the animals (Gen 2:20). In Jewish tradition, a name is much more than a name as we see it today. They believe that a name transforms a person's identity, which is why so many names in the Old Testament describe the character of the person. So when Adam was asked to name the animals, the focus wasn't just on what they would be called, but on what they would become.

**What does your name mean? If you don't know, look it up online. Is it an accurate description of your life?**

YHWH Elohim, the relational God, wanted to create alongside His creation, Adam, and the cool thing is that He still desires to today. God has the answer to every problem in your life. He knows how to make your business succeed, He knows how relationships work best, and He knows how you should evangelize to your long-lost friends. All He wants is for you to dream with Him and create things together as a team.

**In what areas of your life could you be creative with God?**

**GOD  
NEVER**

**BREAKS  
HIS  
PROMISE**

According to the Word, everything up until this point in time was GOOD. It was like heaven on earth and there was no sickness or death. God was in their midst and in relation with Adam and Eve.

Enter: The Fall. Satan deceived Adam and Eve so that they relied on his word instead of the Word of the Father. If they would have realized their identity or obeyed God and walked in truth away from Satan's lie, everything would still be good.

**What do we learn about Satan in Genesis 3?**

**What curses towards women came out of the Fall?  
Towards men? (Gen 3:15-19)**

In order to cover the shame of Adam and Eve, blood was shed on their behalf and God clothed them with animal skin.

**How does that compare to Jesus' shed blood in the New Testament?**

Then comes the classic Sunday School story of Noah's Ark. One thing that confused me before studying the Word was that I couldn't believe every single animal fit into the Ark. There was no way. But in reality, Noah brought in every kind (species) of animal, not every animal. As long as one of them carried the proper gene pool, various breeds could be created.



The covenant that God makes with Noah is called a Promissory Covenant. It's one-sided. God makes a promise and only God can break it, while man just receives it.

**What was the sign or symbol of the Noahic Covenant? What did God promise?**

Even though all of the wicked men were wiped out in the Flood, sin itself was still present. As we see, one of the first things that Noah does is get drunk and take his clothes off.

**Why do you think God chose not to wipe out sin completely and just start over?**

Now that there was a fresh slate, God focused His attention on a man named Abram.

**What was God's reason for choosing Abram?**

(Gen 12:1-3)

Abram had to live from a place of great faith. Remember, he didn't have Scripture or fellowship or even other testimonies. He was it. The first. Being that he was the "firstborn" in this new line of Israel, he received the greatest blessing of all because, in ancient times, the firstborn always received their Father's inheritance.

**What do you think Abram's reason for following God was?**

The covenant that God makes with Abram is another Promissory Covenant, similar to the one with Noah. Covenants weren't just verbal. They were an event. To "cut" a Promissory Covenant meant that you began by cutting an animal in half and laying the two sides out facing each other. Both parties would then walk in between the animals doing a figure-8. They would cut their hand with a dirty rock and shake on it, making it a blood covenant and leaving a scar of remembrance. Each of the participants would have a group of family and friends on opposite sides as witnesses to what was being done. It would conclude with a major celebration between the two groups as they were now one "family".

When God made this covenant with Abram, God knew that Abram couldn't fulfill it, but His Son would one day be able to. Therefore, God completed the covenant for us so that we can just receive the free gift and be included in the "family" without having to work for it.

What are your thoughts on this whole process? Kind of strange, right?

In chapters 16 and 21 we learn about the births of Isaac and Ishmael. Both born of different women and the birth of Ishmael went against the promise of God that He would provide a child through Sarah in her old age. Since Abraham was still the father, God promised to bless Ishmael and provide his descendants with many nations. That's how God works. He is faithful in His promises even when His children mess up. In modern day, Ishmael is the father of the Arab nations.

**What do you observe in the news regarding Arab nations and Israel today?**

God promised Abraham that his son was going to be great, but now God is telling Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. Think of how that would mess with Abraham's head! And think of how that would mess with Isaac's head! Isaac wasn't a little boy like he is portrayed in so many instances. He was actually a grown man in his 30's. Not only did Abraham have to have great faith, but Isaac had to have even more.

**Why were Abraham and Isaac willing to follow through with God's request?** (Gen 22:5)

The story of Jacob and Esau shows us brotherly rivalry and how serious they considered inheritances to be. Esau chose immediate enjoyment over future blessing.

**Can you think of a time when you settled for immediate enjoyment over future blessings? Why?**

This instance tore their family apart, but Jacob was now the spiritual heir to their father's inheritance. That was a major deal considering that the promise God had given Abraham was being passed down through Isaac.

Jacob ran away towards the city of Haran in fear for his safety. On the way, he had a dream of a ladder coming down from heaven with angels ascending and descending upon it. That is an amazing image because it shows us the ongoing relationship that we can have with God now that we are the "house of God", according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:16. Jacob says, "How awesome is this place! It is none other than the house of God, the very gateway to heaven!" (28:17 NLT).

**How does this affect your view of the relationship you have with God?**

Jacob ends up having 12 sons through 4 different women and God chooses to call them the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

**Which sons did each woman have?**

**Leah** (Gen 29:32-35, 30:17-20):

Those twelve sons/tribes will play a major part in the future of God's people throughout the rest of the Bible. Keep an eye out for them.

In Chapter 32, Jacob "wrestles with God" the night before he meets up with Esau, and the angel (some believe that it was Jesus whom Jacob wrestled with) changed his name to Israel, meaning "he strives with God". Jacob now had a new identity and purpose for his life. God was going to use his descendants in amazing ways.

**Zilpah** (Gen 30:10-13):

Jacob's son Joseph plays a very important part in the story of Israel because his story shows how all twelve tribes ended up in Egypt and were blessed.

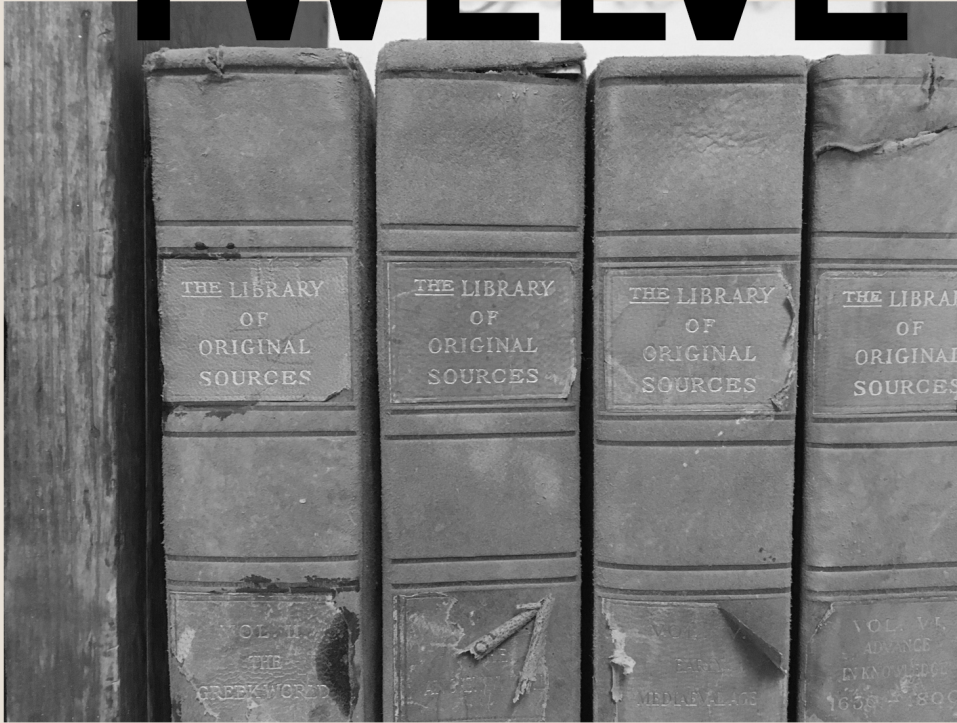
**Rachel** (Gen 30:22-24, 35:16-18):

**Why do you think Potiphar put Joseph in the royal prison with Pharaoh's people instead of the normal prison?** (Gen 39)

**Bilhah** (Gen 30:5-7):

THE

TWELVE



TRIBES

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OF

ISRAEL

After the first dream was interpreted by Joseph, Pharaoh recognized God's hand on Joseph's life; Pharaoh himself was known as a god in the eyes of the Egyptians. This is one of the many times that God gives wisdom to His people. Pharaoh was so blown away that he basically made Joseph the Prime Minister of the world, which was unheard of for a non-Egyptian to get close to that position.

When Joseph's brothers show up, he makes sure that they have had a change of heart before giving them anything. They didn't deserve to be blessed by Joseph either way, but Joseph had a divine perspective and knew that everything happened the way it did so that his family would be protected from the famine.

**What has God done in your life that you didn't realize was for a greater purpose until later?**

Israel doesn't know what to think of all of this so God has to speak to him in a dream at night, calling him by his old name/nature, Jacob. That was enough to do the trick. They were up and moving now. Egypt was on the horizon and their future was looking bright.

Once the group of 70 Israelites were situated in Egypt, the government took very good care of them. It was time for Jacob to bless his grandchildren before passing away.

**Why did Judah receive the top blessing?** (Hint: Matt 1:3-16)

Though Jacob wasn't Egyptian royalty, Pharaoh still chose to honor him and all of Egypt mourned on Jacob's behalf. It was a somber day in the land since the Egyptian people loved the Israelites.

At this point, Moses chose to pick up the story 400-years later with the book of Exodus.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

In each story within Genesis you see God being a God of second chances. A God who takes people who have messed up and ultimately uses their life for good.

I used to be a firm believer in the statement “everything happens for a reason”. I’m not anymore.

But I do believe that God can and will use everything for a reason. Good or bad...as long as you let Him.

The fact that God gives us the ability to choose to love Him also allows for evil to step in and distort our lives. The devil is very real and very interested in pulling you away from God in any way that he can. But the good news is that God wins in the end. Nothing can overpower Him so He can use everything that happens to you for His glory.

He didn't put you through your partying phase and pill addiction.  
He didn't put you through the pain of your divorce.

What He can do though is flip that experience and use it in remarkable ways. God is a GOOD God. A GOOD Father. He's so talented, He can take any sort of junk, and mold it into something beautiful.

So, no matter what you've done in the past, God is a God of second chances. You are never too far away from Him to let Him work into your life and change things for the better. He loves you and truly does care about you.

**How can you apply these truths to your life?**

## THE TORAH BOOK TWO OF FIVE

### AUTHOR

Before the Greeks changed the Hebrew Bible, the first five books were all one book, written by Moses, called the Torah.

### DATE

Moses wrote the book of Exodus sometime during the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness of Sinai in-between their exodus out of Egypt in 1446 BC and the conquest into the Promised Land in 1406 BC.

### AUDIENCE

Exodus was written to God's chosen people, the Israelites who were beginning to form a nation after being enslaved for 400 years. They had no sense of identity at this point and their mindset was more or less Egyptian by influence.

### REASON

Moses wrote this book to create a historical record of their escape from Egypt and the giving of the Law.

### THEME

Deliverance from slavery and the creation of a nation.

### KEY VERSE

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me." (20:2-3 ESV)

### SECTIONS

The Early Life of Moses (Ch 1-4), The Plagues and Exodus (Ch 5-15), The Red Sea and the Giving of the Law (Ch 16-24), The Tabernacle (Ch 25-40)

### KEY WORDS

Slaves, Deliver, Covenant, Law, Tabernacle, Holy



# THE BOOK

The first half of Exodus is all about God setting the Israelites free from slavery, while the second half is all about how they were to live now that they were free. There is a direct correlation to the New Testament here. God sets us free from our sin and then gives us direction on how to live by properly serving Him.

Genesis ended with a group of 70 people from the line of Jacob going into Egypt to be saved from a worldwide famine. Exodus picks up 400 years later, and we see what was originally great for them turned into something terrible...slavery. A new Pharaoh entered the scene after Joseph died and he didn't agree with the blessing of the Hebrews. He wasn't dealing with a group of 70 anymore either. The Hebrews were multiplying. By the time of their release, they had grown into a group of 600,000 men with women and children, estimating to be about 2.5 million people total. That seems like a massive multiplication when you first look at it, but we must remember that a lot can happen over 400 years.

**Why do you think God allowed them to be enslaved for so long?**

Chapters 2 and 3 cover a broad span of Moses's life. Eighty years actually. It goes from his birth and being raised by the queen of Egypt to his fleeing into the wilderness and becoming a shepherd for 40 years.

**How did Moses's upbringing have a positive impact on the Israelites?**

**What leadership traits did Moses acquire during his time in the wilderness as a shepherd?**

In all of history, God rarely seems to call the qualified, but He always qualifies the called. Moses was a runaway from the Royal Court and had begun to build a new life as a shepherd in Midian (modern day Saudi Arabia). He no longer had ties with the Israelites so when God tells Moses His plans, he immediately puts up a defense about why he isn't the right one for the job.

**What excuses did Moses give to God?** (Ex 3:11; 4:1,10,13)

**Has God ever called you to fulfill a task that you weren't qualified for? What happened?**

It's interesting to see that Moses spent 40 years in the same wilderness where he would later spend 40 more years. God had prepared him for the task of leading the people in a way that he would have never expected.

**Looking back, how did God prepare you for what He has currently called you to do?** Whether that's ministry, being a mother, your job, discipleship, etc.

Not only did God prepare Moses and Aaron with signs and wonders to prove the power of their God, but He called them both to obedience by telling them to approach Pharaoh. Instead of being amazed at the wonders of God, Pharaoh hardened his heart and ended up increasing the workload of the Hebrews on top of not letting them go. Pharaoh had a group of magicians that could call on dark

powers and do many of the same things that the God of the Hebrews was doing. We must remember that as our world gets darker...not all signs and wonders are from above. We should be praying for increased discernment every day.

Moses and Aaron spent some time going back and forth with Pharaoh and his magicians performing different signs accompanied with the command of letting God's people go. The Egyptian culture was polytheistic, which meant that they had a god for everything and they would worship that god in order to have an increase in their blessing.

Our God is so creative in His mockery. In each one of the plagues that He placed on Pharaoh and the Egyptians, it was an attack upon one of their gods. It was as if He was saying, "I am God the Almighty. See, I have power over every one of your gods."

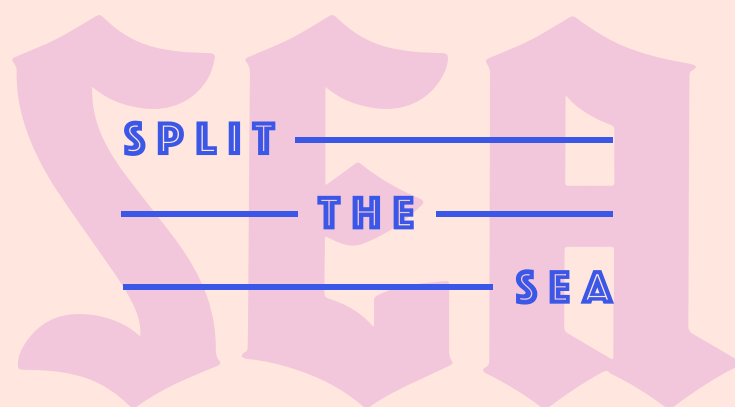
Pharaoh's heart was hardened after each of the ten plagues. The first seven times, he chose to harden it himself, while God hardened it for him the final three. That's because God allows us to choose our own destiny and may even help us get there.

During the final plague, the death of the firstborn, God commands the Hebrews to sacrifice a lamb and spread the blood over their doorposts. As God gave the angel of death free reign over the firstborns, he was commanded to pass over the houses that were covered by the blood.

**How is Jesus our Passover Lamb?** (1 Cor 5:7b)

THE LORD

EXODUS 14



AND THEY  
PASSED OVER ON  
DRY GROUND





**If Passover is an image of Jesus's crucifixion, what could the Red Sea crossing represent?**

As the Israelites were wandering through the wilderness trying to get to the Promised Land, God fed them with manna (or bread from Heaven) and quenched their thirst with the outpouring of water from two different rocks. Just as Jesus is our Bread of Life and Living Water, God sustained them the same way back then.

God always knew exactly what the Israelites needed in order to live a whole and holy life, in which He was willing to provide whatever it took. Yet, it was their responsibility to accept it. The same is true for us today. We are responsible to accept God's direction and correction so that we are blessed with an abundant life.

In many instances of my life I thought that I knew what was best for me, but it turned out that God had a completely different plan. I feel like that becomes more and more common as people grow in their faith.

**Has God ever flipped your life plans upside-down even though you thought that you were doing things right? What happened?**

One way that God tried to help the Israelites follow His plan to become more holy was to give them the Ten Commandments and, later on, the Law. Before Christ, the only way that you could be counted as holy and blameless in front of God was by following the Law to the letter "T". There was zero room for error. God knew what was best for them, so in reality, the Law was a way of protecting them.

Based on what Jesus said about the Ten Commandments in Matthew 5, how can you look at each of them through the lens of the New Testament? (Hint: Some can remain the same)

**Do not have other gods before Me:**

**Do not make idols:**

**Do not take the Lord's name in vain:**

**Honor the Sabbath:**

**Honor your father and mother:**

**Do not murder:**

**Do not commit adultery:**

**Do not steal:**

**Do not bear false witness:**

**Do not covet:**



Jesus sums up the Ten Commandments as a whole when he said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Luke 10:27 NIV).

After receiving the Ten Commandments, God provided Moses with instructions on how to build the Tabernacle so that He could dwell among them. The instructions were extremely precise because it is impossible for pure holiness and sin to dwell among each other. Therefore, the priests and the Tabernacle were held to God's standard and nothing less.

Once the Tabernacle was erected, God's glory filled it. From that moment, the pillars of cloud and fire were with God's people as they wandered through the wilderness for 40 years. God was finally dwelling among His people just as He had originally intended with Adam and Eve.

Today, God's Presence no longer resides in one place. As much as that may sound like a bummer, that's actually one of the biggest blessings that we have. Because of the New Covenant, the New Testament states that we are now the temple of God, seven different times (1 Cor 3:9-17, 1 Cor 6:19, 2 Cor 6:16, Eph 2:20-21, Heb 3:6, 1 Peter 2:5, 1 Peter 4:17). That means the Lord's Presence is now inside all of us instead of stagnant in one location. It is wherever we are.

Look at the diagram of the Tabernacle on the next page.

**How do you think that the pieces of the Tabernacle might compare in relation to parts of your body?** (ie. outer court - skin/body)

**The Holy of Holies** – Where the Ark of the Covenant resided and only a sinless priest was allowed to enter once a year:

**The Holy Place** – Where the Table of Showbread and Incense were located and where the priests prepared themselves to enter the Holy of Holies:

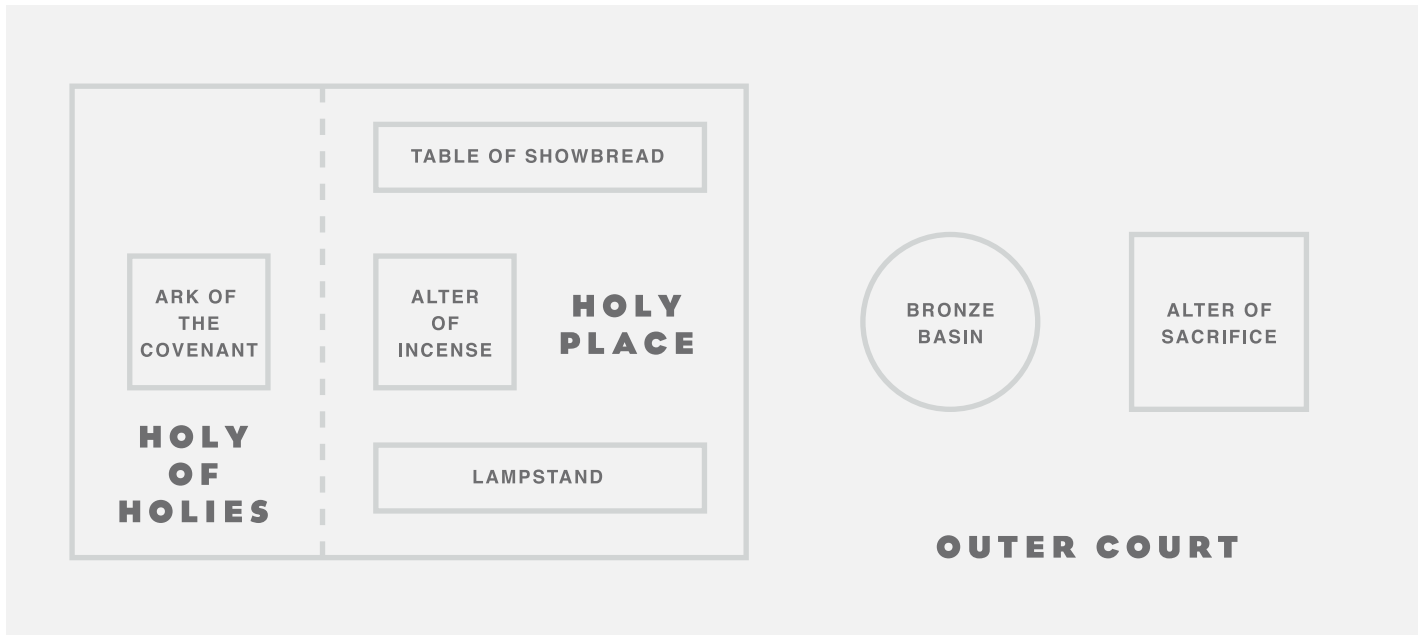
**The Inner Court** – Where sacrifices were offered and people acted intentionally:

**The Outer Court** – Where anyone and everyone could be:

After knowing the standard that God held the Tabernacle to before He was able to dwell amongst them, it should really make us think about the way we treat our bodies. In my opinion, believers should be pioneers in the health and fitness industries.

**What are your thoughts on all of this?**

# TABERNACLE LAYOUT



## FINAL THOUGHTS

The book of Exodus is crucial for understanding the history that we have acquired through our adoption into God's Holy Nation. Also, every part of the story can be applied to our faith journey today, which is pretty cool to try and figure out.

**How can the teachings of Exodus be applied to your current walk with the Lord?**

## THE TORAH

### BOOK THREE OF FIVE

#### AUTHOR

As noted in the previous two books, the author of Leviticus, along with the rest of the Torah, is Moses.

#### DATE

We know that the Law was given to Moses at Mt. Sinai in 1446 BC, but there is a possibility that it wasn't written down until just before his death 40 years later.

#### AUDIENCE

Leviticus was written to the Levites, but was used among all of the Israelites afterwards. They had just been set free from Egyptian bondage when all of these laws were introduced.

#### REASON

Moses had to provide the Levites with a handbook about God's view on holiness and the standards that they needed to live up to.

#### THEME

Holiness and purification.

#### KEY VERSE

"You must be holy because I, the Lord, am holy. I have set you apart from all other people to be my very own." (20:26 NLT)

#### SECTIONS

Approaching Holiness (Ch 1-10), Becoming Holy (Ch 11-27)

#### KEY WORDS

Law, Offering, Atonement, Holy, Sacrifice



## THE BOOK

**In five words, what were your preconceived thoughts on Leviticus before you read it this week?**

**Did your views change at all after diving into the book? How?**

Most Christians that choose to read the Bible all of the way through tend to skip over Leviticus because it seems to be boring and irrelevant for a New Testament believer today. Many people feel that it is just a bunch of rules and regulations that contradict our understanding of Scripture, now that we are no longer under a legalistic type of faith. So, things MUST be different now. And they are.

The question that we must ask ourselves is: WHY did God give the Israelites all of these rules to follow in the first place? What was the point?

From the beginning of the world it was God's desire to live among His creation. His people. In communion. But His holiness demanded holiness, and once Man fell into their sinful nature they could no longer be counted as holy. Now that the Israelites were out of bondage, God wanted to live among them again, but that required holiness on both sides. Enter: The Law. As long as the priests and Levites lived up to God's standard of holiness, He would live among them in the Ark of the Covenant. Hence, being in communion again.

The key verse that we chose for Leviticus is "You must be holy because I, the Lord, am holy. I have set you apart from all other people to be my very own" (20:26 NLT). The Hebrew word for holy means, "to be set apart". God also looks at holiness as a lifestyle that has to be taken seriously.

**Does your lifestyle reflect holiness? If not, how could it?**

The lifestyle that the Israelites had adopted over the previous 400 years was completely Egyptian and did not represent God at all. In the future, they would take over the Promised Land where the Canaanites were even worse than the Egyptians, so God was giving them a way to remain in His Will instead of falling for the desires of the world. The rules that God was giving them were not to restrict them from enjoying life like so many people would presume. But God was giving them standards to uphold in order to remain healthy mentally and physically and to be protected from outside influence. He was looking out for their best interests even if they didn't realize it.

Not only did God have His mind set on the current situation of the Israelites, but He also gave them the Law for future generations to follow, even after they acquired the Promised Land. The Law was to be their handbook on how to live until the Messiah came. Yet, when the Messiah did come, he completely contradicted the Law and they didn't believe Jesus was actually him.

**What did Jesus have to say about the Law? (Matt 5:17) How did he update it? (Matt 5:21-48)**

The Law is not just the Ten Commandments that we saw while studying Exodus. Leviticus shows us that there are actually 613 rules and regulations for how to live right by God and the Israelites were commanded to follow them all to a "T". Therefore, if you had broken one rule, you had broken them all in God's eyes. Holiness was a way of life that demanded perfection. It was impossible to attain without a Savior.

Observe the punishments in Leviticus that accompany each rule. If you are anything like me, you have broken dozens of them and should be given the death penalty time and time again.

**Does your understanding of the Law now change your view of Jesus? If yes, how?**

One crucial strategy that will help you in studying the rest of the Bible is to have an understanding of the offerings and feasts that God commanded His people to celebrate. As you look at the offerings and feasts below, note what each of them means for us today.

## **THE OFFERINGS**

### **Burnt Offerings:**

Burnt offerings are the most common offerings in Scripture. They are voluntary offerings for the Lord, most commonly used for cleansing and purification. They portray a complete devotion and dedication to life with God.

### **Grain Offering:**

The grain offering is the only offering that doesn't require the shedding of blood. Grain offerings were required in all burnt offerings, but also were used as a solo burnt offering for the poor. It gave them an opportunity to show the Lord how they really felt about Him and to praise Him for provision.

### **Peace Offering:**

Peace offerings were different. They were used for fellowship with God in order to display peace among them and offer thanksgiving for who God is and what He has done. It displayed a true act of worship and admiration for the Lord.

### **Guilt Offering:**

The guilt offering was conducted when an individual attacked or disrespected another person or their property. Amends were made between the two and an extra 1/5 was included on top of the offering. Atonement was given through the shedding of blood and forgiveness between the people.

### **Sin Offering:**

Unlike the four above, this is the first offering that is not voluntary. It is required of every single person. Period. It was done in order to make atonement for sins that were made out of ignorance...unintentional sins. The sin offering gives us a picture of Christ becoming sin for us.

### **What are some ways that you can perform an offering to the Lord?**

## THE SEVEN FEASTS

### 1&2. Passover and Unleavened Bread:

Passover begins the entire festival year on the fourteenth day of the first month, which is April on our calendar. It represents the deliverance from bondage in Egypt, based on the miracles that God performed through Moses. Passover signifies the beginning of new life and promised protection in the future. The term itself meant to be protected or delivered from something. In this case: the angel of death.

The Feast of Passover is fulfilled in the New Testament as we see the believer in Christ being delivered from slavery (aka the bondage of sin). We move from death surrounding us to the presence of God protecting us and offering eternal life. Jesus is our Passover Lamb and our salvation! He protects us from darkness and delivers us from evil. We move from death to eternal life. Dark to light.

### 3. Feast of Firstfruits:

The Feast of Firstfruits takes place on the day after the Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened bread. The purpose of this feast is to thank God for the fertility of the land that he provided to the Israelites.

For the believer, the resurrection of Jesus shows that he is the "firstfruits" of the righteous. His resurrection took place on this very day. It was a new beginning and a new year. In the Western world we call this celebration Easter.

### 4. Feast of Weeks:

The Feast of Weeks is also known as Pentecost or Shavu'ot in Hebrew. It is celebrated as a remembrance of God giving the law to Moses 50 days after the Sabbath, following Passover.

As shown in Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost after Jesus was crucified, the apostles presented them with a whole new way of life. A gospel for everyone. They were being told that they could now enter into a New Covenant with Christ through baptism. Whereas 3,000 people died at the giving of the Law in Exodus, 3,000 people received the Holy Spirit in Acts.

### 5. Day of Atonement:

As we saw in Leviticus, the Day of Atonement is the most holy of days for the Jewish people. It falls on the tenth day of the seventh month (September-October). The Day of Atonement is a day of confession and of wiping the slate clean in order to start over with a new year.

The sacrifice that went along with this day was a representation of the death and resurrection of Jesus. This shows that the God of the Hebrews is a God of second chances and He allows us to wipe our slates clean because of the blood of his Son. He is looking out for us whether we do or do not accept it.

## **6. Feast of Trumpets:**

The Feast of Trumpets is to be celebrated on the first day of the seventh month (September-October). It's a day where trumpets are blown throughout the Land and no work is to be done. There isn't much more to it than that. It's just a feast of rest and worship.

As the other feasts represent something that has already happened in history that benefits us as believers, this one is in the future still. We don't know when or how, but it is still bound to happen. Many people believe that the Feast of Trumpets will be fulfilled through the Rapture.

## **7. Feast of Booths:**

The Feast of Booths was a time of celebration on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (September-October) and lasted seven days, but in reality it is celebrated for eight days. They were to look back at the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness and they were commanded by God to rejoice over the fact that He provided them with a roof over their heads while they didn't know where to go.

This feast points to the fact that one day the Lord will again dwell with His people as He comes to reign over all of the world. It is the only feast that will be celebrated during the 1000-year reign, celebrating how God has worked in our lives.

**As a Christian, do you feel the need to celebrate any of these feasts? Why or why not?**



# FINAL THOUGHTS

The book of Leviticus is dedicated to worship and the holiness of God. There is no book like it in the Bible. As intimidating as Leviticus may seem, the benefits of studying it far outweigh the cost of being “bored” or uncomfortable.

1 Peter 2:9 says, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (ESV).

**After learning about the priesthood in Leviticus, how does that impact your understanding of what Peter says above about you?**

Romans 12:1-2 says, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (ESV).

**After learning about the sacrificial system in Leviticus, what do you think Paul means when he says to present our bodies as a living sacrifice?**

## THE TORAH BOOK FOUR OF FIVE

### AUTHOR

The author of Numbers is Moses.

### DATE

Obviously we know that Numbers was written before Moses died, but we also know that it was written during the end of the Israelites 40 years of wandering, making the date around 1405-1406 BC.

### AUDIENCE

Moses was writing to the second generation Israelites whose parents had passed away during the 40 years of wandering.

### REASON

Moses wrote to document the history of the Israelites's wanderings through the desert in order to show the new generation what not to do once they entered into the Promised Land.

### THEME

Shows what happens when Israel wanders away from God's plan.

### KEY VERSE

"For forty years - one year for each of the forty days you explored the land - you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you." (14:34 NIV)

### SECTIONS

Preparing the Israelites (Ch 1-10), Failing Away from the Plan (Ch 11-14), The Lord's Discipline (Ch 15-36)

### KEY WORDS

Wander, Wilderness, Covenant, Sin, Atonement



## THE BOOK

Numbers is a historical look at the Israelite's journey from Mt. Sinai to Kadesh and up through Moab to the edge of the Promised Land. It's a book of rebellion and disappointment. The wanderings were not a part of God's plan, but He adjusted to their decisions.

This book is called Numbers because it begins and ends with a census, showing us that Israel was a nation of around 2.5 million people. That's a lot of people wandering through the wilderness together so it's no wonder that rebellion spread among them. Remember, there weren't sound systems or megaphones back then so whatever Moses said had to be passed amongst the people verbally.

Wandering in the wilderness for 40 years was a punishment for not seizing the Promised Land when they had the opportunity. God decided to wait for the first generation to die off so that the second generation had the same opportunity for obedience. The Promised Land was God's will for their lives. The Israelites just needed to have faith and desire it.

**What does this story show you about the importance of obedience?**

**Have you ever failed to obey God's plan and, in return, didn't receive your Promised Land...God's best for you? If yes, what happened?**

Moses wasn't even allowed into the Promised Land because of his lack of obedience to God while leading the people. If you remember, he struck a rock for water instead of speaking to it as God commanded. And just like that, Moses wasn't allowed in. If you want to get technical, he did make it into the Promised Land later on as we see in the vision from Matthew 17:1-8.

Moses shares with us how the tribes were called to camp around the Tabernacle during the 40 years. He was extremely strategic in laying out the tribes around the Tabernacle, based on importance and their role, similarly to many military strategies of their day. We learn that the tribe of Judah was placed in the most important spot of them all, right in front of the Tabernacle.

**What role does the tribe of Judah play in the future of Israel?**

Speaking of Jesus, he was also sent to the wilderness for a testing period of 40 days with Satan. Whereas the grumbling and complaining of the Israelites caused them to miss the Promised Land, Jesus's spoken word of Scripture allowed him to prevail against the tests of Satan and to begin his ministry.

**Do you believe Satan and his army still respond to the spoken word of Scripture today? If so, have you ever witnessed anything like this?**

**Write out three promises of God from the Bible that you can hold on to when you begin to complain, so that you don't miss walking in your Promised Land:**

1.

2.

3.

When the Israelites first made it to the edge of the Promised Land, Moses and Aaron sent out twelve spies to see what they were going to be coming up against. The spies knew the promise of God, but when they saw giants among the land, ten of the spies retreated in fear even though the land itself was perfect. On the other hand, two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, saw it as an opportunity and had faith that God would pave the way before them. They held onto the truths that God gave to Israel and believed in a brighter tomorrow.

It didn't matter though. The tribes sided with the ten over the two and, in return, God punished them all for 40 years.

**Describe a time when your faith outweighed the faith of your peers. What was the end result?**

When the Israelites finally mustered up enough courage to take over the Promised Land and were standing on the shores of the Jordan River, they were met with resistance from the Moabites and Ammonites who didn't want them to come into their land. So they called on the prophet Balaam to come and curse the Israelites. Every time that he tried to curse them, a blessing came out of his mouth instead. After many failed attempts, God gave Balaam's donkey a word of wisdom and the donkey spoke it to Balaam...knocking some sense into him.

**Has God ever used a strange circumstance to share His thoughts with you? What happened?**

The downside of all of this is that Balaam did find a way to defeat the Israelites and it was through the use of Canaanite women. Seduction plays a major role in the downfall of men in the Old Testament and still holds true to this day.

From there, Moses and Eleazar were called to perform another census and introduce more laws to the nation of Israel before the conquest of the Promised Land. God was going to do whatever He could to make sure they were prepared for their great inheritance. But, as you'll soon see, the temptation was too strong...

# FINAL THOUGHTS

We see two distinctly different generations represented in the book of Numbers. The first generation was a group of slaves that were born and raised under the Egyptian culture. So to be free all of a sudden was quite a change of pace for them. Yet, they remained stuck in their ways. They didn't believe that God was looking out for them because all they really knew were pagan rituals.

The second generation was completely opposite. Even though they made mistakes and weren't perfect at all (as none of us are), they still trusted in God's plan and were about to experience the blessings that they grew up hearing about.

One thing that you have to also remember is that the second generation was most likely all children during the time of the plagues in Egypt, Moses splitting the Red Sea, manna falling down from the sky, etc. Miracles were a way of life for them, not an oddity. Because of this, they were the literal definition of having "childlike faith".

**Looking at the two generations represented in Numbers, which one can you most easily associate with? Being stuck in ritualistic ways? Or having faith for God to move miraculously in your life?**

**What are some changes that you can make in your life to become more like the second generation?**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

0 1 2  
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## THE TORAH BOOK FIVE OF FIVE

### AUTHOR

Deuteronomy is the fifth and final book written by Moses. You'll notice that the final chapter deals with the death of Moses, which was most likely added in by Joshua.

### DATE

Deuteronomy was written at the end of the 40 years of wandering right before the Israelites entered into the Promised Land.

### AUDIENCE

Moses was writing to the second generation Israelites that were about to enter into the Promised Land. He also wrote with the intention of future generations reading this book as well.

### REASON

In Greek, Deuteronomy means "second law," which means this is the second giving of the Law in the nation of Israel. Although this time it is given to the second generation of Israelites as a renewal of the covenant with God's people.

### THEME

Covenant renewal with blessings and curses attached.

### KEY VERSE

"He said to them, 'Take to heart all of the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all of the words of this law. For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.'"  
(32:46-47 ESV)

### SECTIONS

History of Wanderings (Ch 1-4), Review of the Law (Ch 5-26), Curses and Blessings Attached (Ch 27-30), Farewell of Moses (Ch 31-34)

### KEY WORDS

Covenant, Observe, Blessing, Curse

## THE BOOK

Many people become confused when they read Deuteronomy for the first time because they don't understand why there is another book in the Torah that dictates the Law. Didn't we just go through the Law when studying Leviticus?! Yes, we did just go over everything, but the audience is different now. The Law was originally given to the first generation Israelites that had escaped Egypt. God was so disappointed in their lack of faith that He decided that none of them were going to see the Promised Land. Enter: Their children. This was now a new group of faces that represented Israel and God was giving the nation a fresh start. Before entering into the Promised Land, God let them know that they were now going to be held accountable to the covenant. Hence the reason for us hearing about the Law a second time.

Instead of the Promised Land being an untouched paradise like so many people tend to view it as, the Israelites were looking across the Jordan into a land that was definitely flourishing, BUT it was full of people who were very different from them.

**God told Abraham that something had to happen in the Promised Land before His people could take over. What did He tell him? (Gen 15:16)**

The first sermon that Moses preached to the people of God was the story of their parent's time in the wilderness. They could have entered into the Promised Land in less than two weeks, but their grumblings turned it into 40 years. What a waste of time! And in the end, they weren't allowed to enter at all.

Moses wasn't allowed to enter either because of his disobedience. Can you imagine how Moses would have felt after striving toward this promise for so long? The thing that we need to remember is that Moses SAW God on Mt. Sinai and His glory shone upon his face. That's what we strive for every day though many times our desires become selfish.

**What's more important in your life? Achievements?  
Or spending time with God? Why?**

Moses then describes all of the laws that they are to follow once they have conquered the Promised Land. It's nearly an impossible list to follow, but God demands holiness in every area of life otherwise they couldn't be in good terms with Him. Thank God that we are under the New Covenant. And thank God for grace. He still demands holiness in every area of our lives though, not just by going to church on Sunday and being a "good person". Christianity is about full-life transformation.

In which area of your life do you most struggle with holiness? It is God's desire to bring wholeness to that area, no matter what it is. Write out a prayer asking God to intervene and do so with confidence in His promises.

The text says that God takes these rules very seriously because He is a jealous God. Jealousy was always a hard concept for me to understand because I felt like it was a negative trait to have. But I've learned that isn't the case. When I began studying the jealousy of God, my views completely shifted.

**What do you think it means for God to be jealous for His people?**

God wants you to Himself because He knows what is best for us. He always wants to bless us with the best. So, no, it isn't a negative trait in that sense.

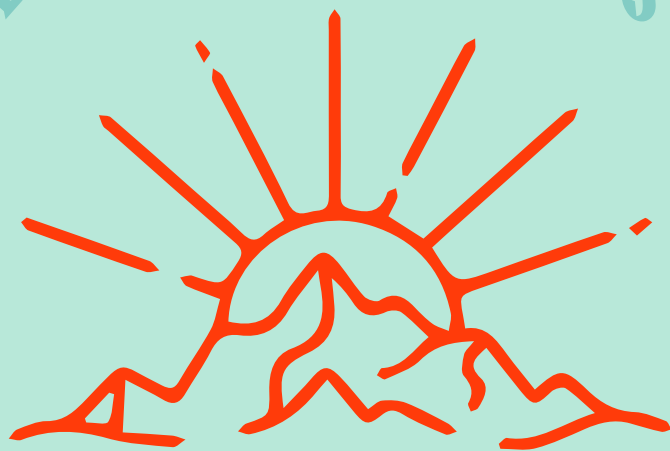
Even though this new generation of Israelites weren't the ones rebelling against God after they were delivered from Egypt, the problems that the rebellion caused were now their responsibility. God didn't care if they were a new group. He takes generations very seriously, which is why He continually reminds them to raise their children to obey the Law.

**Parents: How can you better raise your children by God's Word and principals?**

**Children: How can you improve in respecting your parent's teaching?**



BLESSINGS



OURS

After going over the Law with the Israelites, Moses appointed Joshua to be their new fearless leader. He was going to take charge of the conquest and pick up where Moses left off. The first thing that they were commanded to do was go to Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim to recite the blessings and curses amongst themselves...making them responsible for their actions.

Now it was almost time for them to enter into their inheritance. They just had to wait for Moses to die. **How awkward would that be?! What do you think the vibe was like among the people?**

As we continue to dive into the history of Israel, one thing to remember is that we, as Gentiles, have been grafted into this history so it now becomes our own. Also, God doesn't change (see: Mal 3:6). He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. Yes, there are new stipulations in the covenant, but He still takes holiness just as seriously. God wants the best for us, even if that looks different from what society expects.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

By studying the Torah over the last five weeks we have seen that God's Law has very high standards. With the introduction of the New Covenant, adhering to the standards of the Law is no longer required of us, but obedience to God's Word is. And obedience brings blessing, just as we saw in the book of Deuteronomy.

**How has God blessed you for being obedient to His Word?**

**What other personal applications can you pull out of your study of Deuteronomy?**

## THE HISTORICAL BOOKS ONE OF TWELVE

### AUTHOR

The author of this book is Joshua, Moses's Military General and Assistant. Just as we saw at the end of Deuteronomy, someone else had to have concluded the book by adding in the passage about Joshua's death.

### DATE

Joshua wrote this book right around 1390 BC, just before his death.

### AUDIENCE

The audience of Joshua was the third generation Israelites, whose parents had conquered the Promised Land.

### REASON

The reason that Joshua wrote this book was to have an account of how the Israelites conquered the Promised Land, to record the land allotments, and how to show God's faithfulness to His covenant with them.

### THEME

Possession of the Promised Land.

### KEY VERSE

"So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war." (11:23 ESV)

### SECTIONS

The Conquest (Ch 1-12), Land Allotments (Ch 13-21), Farewell of Joshua (Ch 22-24)

### KEY WORDS

Possession, Inheritance, Land, Covenant

## THE BOOK

The book of Joshua is the first book out of six that are known as the "Historical Books". The first five books of the Law are complete and now it is time to put everything into action throughout the rest of the Old Testament. Israel's obedience ebbs and flows for the rest of their history, but Joshua shows that they begin on a high note after conquering the Promised Land.

Joshua is in charge of the people now, which would have been a major task to follow in the footsteps of Moses. Just as Moses did, Joshua commanded spies to go and check out Jericho. He only sent two instead of twelve because when Moses sent twelve only two came back with the right word. The spies ended up at a prostitute named Rahab's house, who offered them protection because she believed in their God. In return, the spies said that God would protect her from the destruction of her city, Jericho.

**What was Rahab commanded to do in order to be protected from the falling walls?** (Josh 2:18) **How does that compare to the story of Exodus?** (Ex 12:5-7)

As the spies returned to the camped-out Israelites, Joshua makes the call to proceed. That's where God steps-in to show off. Whereas the Israelite's parents crossed through the parted Red Sea after Pharaoh let them go. God parted the Jordan River the moment that the priest's feet touched the water.

**If the story of the Israelites moving from a time of bondage into a time of testing and then into the Promised Land is a representation of our spiritual journey, what do you think that the parting of the Jordan could represent?**

Joshua set up a monument of 12 stones on the other side of the Jordan after the group passed through, as an act of remembrance. Afterwards, all of the men who were not yet circumcised underwent circumcision as a physical representation of their covenant with God.

The first city that the Israelites defeated was Jericho, with the only survivors being Rahab and her family. **In what contexts do we read about Rahab in the New Testament?** (Matt 1:5; Heb 11:31)

The only loss that the Israelites experienced during their conquest of the Promised Land was against the city of Ai. God allows for their defeat because Achan stole “devoted things” (idols and precious metals) on his way out of the city, which went against God’s command. Achan is proof that the disobedience of one man can negatively influence an entire nation. Not only was Achan killed, but his entire family was too, in order to destroy any generational sin.

**Is there any sin in your life that has been passed down from generation to generation that needs to be broken-off? If so, put together a prayer strategy below to defeat it.**

As the Israelites were fighting against the Amorites at Gibeon, Joshua prayed for God to extend the day by making the sun stand still so that they could assure their success. God agreed and allowed the sun to stand still for about an entire day. That’s a classic example of God looking out for His people when they ask. And He does the same sort of things today. Big or small.

**Has God ever helped you win a battle through miraculous intervention? What happened?**

Once the Israelites defeated all of the cities in the Promised Land, Joshua divided the land amongst the twelve tribes. The one tribe that wasn’t going to receive a physical inheritance in the Promised Land were the Levites because God Himself was their portion, which was the most important thing.

**THE PROMISED**

**LAND**

**How would you feel as a Levite, being in the Promised Land, and knowing that you don't have any physical inheritance? Would having God be enough?**

In the last two chapters, Joshua gives a farewell speech, putting the people in charge of passing-on the covenant from generation to generation because he was confident that God was faithful in blessing AND cursing based on their actions.

Joshua's dying words were "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!" (24:15 ESV). Some of you may currently be struggling with relationships in your household. That's ok. You don't have to pretend like everything's perfect now that you are a Christian. One thing I know for certain is that if you stand strong in your faith and approach those relationships from a biblical perspective, God will intervene and work them out because He desires wholeness in all of your relationships. With that said, some of you may need to declare Joshua's final words out loud over your household every day. Try it every morning and evening for two weeks and see what happens!



# FINAL THOUGHTS

The book of Joshua is a story of how Joshua leads God's people into possession of the Promised Land, which is the inheritance they received by being from the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Joshua foreshadows Jesus, and the story, as a whole, foreshadows our spiritual journey.

In comparison, many believers spend their lives wandering through the wilderness, remaining in their old ways and never being allowed to experience their Promised Land (The Promised Land being a place of victory over Satan and provision from the Lord).

On the other hand, there is a small group of believers that get to the Promised Land right away and are able to experience all that God has for them.

**Which one do you associate with? How can you experience the Promised Land today and live under the inheritance that God wants to bless you with?**

## THE HISTORICAL BOOKS TWO OF TWELVE

### AUTHOR

The author of Judges is unknown, but most believe that the likely candidate is the prophet Samuel.

### DATE

Since the book of Judges is used as a defense for soon-to-be-king David, Samuel would have written between David's anointing in 1025 BC and before he captured Jerusalem in 1004 BC. I choose to favor a date closer to the latter.

### AUDIENCE

Samuel wrote to the Israelites whose ancestors continuously rebelled against God.

### REASON

The book of Judges was written as a defense for King David and as a record of Israel's "sin cycles" under their appointed judges.

### THEME

Israel's disobedience and the need to be saved.

### KEY VERSE

"In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (21:25 ESV)

### SECTIONS

The Reason for Falling Away (Ch 1:1-3:6), The Twelve Judges (Ch 3:7-16:31), The Outcome (Ch 17-21)

### KEY WORDS

Sin, Repent, Judge, Faithfulness

# THE BOOK

Before entering the Promised Land, the nation of Israel had one major leader, Moses. The conquest itself was led by one man, Joshua. Now that the Israelites were so spread-out among the Promised Land with specific parameters for each tribe of Israel, they needed to modify the leadership in some way.

Enter: The Judges.

A judge was a deliverer of the people. A hero. A savior. Judges were sent by God as soon as the people cried out for help and their job was to flip the cultures back to normal (for at least a short amount of time).

But lo and behold, the people ended up falling back into their sinful ways and “did what was right in their own eyes” instead of what was right in God’s eyes.

**What caused Israel to continue falling back into their sinful ways?** (Judges 2:10, 12)

The faithfulness of God is ever-present in this book because every time they fell away, He would come to their rescue by sending a deliverer. Samuel shows us the cycle of sin that the Israelites were stuck in. They would fall away, cry out to God, He would provide a deliverer, things would get better, then they would fall right back into it. Twelve. Times.

I see that all the time today with people sinning, crying out to God, He delivers them, and then they fall right back into it instead of remaining free. We are new creations and have been set free from sin’s power. I believe one of the most important topics that a large portion of the Church fails to teach on today is IDENTITY. If you understand your new identity in Christ, it will become much harder to continue falling back into the same sin cycle like the Israelites did.

**What sin cycle do you keep falling back into? What truths or promises from God's Word can you start speaking over your life in order to remain free?**

The judges that God sent for the people varied in importance and effect. We know a lot about some of them and nothing about others.

**The names of the judges were:**

Othniel  
Ehud  
Shamgar  
Deborah/Barak  
Gideon  
Tola  
Jair  
Jephthah  
Ibzan  
Elon  
Abdon  
Samson

When God sent a deliverer to the nation, it was usually in a way that caused destruction towards their enemies. Reading these stories, you come to realize that the judges

were far from perfect and also far from godly according to today's standards.

I mean, you see the left-handed Ehud killing the fat king of Moab and getting his sword stuck in his belly. You have Shamgar who killed 600 Philistines with an oxgoad. And then Samson killing 1,000 people with the jawbone of a donkey. Those are wild stories!

**How can you justify a God of love sending someone to slaughter their enemies?**

One of the judges that Samuel spent extra time talking about was a man named Gideon. God reduced Gideon's army from 300,000 to 300 so that Gideon would rely on God for protection and provision.

**Has God ever reduced your resources in order to draw you closer to Him and to depend on Him? What happened?**



The final judge that everybody knows about was a man named Samson. Samson's parents offered him up as a Nazirite before he was born so he wasn't allowed to drink alcohol, shave his head, etc. There were rules attached to his life so that God could use him in mighty ways.

Samson's one downfall: Women.

The most famous relationship that Samson had was with a woman named Delilah. She was a snake. Delilah did everything possible to find out the secret behind Samson's great strength. So many people portray Samson as this big, burly man, but every time he does something out of insane strength, notice how the Spirit of the Lord comes upon him first. It's never his own physical strength, but always of the supernatural. God does that on purpose in order to show that he can use anybody and to boost the faith of those around them.

**Has God ever used you in supernatural ways to fulfill certain tasks even though you were clearly not qualified? How?**

Every time that God sent a judge to the people of Israel, the Holy Spirit played a major role in the delivering process. It was never out of their own strength, the Holy Spirit always stepped in to work through them, and then He left when the job was done.

**How are things different, now that we are under the New Covenant? (Acts 2:38)**

Samuel wraps up the book of Judges with two stories that should definitely NOT be taught in Sunday School. They were included to show how far the sin cycle had spun downwards and how the Levites were even consumed with moral decay.

Story number one is about a man named Micah who hired a Levite to be the priest over his idol collection.

Story number two is about a Levite and his concubine who was brutally raped by an entire city and then cut into twelve pieces to be distributed throughout the land. It's the most disgusting story in the entire Bible.

**What can you take away from this story?**

Notice how the image of women changes throughout the book. The birth of new life in the Promised Land begins with a woman as the judge and the story ends with a brutal rape case. No matter what some modern day pastors say, God loves women just as much as men and places them at very high standards. The book of Judges shows what happens when God is taken out of the picture and Israel's sinful nature takes hold. And it isn't pretty.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

I grew up in a Christian home with loving parents that loved God even more. They were perfect role models and taught me Christian principles in everything that I did. Modern day Christianity at its finest.

Outside of my home life, I was always submerged in pop culture and ended up getting heavily involved in it as a result of my job back then. Pop culture was my life. I loved it all. The problem with that love though was that there were numerous contrasts with my faith life.

So I had to choose.  
And I chose pop culture.

I relate my past to the people in Judges a lot. When they had a strong leader they would do what was right in God's eyes. When that leader died, they would go right back to their old ways.

Back then, it was about morality for them...not a relationship with God. It was the same for me with the things that my parents taught. I had great morals, but the relational aspect was out the window. I didn't have a good understanding of my faith, just like the people of Israel.

We have it so much easier nowadays.  
We have Jesus.  
We have the Holy Spirit living inside of us.

God is always with us now, and He will never leave, which means we never have to fall back into our old ways if we submit to God and His ways. That's something to rejoice over.

**How can you relate your life to the book of Judges?**

## THE HISTORICAL BOOKS THREE OF TWELVE

### AUTHOR

The book Ruth was originally attached to the book of Judges in the Hebrew text and was therefore written by the same person. In the view that we are choosing to take, Samuel is the author of Ruth as well.

### DATE

Just as we saw when studying Judges, Ruth was most likely written between David's anointing in 1025 BC and before he captured Jerusalem in 1004 BC.

### AUDIENCE

Ruth was written to all Israelites after the time of the judges who would be able to look back and see what their ancestors dealt with.

### REASON

Samuel wanted to show the sin of the tribe of Benjamin (King Saul's tribe) at the end of Judges and then go right into the divinely inspired connection with the king of Judah, King David. Ruth is also used to show Gentile acceptance within Israel and it gives us a roadmap on how to work together with the Jewish nation today.

### THEME

Foreshadowing our Kinsman-Redeemer.

### KEY VERSE

"But Ruth said, 'Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge,' Your people shall be my people and your God my God." (1:16 ESV)

### SECTIONS

The Return to Moab (Ch 1), Ruth and Boaz Meet (Ch 2), Ruth's Request (Ch 3), The Kinsman-Redeemer (Ch 4)

### KEY WORDS

Kinsman, Glean, Redemption



# THE BOOK

Ruth is a book of very high importance to the Church. It foreshadows the acceptance of Gentiles within the nation of Israel and is the key that saves them from the time of the judges.

When Naomi's husband and sons died, she was left in the house with her two daughter-in-laws. You see, Naomi wasn't a happy woman at all so, in her bitterness, she told the daughters to go find a new life somewhere else. Opah obeyed. Ruth did not. And Ruth's decision changed the course of humanity.

**Have you ever made one small decision that changed your entire life? What was it?**

Not only did Ruth choose Naomi, but she also chose Naomi's people and Naomi's God (Ruth was a Gentile). From then on, the Lord found favor with Ruth and blessed her abundantly.

There are three laws that you must understand in order to place yourself into this story.

The Law of Gleaning: Stated that you were allowed to harvest your crop one time every day, but then, whatever you missed was to be left for the widows and the poor.

The Law of Redemption: Stated that if you could no longer afford your land, or if the landowner died, your next of kin (aka kinsman-redeemer) had the first right to take it over, but all obligations were included.

The Law of Levirate Marriage: Stated that if a husband dies, his brother has to assume the marriage in order to properly raise up the husband's seed/children.

SHALL BE MY PEOPLE

YOUR PEOPLE  
YOUR PEOPLE  
YOUR PEOPLE  
YOUR PEOPLE  
YOUR PEOPLE  
YOUR PEOPLE  
YOUR PEOPLE  
YOUR PEOPLE  
YOUR PEOPLE

SHALL BE MY PEOPLE

SHALL BE MY GOD

YOUR GOD  
YOUR GOD  
YOUR GOD  
YOUR GOD  
YOUR GOD  
YOUR GOD  
YOUR GOD  
YOUR GOD

SHALL BE MY GOD

At this point Ruth stumbled into the field of Boaz looking for some grain because she was familiar with the Law of Gleaning. This “random” field that she went into ended up changing everything for us.

Boaz was a noble man of high standard and strength. People looked up to him because he knew what he was doing. Boaz was also a very generous man. He gives a double portion for Ruth to glean. And it just so happens that the mother of Boaz was Rahab; the Gentile with a heart for the Jews.

Naomi realizes Boaz is a kinsman so she sees this as a massive opportunity to bless Ruth as well as herself. Being seasoned in Jewish thought, Naomi counsels Ruth on how to draw-in Boaz to herself.

Do you think Naomi knew Boaz's mother was Rahab? That would tremendously increase Ruth's chances of success since she was also a Gentile.

Ruth approaches Boaz while he is asleep on the threshing floor. It was harvest season so landowners would sleep next to their good crop in order to protect it from being stolen. Covering Boaz's feet was a way of hitting on him and letting him know that she was interested. Boaz takes the bait but realizes he needs to get around the Law of Redemption first since his older brother was allowed first priority.

**What do you think was going through Ruth's mind while she was waiting for Boaz to get permission? Did she have faith that God would pull it off?**

The good news for Ruth is that the nearest kinsman passed on the offer, so Boaz could purchase the land which included Ruth as a bride and he would become her kinsman-redeemer.

Samuel wrote this book for one reason and that can be found in verse 4:17, which says, “And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, ‘A son has been born to Naomi.’ They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David” (ESV). That means Boaz is the great-grandfather of King David. Samuel ended the last chapter in the book of Judges on a low note for King Saul since he was from the tribe of Benjamin and on a high note for King David since this story shows his family's character. It's all political. And shortly, we will see how David reigns supreme.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

**The story of Ruth foreshadows the history of God's people in amazing ways:**

Boaz can be seen as the Lord of the Harvest.

Naomi represents Israel.

Ruth is the Gentile Bride.

Now go back through the story looking at it from this new understanding. Everything lines up perfectly. Naomi and Ruth both play a crucial part in the story of redemption. They couldn't do it without each other and in the end, both are blessed for their actions.

**How does this story impact your views on the Jewish people today?**

## THE HISTORICAL BOOKS FOUR & FIVE OF TWELVE

### AUTHOR

The author of the two books of Samuel is anonymous, but experts believe that they were most likely a compilation of stories by Samuel, Nathan, and Gad.

### DATE

The events recorded in these two books ended around 960 BC, making the dating sometime between 960 BC and shortly after the death of Solomon in 931 BC.

### AUDIENCE

The audience was the nation of Israel who lived under the reigns of David and Solomon. Both books would also be read by the the following generations as a historical guide.

### REASON

The author wrote to show the role that God played in the life of a God-fearing king and to inspire future kings to use David as a role model.

### THEME

The building of a godly monarchy.

### KEY VERSES

"And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God, which he commanded you. For then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you." (1 Sam 13:13-14 ESV)

"Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever." (2 Sam 7:16 NIV)

# THE BOOK

## SECTIONS

### I Samuel:

The Final Judge: Samuel (Ch 1-12)

The Rise of Saul and David (Ch 13-31)

### II Samuel:

King David's Successes (Ch 1-10)

King David's Failures (Ch 11-20)

## KEY WORDS

Judge, King, Evil, Sin, Spirit

The books of Samuel cover a period of 150 years of history. That's a lot crammed into a few small books. Originally in the Hebrew Old Testament, they were one big book, but the Greeks split them up in order to make it more manageable. For organizational purposes, we are going to look at them combined.

This time period represents a turning point in the history of Israel's leadership as they transition from the time of judges to kings. Samuel is the final judge/prophet, while Saul becomes the first elected king. We will see how everything went downhill from there, until we get to the model king, King David.

Samuel begins with a barren woman named Hannah who promises God that if she is given a boy, she will dedicate his life to the Lord's work.

**What other barren women did God use in the Old Testament?** (Hint: Genesis)

THIS IS THE DAY THE LORD



WILL DELIVER YOU INTO MY HAND



Samuel was a God-fearing man who took his Torah seriously. He was a prophet that took over as a leader of the people and eventually founded the popular School of Prophets at the time.

**What do you know about prophecy today? What does Paul say we should do regarding the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:1)?**

When the Lord visited Hannah and answered her prayer He didn't do the minimum, in fact, He went above and beyond to make sure that she was taken care of because God loves blessing those that love Him. Sometimes all it takes is to ask for it. I hear a lot of people complain today that God doesn't bless them or their situation, but many times people don't spend time in prayer asking for the blessing. Even though Matthew 7:7 promises: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (ESV).

**What are your thoughts on God blessing His people today (Jewish and Christian alike)?**

In Chapter 4, the Philistines stole the Ark of the Covenant from the Israelites. That's a big no-no. The Philistines didn't fully understand the Ark though because they thought God was now on their side if they owned it. Their understanding was in the physical realm; not the spiritual. Samuel let the Israelites know that they lost against the Philistines because of their sin. Ultimately, he got them to destroy their pagan gods and clean up their act.

Many times throughout the Old Testament we will see that whenever Israel disobeyed God, He would send an enemy against them as a form of punishment.

Once the Israelites repented, God intervened in order for the Ark to make its way back into the hands of Israel. At this point in time, the Israelites began to demand a king that their enemies could actually see. They looked at all of the other nations who were successful with a kingship, and they wanted to be like them. That wasn't God's plan, but He chose to give the people what they wanted.

As a result, the Israelites chose a handsome, macho man.

Saul started off great, but just like with the judges, his time in office ended badly because he wasn't striving after the Father's heart.

Having a king gave them rules and parameters on how to live their life. All people wanted was a checklist to follow so they could perform a certain way and live the rest of their life on their own. A similar mindset has continued on through the ages and many Christians today still desire the same thing. But that ends up erasing the relationship-with-Jesus part of our faith and the need for a transformed life.

**Why do you think people like being told what to do in their faith? How do you think God feels about that?**

Like I said, when Saul became king, he started off great, but eventually fell. The text even says that the Spirit came mightily upon him, meaning that he was walking in the Spirit for the time being and he feared the Lord.

**What does it mean to “fear the Lord”? How do you fear the Lord?**

**What was Saul’s downfall? Could it have been avoided?**

Even though Saul was still king, God directed Samuel to seek out Jesse and anoint one of his sons. Jesse was obviously proud so he showed off his boys to Samuel, leaving out David because he was at the bottom of the totem pole. Samuel didn’t sense the Holy Spirit guiding him to anoint any of them so he asked Jesse if he had any other sons. When David showed up, Samuel knew right away that he was the one. The anointing process took place, and his time of kingship awaited him sometime in the future.

**Since he didn’t know the timing of his kingship, how do you think it affected him? Do you think his family treated him differently?**

David ends up being called to fight against Goliath as the representative for Israel. Obviously this story is one of the most popular Sunday School stories, which makes absolutely no sense. It's brutal! David kills Goliath and cuts his head off. That's a pretty gruesome children's story if you ask me!

But, the story of David and Goliath is a great one for adults to study. It shows how you and I can be successful against the "Goliaths" in our lives with the help of God. All He calls us to do is act in obedience.

**What "Goliaths" are in your life that you need to defeat with a sling and a stone? Write out a prayer asking God to help you take them on just like David did with Goliath.** Then, walk in confidence knowing the same Holy Spirit that empowered David lives in and empowers you too, if you are a child of God.

After killing Goliath, the Israelites praise David for his strength and skill. Jealousy rose within Saul when he heard of their praises and he made it a point to defeat David. Little did he know, that his plan was going to be harder than it sounded.

We really see David's character shine in the next few chapters as he has two different chances to kill Saul in return for the threat upon his life, but chose to let Saul live. Each time David messed with him a little bit though.

In the first instance, David comes across Saul when he is sleeping and clips the edge of his garment off. It's important to understand that back then, the edge of the garment was where your authority was held. It was similar to stripes on a military uniform today. So, first, David is taking away Saul's "authority". In the second instance, David comes across Saul when he is sleeping again. This time he takes Saul's weapon and his water: two things necessary for survival. David hinted that Saul was going to die soon, but he didn't make the move himself.

To close out the first book of Samuel, Saul dies in battle, and his sons are slain as well, in order to kill-off the family bloodline.

We saw quite a bit of David's character come through during the first book, but it's really in the second book where we understand him even better. This is where we learn that David is considered a "man after God's own heart".

**List the top 5 strengths that you admire of David from Second Samuel:**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**What are some practical ways that you can mold your life to be similar to David's?**

**What is the Davidic Covenant that is promised in 2 Samuel 7:8-16?**

**COURAGEOUS**  
**MAN AFTER** **GOD'S OWN**  
**HEART**  
**MERCY**  
**AN OINTED**  
**PRAISE & WORSHIP**  
**HUMBLE**  
**FEARED GOD**  
**GRACE**

The “Great Sin of David” was his affair with Bathsheba, which resulted in the murder of her husband Uriah the Hittite. It’s a terrible story of what lust can make you do when it has a grip on your life.

God sends Nathan as a gift to David after he commits these acts in order to open David’s eyes and rebuke his actions. David knew his sin, acknowledged it, repented, and moved on with his life. That’s all that needed to happen for David to get right with God. God has a lot of grace for repentant sinners.

**What does this story teach you about the character of God? How does that influence the way you view your life?**

**David was forgiven of a great sin. If you repent of your sins, are you confident that you too will be forgiven?**

The second book of Samuel closes out with David purchasing a threshing floor upon which to build a temple for the Lord. He has all of the resources imaginable and wants to bless God, but God told him that He wanted David’s son, Solomon, to be the builder. So he gathered the resources, put together a plan, and sat on it, waiting for the day that Solomon would build this great temple for the Lord.

**How do you think David felt about not being able to build the temple? Did it change his attitude towards God at all?**

# FINAL THOUGHTS

One of my favorite people in history is King David. He was THE man. He was the only man in the Bible that was considered to be “a man after God’s own heart”, which just so happens to be the greatest title you could ever be given. Come on. Give me that.

King David was the “whole package” in God’s eyes.  
He trusted God and had unstoppable faith.  
He was courageous.  
He looked out for other people.  
He knew how to repent of his sins.  
He learned from his mistakes.  
He continually worshipped God throughout the day.

What it means to be a man, has everything to do with God in your life.

The cool thing about studying his life is that David messed up. He wasn’t perfect at all. He messed up so bad that he should have been put to death. But that wasn’t God’s plan for his life. No matter how much you fail, you’re never in too deep for God to use you for His plan.

As much as the Bible isn’t a ten-step program for how to live life, it does give us principles and people to model our lives after. David is one of those people for me.

**Who do you model your life after? Why?**

## THE HISTORICAL BOOKS SIX & SEVEN OF TWELVE

### AUTHOR

The author of the two books of Kings is unknown, but many people attribute the writings to the prophet Jeremiah.

### DATE

Kings was written during the Babylonian Exile, sometime between 560-550 BC.

### AUDIENCE

Jeremiah wrote to the Jews in exile so that they would remember their roots and able to pass their history down to their ancestors.

### REASON

The reason that Jeremiah wrote the book of Kings was to record the history of Israel and Judah and to give them a bird's-eye view of why they were exiled in the first place.

### THEME

Failing to live for God leads to judgement.

### KEY VERSE

"And this occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other other gods and walked in the customs of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs that the kings of Israel had practiced." (2 Kings 17:7-8 ESV)

### SECTIONS

#### I Kings:

Reign of Solomon (Ch 1-11), Division of Kingdom and the Kings that Followed (Ch 12-22)

#### II Kings:

Fall of Israel and Judah (Ch 1-17), Judah into Exile (Ch 18-25)

### KEY WORDS

Did What Was Evil, Did What was Right, Covenant, Sin, Disobedience



## THE BOOK

The two books of Kings present a historical look at the times of the kings and the downfall of the northern and southern kingdoms.

We finished the book of Samuel with a look at the life of King David, the great man that he was. David was the prime example for kingship among the Israelites and was used as the plumb line for what made a great king. We saw that David pulled together resources and plans for how his son Solomon should build the temple of God.

Solomon had everything you could ever imagine. People were astonished by his wealth, wisdom and character, all three of which were given to him by God. Solomon struggled with a few identity issues that resulted in many highs and many lows in his life. Therefore, he made some good decisions and he made some bad ones.

**List 5 things that Solomon is known for:**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

One thing that Solomon did very well was that he united the people towards one focus. As soon as he died, the kingdom split into two groups, the northern and the southern kingdoms. The north, aka "Israel", consisted of ten of the tribes joining forces, while the south, aka "Judah", only consisted of two tribes.

Even though the southern kingdom was small, they had three very important things going for them: The city of Jerusalem, the temple and the bloodline of David. For these reasons, they lasted over 100 years longer than the northern kingdom. They definitely weren't perfect, but they had far more good kings than the north.

**Who were the good kings of the south?** (1 Kings 15:9-24; 1 Kings 22:41-50; 2 Kings 18:1-20:21; 2 Kings 22:1-23:30) **What made them good?**

Since the northern kingdom didn't have anything that connected them to God, they gave into their pagan neighbors by worshiping idols and living out very sinful lifestyles. In return, they never had the opportunity to be led by a good king. They were all terrible and sinful, bringing the state of the northern kingdom further downhill until their eventual fall in 722 BC by Assyria.

**Who was the worst king of the north?** (1 Kings 16:29-22:40) **What made him so bad?**

After studying the history of Israel, some people may call God unfair for not giving them a way out, but time and time again, He sent different prophets, like Elijah, with a word of repentance and a chance for reconciliation. But God's people never listened. As we continue to study the Old Testament, we will learn more about the prophets God sent.

**Who were Elijah and Elisha?** (1 Kings 17-19) **What did Elisha ask of Elijah before he was taken up to heaven?** (2 Kings 2:9)

Instead of doing an application this week, we are going to do a timeline of the Kings, Prophets, and Major Events. You will find a list of dates, names, and events on the next few pages. Then, the following pages have a blank timeline on them so it is your job to fill in the names/events and color code the kings as to whether they are Good, Bad, or So-So.

# KINGS

## KEY KINGS

<b>Saul: 1050–1010 BC</b>	<b>Bad</b>
<b>David: 1010–970 BC</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Solomon 970–930 BC</b>	<b>So-So</b>

## NORTHERN KINGS

Jeroboam: 930–909 BC  
Nadab: 909–908 BC  
Baasha: 908–886 BC  
Elah: 886–885 BC  
Zimri: 885 BC  
Tibni: 885–880 BC  
Omri: 885–874 BC  
Ahab: 874–853 BC  
Ahaziah: 853–852 BC  
Jeroram: 852–841 BC  
Jehu: 841–814 BC  
Jehoahaz: 814–798 BC  
Jehoash: 798–793 BC  
Jeroboam: 793–753 BC  
Zechariah: 753 BC  
Shallum: 752 BC  
Menahem: 752–742 BC  
Pekahiah: 752–732 BC  
Pekah: 742–740 BC  
Hoshea: 732–723 BC

## SOUTHERN KINGS

Bad	Rehoboam: 930–913 BC	Bad
Bad	Abijam: 913–910 BC	Bad
Bad	Asa 910–869 BC	Good
Bad	Jehoshaphat: 872–848 BC	Good
Bad	Jehoram: 853–841 BC	Bad
Bad	Ahaziah: 841 BC	Bad
Bad	Athaliah: 841–835 BC	Bad
Bad	Joash: 835–796 BC	So-So
Bad	Amaziah: 796–767 BC	So-So
Bad	Azariah / Uzziah: 767–750 BC	So-So
Bad	Jotham: 750–732 BC	So-So
Bad	Ahaz: 732–725 BC	Bad
Bad	Hezekiah: 725–686 BC	Good
Bad	Manasseh: 687–642 BC	So-So
Bad	Amon: 642–640 BC	Bad
Bad	Josiah: 640–609 BC	Good
Bad	Jehoahaz: 609 BC	Bad
Bad	Jehoiakim: 609–598 BC	Bad
Bad	Jehoiachin: 598–597 BC	Bad
Bad	Zedekiah: 597–586 BC	Bad

# KINGS

# PROPHETS

Obadiah: 850 BC

Joel: 835–796 BC

Jonah: 770–750 BC

Amos: 760 BC

Hosea: 750–715 BC

Isaiah: 700–680 BC

Micah: 700–686 BC

Nahum: 663–612 BC

Zephaniah: 640–621 BC

Jeremiah: 626–585 BC

Habakkuk: 609–605 BC

Ezekiel: 593–571 BC

Daniel: 530 BC

Haggai: 520 BC

Zechariah: 520–518 BC

Malachi: 430 BC

# PROPHETS

# EVENTS

Divided Kingdom: 930 BC

Fall of Samaria: 722 BC

Fall of Nineveh: 612 BC

First Battle of Carchemish: 609 BC

Second Battle of Carchemish: 606 BC

Second Deportation: 597 BC

Fall of Jerusalem: 586 BC

Fall of Babylon: 539 BC

Cyrus' Decree: 538 BC

First Return: 536 BC

Temple Finished: 516 BC

Second Return: 458 BC

Third Return: 444 BC

# EVENTS

NORTH

930-909	909-908	908-886	886-885	885	885-880	885-874	874-853	853-852	852-841	841-814	814-798	798-793	793-753	753	752
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PROPHETS

1050-1010	1010-970	970-930
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850
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835-796
---------

770-750
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760
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- BAD KING
- GOOD KING
- SO-SO KING

930-913	913-910	910-869	872-848	853-841	841	841-835	835-798	796-767	767-750
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SOUTH

NORTH

752-742	752-732	742-740	732-723

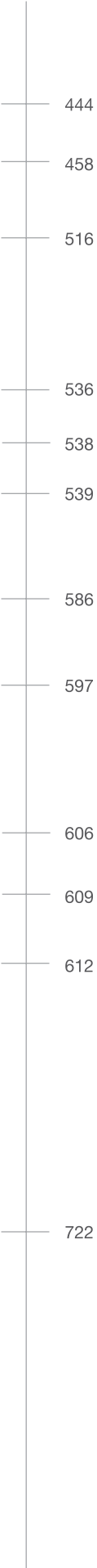
PROPHETS

750-715
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700-680	663-612	626-585	593-571	530	520	430
700-686	640-621	609-605			520-518	

750-732	732-725	725-686	687-642	642-640	640-609	609	609-598	598-597	597-586
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SOUTH



## THE HISTORICAL BOOKS EIGHT & NINE OF TWELVE

### AUTHOR

The author of Chronicles is unknown, but Jewish tradition states that Ezra was the author.

### DATE

The books of Chronicles were written after the Israelites had returned from exile and were now back in Jerusalem. The time is 450-440 BC.

### AUDIENCE

Ezra was writing to the returned exiles.

### REASON

Ezra wrote to restore the Israelite's identity and bring them back to the law of Moses.

### THEME

The kings of Judah and God's covenant with David's household.

### KEY VERSE

"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14 ESV)

### SECTIONS

#### I Chronicles:

Re-establishing History (Ch 1-10)

Building of the Temple (Ch 11-29)

#### II Chronicles:

Reign of Solomon (1-9)

History of Judah and the Temple (Ch 10-36)

### KEY WORDS

Kingdom, Law, Temple, Covenant



## THE BOOK

First off, we aren't going to spend too much time on this book because we already went through Israel's history while studying Kings, but with that said, **what do you think could be the reason for having both Kings and Chronicles?**

When you were reading, you probably noticed that the books of Chronicles are much more positive books than Kings. Whereas Kings was dark and focused on the sin of the kings, Chronicles is more positive and centered around the good. It still seems strange that we have the sets of Kings back-to-back with the books of Chronicles, doesn't it?

Well in the Hebrew Bible these two books are split-up. Chronicles is actually the last book that they read, so their Bible ends on a much happier note than ours does with Malachi.

The thing that makes Chronicles stand out from the pack is that Ezra keeps his focus on the royal line of David and their religious history, whereas Kings is on their political history.

Ezra focuses almost solely on the southern kingdom because that was where the temple was located and his priestly calling connected him to the goodness of the Law and the importance of the temple. He spends his time writing about eight main kings that positively impacted the nation.

**What did all of those kings do in order to bring the people back into right relationship with God?**

One of the most important things that this book did was show the returned exiles their genealogy. Now, I know genealogies may not be that big of a deal to you and I, but to the Jew, a genealogy is EVERYTHING. It displays where they came from and also gives them something to place their pride in.

**Now that we, as believers, have been grafted into the same olive tree of the Jews, what do biblical genealogies mean to us? How should they affect our lives?**

The key section that links Chronicles to the beginning of Ezra is found in the last two verses of Second Chronicles. They talk about Cyrus allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem in order to rebuild the temple. Since they didn't have the Holy Spirit inside of them, the only way to be connected to God was by having a place for Him to reside: The temple. The temple was the livelihood of the priests because it gave them a purpose and a place to worship God. They could now get right with God after being in exile for 70 years. This was their time to shine. Will they make it? Or break it? We'll just have to wait and see.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Ezra does a great job at focusing on the positive defining moments of Israel's past in order to set the people up on a good note. It's almost as if their failures were wiped away and God was showing them where He was in all of it.

He still does that today. When we become new creations, all of the sin from our past/present/future is wiped away, and we have a fresh slate with a new identity attached to it.

Just as Ezra did, list some positive defining moments from your past below, and try to focus on those when the enemy, Satan, tries to condemn you for your failures.

## THE HISTORICAL BOOKS TEN OF TWELVE

### AUTHOR

Ezra and Nehemiah were originally compiled as the same book in the Hebrew Bible. They called it Ezra-Nehemiah. With that said, the author of both books is Ezra the priest, the leader of the second return to Jerusalem.

### DATE

Since we know that Ezra came back to Jerusalem in 458 BC and Nehemiah went back to Babylon in 433 BC, it is safe to say that Ezra wrote these two books sometime after 433 BC.

### AUDIENCE

Ezra and Nehemiah were written to the returning Jews of the Babylonian captivity. The temple was already built and they were finally getting to work on the city of Jerusalem.

### REASON

Ezra wrote to show the history of their rebuilding after exile and to spark a fire in their lives.

### THEME

Rebuilding of the temple and restoring of their faith.

### KEY VERSE

"And the elders of the Jews built and prospered through the prophesying and Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. They finished their building by decree of the God of Israel and by decree of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes, king of Persia; and this house was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king." (6:14-15 ESV)

### SECTIONS

First Return (Ch 1-2), The Rebuilding (Ch 3-6), Ezra's Return (Ch 7-8), Restoring Faith (Ch 9-10)

### KEY WORDS

Temple, Law of Moses, Decree, Restore

## THE BOOK

The book of Ezra records what happens directly following the nation of Israel's 70 years in Babylon, and how easily they went right back into sin. Just as we see in Jeremiah 25 and Isaiah 44, God promised to bring His people back into the land after the time of their exile was complete, through a decree by a man named Cyrus.

When Cyrus of Persia led the takeover of Babylon, Daniel approached him with a copy of Isaiah's prophecy and proclaims freedom for God's people. Cyrus was a peacemaker with the gods and wanted to bless them all in hopes of being blessed in return. Little did he know that the God of Israel is the one true God that would actually be able to bless him.

So Cyrus makes a decree in 538 BC that allowed all of the Jews to go back to Jerusalem and he even gave the Jewish remnant all of the materials necessary for rebuilding the temple.

**Who was Zerubbabel?** (Ezra 2:2, 3:2-8, 5:2)

**Why do you think only 50,000 people returned from exile?**

The returning remnant had a plan. They knew that God wasn't happy with them, but also recognized that they were being given another chance to make things right. So the consecration and rebuilding began. This time they were going to get it right, so the builder spent a great deal of time getting a firm foundation set for the temple. Having a solid foundation sets the tone for what's to come. Same is true with our faith, which is why I am so stoked that you are going through this study and doing just that.

**What other ways can you build a firm foundation in your faith?**

No matter where you go in the world, if you are walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16), you will be met with some sort of resistance because the devil doesn't want God's plan to come to fruition. In this case, the Samaritans were trying to get Artaxerxes (Cyrus' replacement) to stop the Jews from continuing on.

**Have you ever faced any resistance when walking out God's plan for your life? If so, in what way?**

The Second Temple was finally finished being rebuilt in 515 BC, 23 years later, but it wasn't nearly as magnificent as Solomon's Temple. That bummed some of the people out because Cyrus had provided enough materials for it to be GREAT, but the remnant didn't take advantage of their gifts.

I see the same thing happening in many churches today. We spend all of our time and energy building up a strong foundation, but when it comes to walking in our new identity and using our spiritual gifts, many modern day teachings lack in that department. This is a shame because God has such great plans for each and every one of us! The foundation is only stage one.

**Now that your foundation is being set, what can you do to make sure your temple becomes like Solomon's (the best it can be) and not the Second Temple?**

# IMPORTANT

## DATES TO REMEMBER

539 BC	Fall of Babylon
528 BC	Decree of Cyrus
537 BC	Return under Zerubbabel
515 BC	Temple Rebuilt
458 BC	Return under Ezra
444 BC	Nehemiah Arrives

# DATES

By the time that Ezra is sent to Jerusalem, the temple had already been built for almost 60 years. That's something we may miss when reading through such a short book. Ezra was sent with a mission: To restore their faith. So he showed up with the Law and a bunch of Levites to assist in the rest of the restoration process. The king of Persia was backing the mission legally and financially because he wanted the Persians to be blessed. Not obeying Persian law was punishable by death and Artaxerxes declared that every person in the land know the Law of Moses. That's AMAZING coming from a Gentile!

When Ezra showed up he realized that the Israelites were in rough shape. Their entire downfall, from the beginning, upon entering the Promised Land was that they lusted after the Canaanite women and that's exactly what we see here: They married Gentiles. Satan knew that he could distract them with women again because to them it was something new, and their lustful desires were sparked.

**How did Ezra react? (Ezra 9:3-15) How should we react to our sin, no matter what it is?**

Even though he did not participate in the sin with the people, Ezra, as a great leader, still prayed to God using "our" and "we" because he was included in God's people. It was a "when one man falls we all fall" type of mindset. That's why Ezra stood out. He truly cared for the people. That was a very godly perspective because God Himself made a covenant with the entire people group, not just one individual.

We see that Ezra's prayer life brought revival. It's another example of God moving when His people ask. In this case, an entire nation confessed and came back into a right relationship with God. Through the prayers of ONE man.

**How does Ezra's prayer life encourage yours? What are some practical ways of growing in your prayer life?**



# FINAL THOUGHTS

The book of Ezra is a testimony of God fulfilling His promises. God promised that He would one day bring His people back into their land and that's exactly what we see here. Ezra is meant to bring hope to the hopeless. Life to the lifeless. Joy to the depressed.

The Hebrew root word for testimony means "to do again". Just as this book shows God fulfilling His promises, we should be praying into the testimony of Jesus and the promise of his return every day. It's through these testimonies that we can ask God to "do it again".

**What promises are you waiting on God to fulfill? How does the book of Ezra increase your faith in those areas?**

## THE HISTORICAL BOOKS ELEVEN OF TWELVE

When studying the book of Ezra, we learned that both Ezra and Nehemiah were originally one book entitled Ezra-Nehemiah. Ezra, the priest, wrote these books sometime after Nehemiah's return to Babylon in 433 BC. While Ezra was a priest, Nehemiah was a working man. A "man's man". And he came to get the jobs done.

### REASON

Ezra wrote to record the temple restoration process for the future generations to read and appreciate.

### THEME

Restoring the city and the people.

### KEY VERSE

"So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Elul, in fifty-two days. And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of God." (6:15-16 ESV)

### SECTIONS

Nehemiah's Return (Ch 1-2), Rebuilding the City (Ch 3-7), Revival Under Ezra (Ch 8-13)

### KEY WORDS

Law of Moses. City, Covenant, Prayer

## THE BOOK

The beginning of this book shows Nehemiah sitting back comfortably in the king's court. He was a cupbearer, a high authority position. He was a godly man that knew his Bible well and knew the God of the Bible even better. If he was called to do something, obedience was the only available option.

Nehemiah's friend Hanani updated him on what was happening in Jerusalem and it didn't sound good at all. Nehemiah knew that God had set apart His people in a specific way so any time that they weren't doing well, it broke Nehemiah's heart.

**What did Nehemiah do when this news came through? (Neh 1:4) How does that compare to your initial reaction when receiving bad news?**

Ezra shares that the king noticed that Nehemiah was sad one day, and Nehemiah was able to tell him how he felt. The king, obviously being influenced by God, was willing to help to the fullest. Anything that Nehemiah needed to help make things right, he was given.

Nehemiah arrived with an extra skip in his step. Nobody knew who he was, but his presence was to be admired. He inspected the wall and knew what needed to be done.

So, the delegation began.

Nehemiah was now the new governor in town. He was the big man on campus. He was sent by the king with working orders so everybody had to listen to him.

Unlike their previous governors who increased social injustice and were just there for personal gain, Nehemiah knew what needed to be done and how they were going to complete it. And he chose anyone and everyone to do it. God is much more inclined to use the willing than the able because you can always increase the knowledge and skill level of a willing person.

**How willing are you to be used in God's plan? What holds you back from going all-in?**

Just as we saw in Ezra, there was a lot of opposition towards the Jew's rebuilding project. There were two men named Sanballat and Tobiah who weren't the friendliest of the bunch. Sanballat and Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites all teamed up together and were angered at how fast the wall was being built. It was the devil inside of them that made them fume. They couldn't stand seeing how good of a job they were doing and how hard it would soon be to destroy them.

God doesn't always protect His people if they aren't willing to put in the work. So they rallied the troops with sword in hand and continued working on the walls, but puffed-up their chests in case they had to attack. They knew that the enemies wouldn't come right away, but if they did, they were ready. A plan was in motion. If anything were to come against them, they knew what to do.

**How does this image compare to a body of believers today? Are you plugged into a community that fights alongside each other and for each other?**

When the last nail was pounded and the final bolt was tightened, the door was set up and the people were placed in their official positions under the direction of Nehemiah.

Whereas the first seven chapters were based on the wall and opposition, the content is now redirected to the people. It went from renovating the city to renovating the nation. Both were needed for the nation's success.

*All Things New*

*All Things New*

*All Things New*

*All Things New*

*All Things New*

*All Things New*

*All Things New*

*All Things New*

Ezra enters the scene again. While Nehemiah was the champion of social and political influence, Ezra brought them home from a spiritual perspective. When Ezra spoke, everyone listened. The people actually begged for more. This was a defining moment for the people of Israel and the future nation as a whole.

After celebrating the Feast of Booths all week, the people drove themselves to mourning. They separated themselves from foreigners and confessed their sins for what they had committed as well as the iniquities of their fathers. They wanted to start fresh. New. Improved. Doing things differently this time around.

**Has anything happened in your life that caused you to change from your old ways? If so, did you change cold turkey or was it a gradual process?**

So what did the people do to confirm their change of heart? They made a covenant. Just as they saw their ancestors do in the past, the Jews did the same. This wasn't your normal, every day covenant though. This one was with the God of the universe. From here on out, they promised to be holy as a group, not as an individual like a typical covenant. It was to be between God and His people alone.

They promised themselves that they would be set apart from the land and would follow God's law completely. New laws were to be instated because the people could no longer live the way that man had always taught. They now had new obligations. The Lord's one desire for His people from the beginning was to have them live as a solid representation of His glory.

Nehemiah and Ezra, equipped with the law of the Lord, were there to bring revival. To teach the people what needed to be changed in order to receive the blessing of the Lord upon their new city/nation. This was the reformation of a nation for the history books. There was none like it.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Nehemiah shows that it is possible to be a strong leader and man of God at the same time. He even makes it look enjoyable!

From the beginning, we see that Nehemiah takes prayer very seriously. He drops to his face when he hears of the current state of Israel. Ezra also knows the importance of prayer in leadership so he makes sure to include all of the one-liner prayers that Nehemiah says throughout the day because if the Lord knows your heart, one line is all you need for Him to move. And Nehemiah's prayer life is remarkable. Every single time he prays, Nehemiah begins with praising the Lord, then he gives his opinion and desires, and finally, he ends with more praise. His life was filled with praise and that is apparent throughout his successes. The Lord listened to Nehemiah and He moved.

**How can you incorporate Nehemiah's prayer strategy into your prayer life? Write out a prayer following his outline and ask God to help you lead like Nehemiah.**

## THE HISTORICAL BOOKS TWELVE OF TWELVE

### AUTHOR

I have absolutely no idea who wrote the book of Esther and neither does anybody else. There is a chance that it was Mordecai himself, but an unknown Persian Jew may seem more reasonable.

### DATE

The book of Esther was most likely written shortly after the events occurred, around 460 BC.

### AUDIENCE

Esther was written to the Israelites that remained under Persian control and were familiar with the recorded events.

### REASON

The reason that Esther was written was to record the origin of Purim and to show that God was still involved with the Jews who remained in exile.

### THEME

Saving God's people.

### KEY VERSE

"For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (4:14 ESV)

### SECTIONS

Esther Becomes Queen (Ch 1-2), Threat Against the Jews (Ch 3-4), Victory of the Jews (Ch 5-10)

### KEY WORDS

Queen, Jew, Banquet, Decree



## THE BOOK

The book of Esther is an amazing story of how God protected His people from extinction yet again. We're dealing with the Jews that chose not to return to Jerusalem from exile because of either social or work-related reasons. And God still chose to protect them.

The book of Esther begins in a party at the king's quarters. This isn't just any party that the king decided to throw. It's a rager. Lasting for 180 days. That's a full six-month party!

The name, Ahasuerus, is the Hebrew name for the Persian King Xerxes and his reign lasted from 486-465 BC.

King Ahasuerus called for his wife Queen Vashtie to come and dance for his generals, but she said no. That put the king in a very tough situation because he was technically in charge of her.

Many claim that she was just an independent woman who was being modest, but they overlook the fact that her son, Artaxerxes, was born in 483 BC. She very easily could have been pregnant with him and not been able to dance. Or she could have had the baby already and that's what this celebration was about, but didn't want to show off her post-pregnant body. Either way, her tiara was taken away because they feared that other women would use Vashtie as an example for rebelling themselves.

After four years of not having a queen, Ahasuerus became lonely and called for his people to create a beauty contest for him to select a new queen. Being the king of 127 provinces meant there would be a TON to choose from, but they set out on a mission and pulled together all of the single women.

One of the women was a Jewish girl from the tribe of Benjamin named Esther. Esther was raised in captivity by her cousin Mordecai who was a very smart man. He knew that she had to keep her background a secret in order to remain eligible for royalty. An interesting thing to note is that even though Esther went against the Mosaic Law multiple times, God still chose to give her favor and be used in amazing ways.

In Chapter 3, we are introduced to Ahasuerus' general, Haman, who had a massive ego and his pride would eventually result in his death. Haman didn't like Mordecai because he was a Jew and didn't worship Haman when he walked by, so he put together a plan to exterminate all Jews.





**Give at least one historical example of an attempt to wipe out the Jewish race:**

**What role does Satan play in anti-Semitism (hatred towards Jewish people)?**

**How should the Church respond to anti-Semitism?**

The king accepted Haman's plea to wipe out the Jews, which meant that if anybody found out Esther's true nationality then she would be killed as well. Persian law was final and even the king wouldn't be able to save her. Mordecai realized that her positioning was a part of something bigger than they even knew. She was there to save the Jews.

So the text says that Esther walked "boldly" into the king's presence, even though the queen was not allowed there without an invite. And the king reached out his scepter towards Esther, allowing her to speak and then he fulfilled her request.

**How can we use Esther's boldness as an example in approaching our King?**

Esther threw the king two feasts before asking him anything, which meant that she had a major request. During the second feast, after God had been working

behind the scenes a lot, the enemy of the Jews (Haman) ended up pleading for his life from a Jew. God stepped up and protected His people once again and Haman was hung on the same gallows that he prepared for Mordecai. I guess, what goes around, comes around, huh?

Even though Haman was dead, the edict against the Jews was still out there. It couldn't technically be revoked at this point according to Persian law, but a stipulation could be added to it in order to combat the original intent. So that's what Esther begged for, and the king allowed one to be written up.

The stipulation didn't allow them to initiate the attacks, but it did say that the Jews could defend themselves. And that is exactly what they did. 75,000 died during the battle and the Jewish people became highly respected among the Persians.

As we saw when studying Exodus, the Jews inaugurated holidays and feasts in order to remember how God used His people and worked on their behalf. These holidays and feasts are always about God, which is pretty remarkable. Since Haman cast lots to see which day the Jews should be persecuted, it only made sense that they would name this new feast after that. So Purim was added to the main feasts from Exodus to show God's faithfulness to the covenant, making it a beautiful holiday to be celebrated.

One heavily debated part of Esther is that the name of God is never mentioned, and a lot of people have a problem with that. Martin Luther actually didn't even think that Esther should be included in the Bible based on that reason alone.

**What are your thoughts on the absence of God's name in Esther? Do you think it's a big deal? Why?**

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Growing up, I believed that everything happened for a reason. It was kind of my mantra for a while. Then once I began studying the Bible more and had a new understanding of the spiritual realm, I came to the conclusion that not everything happens for a reason. The devil is completely real and completely dedicated to diverting the plans of God every day.

Then I hit the book of Esther.

As I'm reading through it, I came across how detail-oriented God was with the actions of people that didn't even follow Him. Here, He used a Persian king that was cool with any type of religion, but definitely didn't consider the Lord to be His one and only God.

In this case, the king's God-inspired actions changed the course for the entire Jewish race. They were saved from a mass genocide because of insomnia and a random evening's chosen reading. God's hand was all over it.

So, does everything happen for a reason?

I still don't think so, but I do know that God can use anybody and any situation for His will to be done.

**What are your thoughts?**

## WISDOM LITERATURE ONE OF FIVE

### AUTHOR

Nobody knows for sure who the author of Job was.

### DATE

The author most likely wrote the book of Job around 2000 BC, during the Patriarchal period.

### AUDIENCE

Since we are dating this book around 2000 BC, we do not have a clear idea of who it was written to, but we can conclude that they were both righteous and suffering at the same time.

### REASON

The book of Job was written to show that God's people still suffer and that the righteous will be blessed even greater if they continue on in righteousness.

### THEME

Dealing with suffering in the lives of the righteous.

### KEY VERSE

"My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes." (42-6 NIV)

### SECTIONS

The Testing (Ch 1-2), Dialogue with Three Friends (Ch 3-31), Elihu's Thoughts (Ch 32-37), God's Thoughts (Ch 38-41), Job's Restoration (Ch 42)

### KEY WORDS

Suffering, Righteous, Sin, Restore

## THE BOOK

One thing to note while looking into this book is that the theology behind Job's friends' arguments were wrong, which means you should not quote them as truth.

From the first interaction in the book of Job we see that there is a lot more going on behind the scenes of heaven than what we see in the natural realm. Many times, what happens here on earth is a direct result of what happens up there. And that can bring a lot of confusion to our situations.

Satan believed that people only followed God for the blessings that He gives them. That's the concept behind this story, but Job proved him wrong.

### **What else do we learn about Satan from this interaction?**

After their discussion, God allows Satan to tempt Job for a period of time because of His confidence in Job's steady character. The key here is that Satan always needs permission before he touches the righteous. That is very good news for you and me! Every point of suffering means God allows it because He has confidence that we will persevere. It's always to prove Satan wrong.

### **Have you ever suffered? What happened? How does this new understanding from Job alter your views of what you went through?**

**testing brings perseverance**



**Not all  
advice  
is good  
advice**

**Do you know anybody that has fallen away from their faith because of a trial they went through and, in return, ended up blaming God for it? What would you say to them?**

After Job lost everything, three of his friends came to him in order to do their best at counseling him through it. Normally we would look at that as a good thing, but their theology was a little skewed by a lack of understanding in the spiritual realm. They didn't understand the goodness of God and claimed that Job's suffering was a result of him displeasing God in some way.

**Unlike what Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar did, what is the best way to comfort a friend that is going through a hard time? Why?**

Most of what those three said about Job's situation was false and it came from a poor understanding of God. Job knew the Father better than that. He knew God was good, which is why Job is extremely honest during the entire book. God desires for us to be honest with him in all that we are going through. You can't hide your feelings from him or put on a mask when you pray so you might as well put it all out on the table in the first place.

Job's buddy Elihu eventually steps on the scene and, even though he was younger than the others, he shared some of the best advice that Job received all week. Elihu also thought there was a higher purpose behind the suffering and he sort of sets the stage for God to come in and answer Job.

When God shows up, He doesn't give Job answers, but He does show Job who He is.

**What are some things that God says to Job in order to show how powerful He is?** (Job 38-39)

James 1:17 says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow" (ESV). If every good thing comes from God that means every bad thing comes from Satan. Jesus says in John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (ESV).

Steal, Kill or Destroy. Everything Satan does falls into one of those three lanes.

Time and time again in modern teachings we see that God takes the rap for Satan's tasks. Yes, God may ALLOW hard times, but it is always for our good and His glory.

God is love and He always takes care of His people. In this case, yeah Job had to deal with some junk, but in the end he received more of a blessing than before. So no matter what Satan throws at you, pray into God's promises and He will bless you through it all.

**Has God ever given you an even greater blessing after a time of suffering? If so, what happened?**

# FINAL THOUGHTS

God is good. That's the mindset that was present through it all, even when the outcome was uncertain and death was appearing to have the upper hand.

God. Is. Good.

I grew up in a way that not many people my age could relate to. When I was four years old my mom got cancer for the first time. That was followed by three more cancers. Four cancers in ten years.

Stage-four ovarian. Tumor around her sciatic nerve. Colon. Breast. Definitely not the recipe for a normal childhood.

But God was good. My mom is the biggest warrior of a woman that I have ever met. Her faith in God is on another level. She doesn't worry about a thing because she's already made it further than she was expected to so now, at this point, every single day is a gift and should be treated like one. Some of her doctors call her a walking miracle. When a non-Christian DOCTOR says you're a miracle then you know that God had His hand upon your life for a reason.

My mom learned early on in her cancer journey that God was in control no matter what her circumstances were. He was looking out for her, and was going to use her story in amazing ways for HIS glory, not hers.

Hospitals were my childhood.

Hope was my childhood.

Trusting in God was my childhood because that is all that I could do.

Being raised with that type of mindset will change everything for you. It gives a completely different perspective on the lemons that life throws. It gives you an understanding of what matters most in life and how you can go about dealing with issues. Not only that, but it also provides counsel to others that are dealing with similar issues.

God has proven countless times that His plan does not make sense in my mind. I'm completely fine with that. He is huge, and I am super small. I'm not here for me. I'm here for He who made me.

While reading Job I was intrigued by his hopeless mindset because that's the same mindset that so many Christians have today. Everybody needs to study Job just to understand the fact that it isn't about them, and it's all about Him. Every time that I begin to get upset about things that are happening in my life, I now have this book to look at and realize that it's a God sanctioned occurrence. He will never give you anything you can't handle so if you look at the positives in every negative situation then you are bound to have a far less stressful life.

Never lose sight of God's goodness because He IS good.

**What are your thoughts on suffering? Has the book of Job changed your views on it? If so, in what way?**



GOOD

FOR

YOU

THE  
PSALMS  
ARE

## WISDOM LITERATURE

### TWO OF FIVE

#### AUTHOR

The book of Psalms is a collection of pieces from many different individuals including King David, Moses, Solomon, the sons of Korah, the sons of Asaph, and others.

#### DATE

All-in-all, the Psalms were written over a very long time period of nearly 1000 years. It was an ongoing collection of works that was continually added-to over the ages so there was no distinct time of writing.

#### AUDIENCE

The audience of the Psalms was varied, based on what timeframe the author was writing in, but nearly all of the psalms were originally directed toward the Israelites.

#### REASON

These psalms were arranged to be a collection of prayers and praises for the Jewish people toward God.

#### THEME

God is good all the time.

#### KEY VERSE

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." (19:14 ESV)

#### SECTIONS

Book I: (Ch 1-41), Book II: (Ch 42-72), Book III: (Ch 73-89), Book IV: (Ch 90-106), Book V: (Ch 107-150)

#### KEY WORDS

Praise, Prayer, Thankful, Hope, Messiah



## **THE BOOK**

The book of Psalms is the longest book in the Bible and the easiest to relate to. Every psalm was written from an emotional state that we deal with today, whether that's joy, love, thankfulness, anger, etc. These psalms were used as a devotional for the Jewish people, yet, they are also for you and me.

Since this is such a unique book of the Bible, we are going to do the study a little differently this week. I would encourage you to read one psalm every day for the next 150 days. During that time, I would also encourage you to write three of your own psalms/poems on the next few pages, covering topics that can be found throughout the Psalms.

Ex. Creation, joy, prayer, love, the Messiah, peace, war, anger, thankfulness, worship, praise, judgment, hope, trust, glory, etc.

## **MY PERSONAL PSALM**

**MY PERSONAL PSALM**

**MY PERSONAL PSALM**

**GOOD**

**IS GOOD**

**ALL THE TIME**

## WISDOM LITERATURE THREE OF FIVE

### AUTHOR

The book of Proverbs was almost entirely composed by King Solomon himself. There are six chapters of Solomon's proverbs compiled by Hezekiah's men and two chapters written by guys named Agur and Lemuel. Some scholars believe Agur and Lemuel are nicknames for Solomon, making the entire work Solomonic.

### DATE

These proverbs were composed sometime during the middle of Solomon's life (990-931 BC) and fully edited by Hezekiah's men around 700 BC.

### AUDIENCE

Solomon wrote to the young, wise men of Israel.

### REASON

These proverbs were written as a teacher's manual for how to live wisely day-by-day.

### THEME

Sharing wisdom.

### KEY VERSE

"Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance." (1:5 ESV)

### SECTIONS

Father to Son Wisdom (Ch 1-9), Proverbs of Solomon (Ch 10-22), Common Wisdom (Ch 23-24), Proverbs of Solomon 2.0 (Ch 25-29), Wisdom from Agur and Lemuel (Ch 30-31).

### KEY WORDS

Wisdom, Knowledge, Understanding, Righteous, Wealth

# THE BOOK

In 2nd Chronicles 1, God asked Solomon what he wanted in life. Instead of saying wealth or honor like most people would pick, Solomon chose to be granted with wisdom and knowledge. Because of this choice, "God said to Solomon, "Because you had this in mind, and did not ask for riches, wealth or honor, or the life of those who hate you, nor have you even asked for long life, but you have asked for yourself wisdom and knowledge that you may rule My people over whom I have made you king, wisdom and knowledge have been granted to you. And I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings who were before you has possessed nor those who will come after you" (11-12 NASB).

Solomon was the wisest person to ever live and we should be forever grateful that he left us with a collection of 900 proverbs on how to live a good life. How cool is that?!

Since Proverbs is another unique book of the Bible, we are going to read it like we are currently doing with the Psalms. Your goal is to read one chapter per day for the next 31 days then write out your favorite proverb from each category listed below:

**The Tongue:**

**Wealth:**

**Health:**

**Fear of the Lord:**

**Joy:**

# Words of Wisdom to Empower you to Reign in Life

PROVERBS

## **AUTHOR**

The book of Ecclesiastes has widely been attributed to King Solomon over the years and there is no reason, in my mind, to believe otherwise.

## **DATE**

Solomon wrote Song of Songs, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, all at different stages in his life. This book was most likely written during the final years of his life and before the division of the kingdom in 931 BC, dating it around 940-931 BC.

## **AUDIENCE**

Ecclesiastes was written to the wise Israelites of the time.

## **REASON**

Solomon wrote this book to show that material things fade away and the real meaning of life can only be found in things from above.

## **THEME**

Everything under the sun is vanity.

## **KEY VERSE**

"Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after the wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun." (2:11 ESV)

## **SECTIONS**

Introducing the Issue (Ch 1:1-11), Looking at the Meaning of Life (Ch 1:12-12:8), Importance of Focusing on God (Ch 12:9-14)

## **KEY WORDS**

Vanity, Under the Sun, Wealth, Wisdom



# THE BOOK

As we know, King Solomon was the definition of what society deemed as successful. He was the wisest, richest person to ever live, and people traveled thousands of miles just to witness his grandeur. He was the MAN.

But even though he had the world at his fingertips, it still didn't satisfy his appetite. In fact, he felt like he had wasted his life just by pursuing meaningless things. Some of you may be in the same boat and/or some of you may have actually come to the Lord while searching out a deeper meaning for this thing called life.

My background has allowed me to be constantly surrounded by the American Dream. People that are in need of nothing, but they're still missing something...and few have figured it out.

They have the houses.

The cars.

The vacations.

Everything.

So what's missing?

For as long as I can remember I have asked people that are older than me: What do you wish you knew in your 20's that you know now?

When I started asking that, my intentions were to get some insight on how to become successful faster. The funny thing is that the answers were never what I had expected. The majority of them looked something like this:

Spend more time with family.

Chase after your dreams instead of money.

Spend more time in prayer.

Etc, etc.

WHY AM I HERE?



WHAT IS MY PURPOSE?

Not once was I taught to do whatever it takes to fulfill the American Dream. So what is the meaning of life? First you need to look at God. The Creator of life.

God is perfect. His being is flawless, and His glory is indescribable.

The most selfless thing that He could have done was to create mankind so that we could enjoy His glory along with Him. So that's what He did.

You and I were created to love and to be loved. To constantly live in joy. To never be sick. To be provided with our every desire because every desire would be perfect and holy.

Something happened in a garden way back when. The first man and woman to be created "gave in" to temptation and because of that there has been a barrier between God and mankind every since. Satan temporarily won. Or so he thought.

Ever since then, things changed. Life is now different from the original intent. But we work with what we've got. We are now blessed to bring heaven to earth every day until the time comes when God ushers in a new version of each, and His people are able to enjoy life the way it was meant to be.

That means for now you need to love those around you, even your enemies.

That means loving God and thanking Him for loving you.

That means serving people without expecting anything in return.

That means being joyous even when your circumstances scream differently.

That means looking at the life of Jesus and doing your best to mimic his every move.

You see, to me, the meaning of life is simple. It's about bringing heaven to earth and glory to God now for an eternal enjoyment later.

**What would you say is the meaning of life?**

# SONG OF SONGS

## WISDOM LITERATURE FIVE OF FIVE

Song of Songs is by far the most debated book in the Bible from who the author is to how you should view the book to why it's included in the first place. So with that said, our study is going to present multiple views that allow you to decide for yourself.

### AUTHOR

A large portion of evidence for the authorship of Song of Songs suggests King Solomon, but many scholars disagree. In reality, nobody knows for sure.

### DATE

Since I believe that Song of Songs was written by Solomon, he most likely penned it during the beginning or middle of his reign, possibly around 950 BC.

### AUDIENCE

Song of Songs was most likely written to the people of Israel that looked up to King Solomon.

### REASON

Solomon wrote to show the importance of a holy marriage and how a romantic relationship was to unfold.

### THEME

God's view of marriage and sex.

### KEY VERSE

"Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, he would be utterly despised." (8:6-7 ESV).

### SECTIONS

Praising the Physical Attributes (Ch 1:1-2:7), Becoming More Intimate (Ch 2:8-3:5), The Procession and Marriage (Ch 3:6-5:1), Missing Her Husband (Ch 5:2-6:9), The Romance (Ch 6:10-8:4), What the Future Holds (Ch 8:5-14)

### KEY WORDS

Beloved, Love, Beautiful

# THE BOOK

As I mentioned earlier, your view of this book will be based mainly on your interpretation of the context, and which lens you choose to view it through.

The three ways of interpreting Song of Songs are:

The Literal Interpretation looks at this story as God's view of a holy marriage.

The Allegorical Interpretation looks at the Song as an allegory of God's love for Israel.

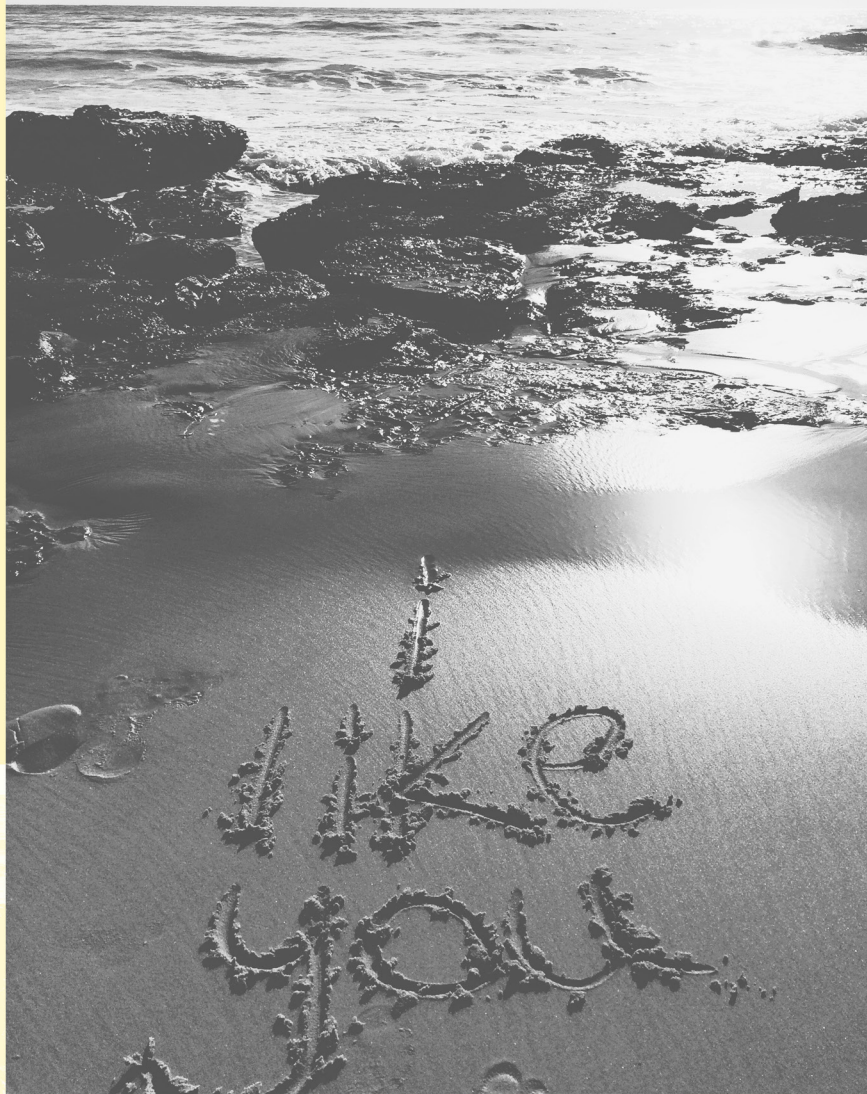
The Typical Interpretation looks at it as being a "type" of Christ and the Church.

All three of the interpretations are true, and you can learn incredible truths by viewing the Song through each lens.

Many people have a problem with this book because of the sexual content. They tend to disregard it because they don't believe sex is a spiritual experience considering how sex is viewed in our society. In reality, sex is a gift from God and should be treasured. Satan has continually distorted our view of sex to keep believers from experiencing God's plan and the fullness of it.

**What are your views on sex? What does your church teach about it?**

**How can sex be a holy experience?**



**A LOT.**

Personally, I have loved, and I have been loved.  
I've made bad decisions, and I've made good ones.  
I have broken hearts, and I have had my heart broken.  
Many times.

A lot of my childhood was spent with a group of four sisters that lived down the street from me. We were all within five years of each other so I witnessed the ups and downs and everything in between that girls go through at different stages of life. Because of that, I have always felt like I understood women far better than guys. So ever since I was younger I knew how to play the game. Mix that with ten years of being a waiter and I've learned what women want before they even have to ask for it. That turns into far more of a problem than a blessing when it comes to relationships that don't have God at the center of them.

When I first studied Song of Songs it really impacted me. It's amazing. It's a beautiful poem that displays intimacy and true companionship from a godly perspective. It shows a dance among partners between pursuing and being pursued. What society tells us is that what is right doesn't look anything like the true intimacy that is associated with a godly relationship. That hit me.

While the media shows what is "acceptable" in relationships and how a couple is supposed to function in their eyes, how are we as Christians called to act?

The sad truth is that many times you can't tell the difference between the two. In reality, we are called to be holy. To be set apart.

**So, what does that mean for you? List five key points from Song of Songs that you can apply to your love life?**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS ONE OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The book of Isaiah was written by the prophet Isaiah.

### DATE

Isaiah was kind enough to note which kings were reigning during his ministry and we can conclude that he wrote his prophecy shortly afterwards, around 700-680 BC.

### CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

Hosea around 750-715 BC

Micah around 700-686 BC

### AUDIENCE

Isaiah wrote his prophecy mainly to the southern kingdom of Judah, but also to the northern kingdom and all of the Gentile nations that were willing to listen.

### REASON

The main reason Isaiah was written was to show how serious God takes His covenants and to give His people hope for the future.

### THEME

Judgement and salvation.

### KEY VERSE

"You will say in that day: 'I will give thanks to you, O Lord, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me.' 'Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.'" (12:1-2 ESV)

### SECTIONS

Judgement (Ch 1-39), Salvation (Ch 40-66)

### KEY WORDS

Woe, Remnant, Salvation, Redemption, Glory



## THE BOOK

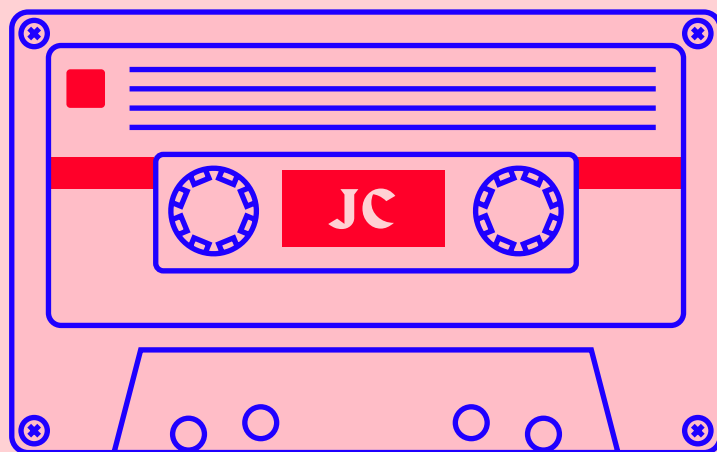
Isaiah is the first of the “Major Prophet” books of the Old Testament. He is known as the “Messianic Prophet” because of his vast array of messianic prophecies.

The Major Prophet books are BIG and jam packed with content that encompass entire studies inside themselves. SO...I would strongly encourage all of you to spend additional time on them once this study is over.

The book of Isaiah is very similar to many of the prophetic books in that it covers future judgment and eventual restoration. Not only does it promise restoration for the nation of Israel, but it also promises that the Messiah will arise from the House of David. With that said, the New Testament quotes from Isaiah more than any other prophet because he had so much to say about the coming King.

One thing that makes Jesus hard for the Jews to understand is that he didn't present himself as a conquering king like Isaiah prophesied about, but he did come as a suffering servant. You see, Isaiah represented what seemed like two different people: A king and a servant. So that is what the Jews expected. It's the great mystery of Isaiah that we, as believers, are blessed to understand.

So, using your New Testament understanding of the Messiah, along with Isaiah 53, take the next page to explain to a Jewish person why Jesus is their Messiah after all. It's not an easy task, but it's important to be able to do. Have fun with it!



MY STRENGTH AND MY SONG

# WHY IS JESUS THE MESSIAH?

## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS TWO OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The book of Jeremiah was written by Jeremiah, son of Hilkiah the priest. That would make Jeremiah another priest-prophet.

### DATE

The ministry of Jeremiah took place between 626-580 BC and he wrote these prophecies over that 46 year timespan.

### CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

Nahum around 663-612 BC, Zephaniah around 640-621 BC, Habakkuk around 609-605 BC, Ezekiel around 593-571 BC

### AUDIENCE

Jeremiah wrote his prophecies to the southern kingdom of Judah, more specifically Jerusalem.

### REASON

The main reason that Jeremiah wrote these prophecies was to warn Judah of the coming judgement that was ahead, in hopes of sparking nationwide repentance.

### THEME

The fall of Jerusalem and the reason for their exile.

### KEY VERSE

"For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back this place. For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (29:10-11 ESV)

### SECTIONS

Jeremiah's Call (Ch 1), Warning to Judah (Ch 2-29), Future Restoration (Ch 30-33), Before and After the Fall of Jerusalem (Ch 34-45), Warning to Other Nations (Ch 46-51), Final Outcome (Ch 52)

### KEY WORDS

Sin, Wickedness, Judgement

## THE BOOK

Jeremiah was known as “the weeping prophet” because he really put his heart into his prophecies. His words hit you on the inside and you get to know his personality much better than the other prophets.

Jeremiah is the second longest prophecy at 52 chapters in length. The only longer one is Isaiah, which we just studied. As with Isaiah, we are not going to dive into the entire book because there is far too much content there. Instead, we are going to do a small assignment.

The majority of this book is about destruction and judgment that was to come to Judah and the surrounding nations for remaining unrepentant.

Same story; different prophet.

You may have noticed that Jeremiah writes in poetry for the whole book. It shows that the Father is communicating His heart towards the audience instead of His mind, like we see when a writer uses prose. Poetry is deeper and shares the feelings of the Father. Prose is more effective to get the point across.

Not only did Jeremiah write from the heart and share the Father's heart, he also spoke a lot about the importance of getting your heart right with God instead of being religious with your actions. So often, we tend to get caught up in the actions of our faith and think that's good enough. We go to church every Sunday, attend a small group on Tuesdays, have a 15-30 minute “quiet time” (depending on the day) every day, and think we are set when in reality the Father desires intimacy with His children and doesn't look at what you are doing to be a “good” Christian. So if you're missing out on that intimacy while attending your church, small group, and having a “quiet time”, then you may be missing the relational aspect of the Christian life. I get it though. There was a time in my life when I was in the same position. All I wanted was to know the Bible well and learn as much as I could about what I believed. So I filled my head with as much knowledge as possible, but my heart remained untouched. I've been in a process lately to change that. To go from my head to my heart, and I'm finally able to see God move more and hear what He has to say.

With all of that said, **I suggest the following prayer:**

"Father, it's clear that Jeremiah knew Your heart, and You knew his. He expressed Your feelings with confidence and knew his identity in You. I want that. So, Father, I'm asking You to align my heart with Yours. Take what I know in my head and teach it to my heart. Show me how to apply Your heart to my current situation and show me what You think about me. Amen."

**Now, be still and spend this page writing down what you sense the Father might be saying to you:**

**PLANS TO  
PROSPER YOU  
PLANS TO GIVE  
YOU A HOPE  
AND A FUTURE**

**JEREMIAH 29:11**

## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS THREE OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The author of Lamentations is considered anonymous, but the majority of scholars attribute it to Jeremiah.

### DATE

Lamentations was written at the beginning of exile around 586-580 BC.

### AUDIENCE

Lamentations was written to his fellow Jewish people in exile.

### REASON

Jeremiah wrote to express his deep sorrow over the destruction of Jerusalem.

### THEME

Sorrow over Jerusalem and the compasison of God.

### KEY VERSE

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." (3:22-23 ESV)

### SECTIONS

Destruction of Jerusalem (Ch 1), The Anger of the Lord (Ch 2), The Lord's Comfort (Ch 3), Past vs Present (Ch 4), Prayer for Forgiveness (Ch 5)

### KEY WORDS

Sin, Anger, Transgressions, Zion



# THE BOOK

Lamentation: Noun

“The passionate expression of grief or sorrow.” (Oxforddictionaries.com)

As we saw while looking at the book of Jeremiah, Jeremiah was known as “the weeping prophet” because of how emotional he was in his writing. Lamentations is proof of that.

After multiple prophecies of Jerusalem’s future destruction, their time was finally coming to pass because they had failed to repent as Jeremiah had pleaded. Jerusalem was destroyed before their eyes, and the people were taken away to exile. It was a horrific time to be alive.

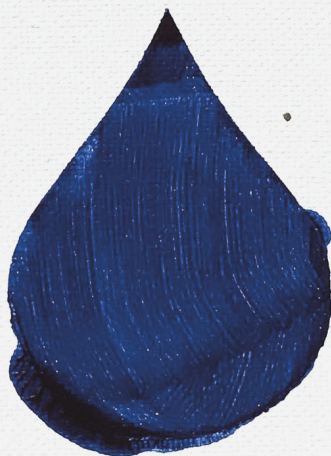
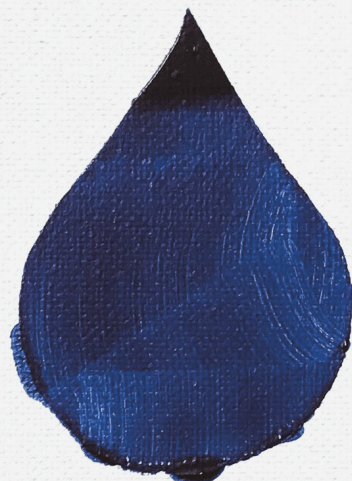
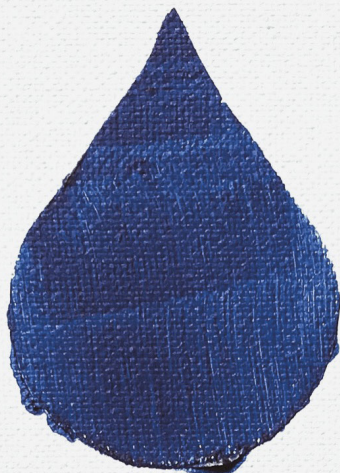
And Jeremiah wept. Oh, how he wept.

Lamentations is the record of that weeping. It’s one of the saddest books you could ever read.

But there’s hope! Jeremiah realized that through God’s mercy He chose to keep a group alive. He was seeing the good inside of the bad and found something to be thankful for even when the situation looked terrible. Jeremiah took that revelation and prayed into it that God would one day be so merciful that the nation of Israel would be restored. And history shows us that the Lord answered it. Hallelujah!

No matter how angry God was, or how much judgment He placed on Israel and their enemies, the Lord's mercy always reigned triumphant.

With that said, spend a few minutes listening to the song "Mercy" by Amanda Cook. **Then spend this page journaling what you sense the Father saying to you through that song and what His views on judgment/mercy are.**



## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS FOUR OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The book of Ezekiel was written by the priest-prophet, Ezekiel, who was one of the captives during Nebuchadnezzar's second siege of Jerusalem.

### DATE

Ezekiel was written around 593-571 BC

### CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

Jeremiah around 626-585 BC

### AUDIENCE

Ezekiel directed his prophecies towards the exiles in Babylon who were steadily losing hope.

### REASON

Ezekiel wrote to show that God was still among them while in exile, and He will be faithful to His promise of future restoration.

### THEME

God's sovereignty over all people and His glory.

### KEY VERSE

"Then they shall know that I am the Lord their God, because I sent them into exile among the nations and then assembled them into their own land. I will leave none for them remaining among the nations anymore. And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord God." (39:28-29 ESV)

### SECTIONS

Judgement Against Judah (Ch 1-24), Judgement Against Other Nations (Ch 25-32), Future Restoration (Ch 33-39), The Future Temple (Ch 40-48)

### KEY WORDS / PHRASES

Know that I am the Lord, Covenant, Glory, Temple, Holy



# THE BOOK

The book of Ezekiel has a lot of prophetic destruction that may not really apply to us, but there are some gems that can speak into our lives and our current situation. Those are the ones we are going to focus on.

Being that Ezekiel was both a prophet AND a priest makes him stand out from most of the prophets in the Old Testament. His original calling in life came through this crazy vision that we see in Chapters 1-3.

**Draw out what Ezekiel sees in his open vision:**

**What do you think each piece could represent?**

**Lion:**

**Ox:**

**Man:**

**Eagle:**

**Wheels:**

Ezekiel knew that he was now in the presence of God. He was experiencing holiness firsthand so he dropped to his face in worship. That's all you can really do when you're in that position.

**Have you ever been overcome by the Lord's presence? If so, what did it feel like? How did you respond?**

From Chapters 4-37 there are 10 different things that God makes Ezekiel do in order to get His point across to the people. List them below:

**1. (4:1-3)**

**2. (4:4-8)**

**3. (4:9-17)**

**4. (5)**

**5. (12:1-16)**

**6. (12:17-20)**

**7. (21:8-17)**

**8. (21:18-24)**

**9. (24:15-24)**

**10. (37:15-28)**

After everything that God calls Ezekiel to do, he promises a future restoration for the people of Israel. The restoration was not a reward for their good behavior or anything that they could physically do, because when it came down to it, they always ended up failing. The restoration was completely for God's sake so that He would be represented accurately. God takes His name very seriously and expects us to represent Him well. Calling yourself a Christian means that you associate yourself with Christ, AND He also associates with you. It's two-sided and should benefit both.

**Would you say that you are a good representation of Christ? In what ways could you improve?**

Ezekiel goes on to share a very popular prophecy about a bunch of bones coming to life. It's an image of God pouring His Spirit out on the lifeless and bringing them to life or resurrecting them. It's important to note that Ezekiel clarifies that this is a spiritual and physical restoration of Israel, which we began to see in 1948 when Israel became a nation. When the Spirit comes upon them in the future they will come to life and begin walking in their intended destiny. Many Jewish people in Israel are "coming to life" and receiving the Holy Spirit already, but the full outpouring won't happen until later on.

Right after the dry bones prophecy, Ezekiel goes into a highly debated prophecy: The War of Gog and Magog. The prophecy suggests that Israel will be attacked from all sides and God will step in at the last minute to protect His people. History shows that He has done it before, and prophecy shows that He will do it again. If you keep an eye on Israel, you can see God's hand in all of it.

**What is currently happening in Israel? Can you see God at work?**

In Chapters 40-48, Ezekiel ends by speaking of a GRAND temple that was going to be built with the reinstatement of the sacrificial system. This section is another highly debated prophecy among scholars today. Some people go with a symbolic interpretation of the passage, while others go with a literal interpretation. One thing we know for sure is that this temple that Ezekiel is speaking of has never actually been built.

The symbolic interpretation states that the temple is a spiritual temple that was fulfilled through the Church today. The literal interpretation states that there will one day be a 3rd temple in Jerusalem, and that the sacrificial system will be reinstated during the Millennial Reign.

**What are your thoughts on the temple? Do you think we should take it literally or symbolically?**





**I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT IN YOU**

**AND YOU WILL LIVE**

**AND I WILL SETTLE YOU**

**IN YOUR OWN LAND**



HOPE: Noun

"A feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen." (Oxforddictionaries.com)

The book of Ezekiel is a book of hope. Hope for the future; all because of one man named Ezekiel. He was a prophet that God gave many visions to, in order to promise future restoration. You see, when God promises something, it has to come into fruition because He can't lie.

God's actions don't always line up with our desired outcome though. Then we get mad and wonder where God was the entire time. Sound familiar?

Every time that happens to me I always reflect and can see God's hand all over the situation. Most of the time the outcome was even better than I could have conjured up in my own mind. Sometimes He does stuff that doesn't make sense though. Sometimes life is tough for no reason at all.

But that's where trust comes in.

Trusting that God's ways are the best ways.

Trusting that He is for you and not against you.

Trusting that it WILL all be better in the end.

Ezekiel was one of the only guys in exile that God shared His plan of redemption with. Ezekiel could either share it or keep his insight to himself. He chose to share it because it provided hope to all of the Israelites since they just had their entire lives stripped from them. He provided hope in order to show them that life was actually worth living.

So listen up. No matter what you go through in life, if you have accepted Jesus as your Savior and Lord and have a personal relationship with Him, then you can have hope and confidence in the fact that you will one day be in heaven and the New Earth for eternity.

**What truths will you take from the book of Ezekiel?**

## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS FIVE OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The book of Daniel was written by the prophet Daniel, an exile during the Babylonian reign.

### DATE

Daniel was taken into exile as a child during the first deportation of the Jews in 605 BC and recorded events up until 540 BC. Therefore, the book of Daniel must have been written shortly after that time, around 540-530 BC while he was in Persia.

### CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

Jeremiah around 626-585 BC  
Habakkuk around 609-605 BC  
Ezekiel around 593-571 BC

### AUDIENCE

Daniel wrote to the other Hebrew exiles in Babylon and later in Persia.

### REASON

He wrote in order to show them God's hand in all that was happening.

### THEME

No matter what happens on earth, the kingdom of God will reign supreme for eternity.

### KEY VERSE

"His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, 'What have you done?'" (4:34b-35 ESV)

### SPLIT

Stories of Daniels Influence (Ch 1-6), Prophecies of Future Victory (Ch 7-12)

### KEY WORDS

Dream, Kingdom, Authority, Time

## THE BOOK

The book of Daniel is full of stories and prophecies, both natural and supernatural. Daniel is known as the “Revelation of the Old Testament” because of its focus on the end times. Some revelations are easy to understand and some are a little harder and unclear. There’s some mystery involved, but the life lessons are numerous.

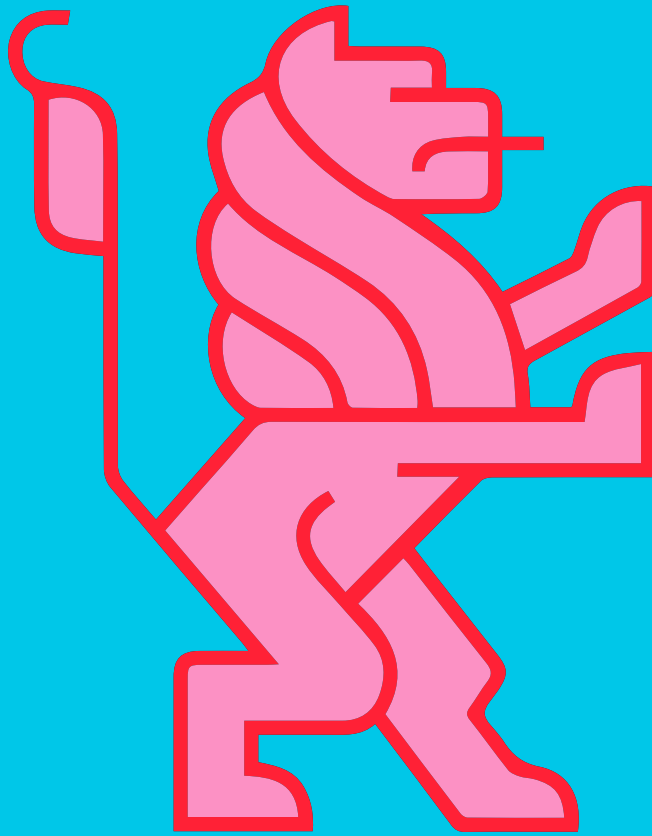
Daniel presents us with the inside scoop. He is given the backstage pass to Babylonian royalty and ends up being one of the leading actors. Not only is this Daniel’s story, but it also shows how God was protecting His people, even during their punishment in exile.

When Nebuchadnezzar took over a new city, he would start by bringing the wisest men back to Babylon first in order to bring advancement among his dominion. So, by the time Daniel and the first round of exiles were taken captive, Babylon was highly advanced in wisdom, wealth, and spirituality.

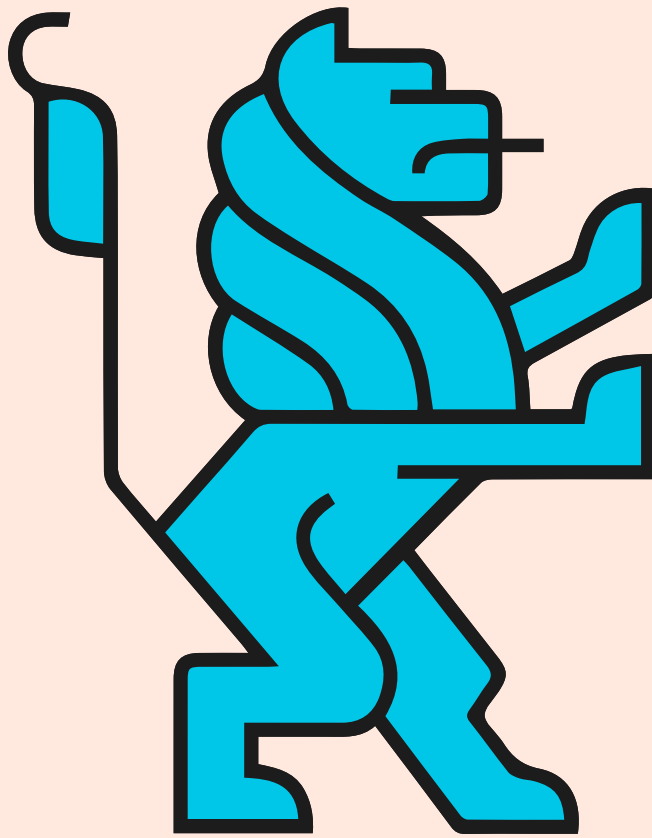
**Can you think of anywhere in the world that is similar to Babylon today?**

When Daniel and his buddies were being immersed in the ways of the Babylonians, they remained faithful because they knew who the one true God was. In return, their obedience called for a large amount of favor from the Lord. He also gave them skills and wisdom to be the best of the best. That favor resulted in Daniel being an official in Babylonian royalty for nearly 70 years. Amazing!

**How has God shown you favor among unbelievers?**



**BOLD AS A LION**



**BOLD AS A LION**

**By looking at the life of Daniel, how could you receive more favor?**

Daniel's first prophesy over Nebuchadnezzar involved the interpretation of one of his dreams. The statue of Nebuchadnezzar himself. Just as we will see with the other prophecies in this book, the statue represented the rise and fall of the earthly kingdoms and the ultimate reign of the kingdom of God.

The Gold on the statue represented Babylon from 606-539 B.C.

The Silver represented Persia from 539-332 B.C.

The Brass represented Greece from 332-68 B.C.

The Iron represented Rome from 68 B.C. onward.

The Iron and Clay is not a completely new world power, but a variation of Rome. There are many speculations on what the final world power will be, but nobody knows for sure.

Continuing on, the stone cut without hands signifies the Second Coming of the Messiah. And his vision of the mountain is God's kingdom taking over the whole earth before the New Heaven and New Earth are introduced.

So what does Nebuchadnezzar do? He makes a statue of himself made entirely of gold to show that his kingdom couldn't be taken over by any other world power and forced all of the people to bow down and worship him.

Daniel and the boys didn't agree with this new law so Nebuchadnezzar turned up the furnace heat and called for Daniel's friends to be thrown into the furnace. God remained true to His character and saved the guys through the fire.

**In what areas of your life have you dealt with fiery trials and saw that God was faithful in helping you through? Give an example.**

In Chapter 4, Nebuchadnezzar had another dream that prophesied his demise. Daniel had grown keen of Nebby, so this time it was hard for him to share what the dream meant. Nebuchadnezzar still had so much pride and an unrepentant heart that God allowed Satan to torment him for seven years with the desired outcome being repentance. It was a second chance to humble him, just like the tribulation period will be.

**What happened after the seven years of torment?**  
(Dan 4:34-37) **What does Nebuchadnezzar's time in the wilderness teach us about God?**

Many years after Nebby's conversion, his grandson Belshazzar began his command and Daniel was around 80 years old. Belshazzar decides to throw a party that resulted in the fall of Babylon.

After desecrating the temple jars with wine, the words "Mene, Tekel, Peres" were written upon the wall next to them. Mene means "Numbered", Tekel means "Weighed" and Peres or Parsin means "Broken, divided". The words were all Aramaic so it wasn't that the people couldn't read

them, they just didn't understand their meaning. Daniel was called in and interpreted that the words meant their time was up. It just so happens to be that Persia took over Babylon that very same night without a fight.

**What would you have done if you saw a hand writing on the wall next to you?**

Another classic Old Testament story that we find in this book is when Daniel is thrown into the lion's den and God closed the lion's mouths for the night to keep Daniel alive.

**Metaphorically, have you ever been thrown into a lion's den and had to rely on a godly intervention? If so, what happened?**

In Chapter 7, the book shifts from narratives to prophecies. Now, almost all prophecies from the Old Testament have many different interpretations to them, so we aren't going to dive too far in, but we will scratch the surface.

First off, whereas in Chapter 2 we have the statue with the different metals describing what will happen to the earthly kingdoms, in Daniel 7 he is describing the exact same thing...only from God's perspective.

So for Babylon we had gold and now there is a winged lion.

For Persia we had silver and now a bear on its side.

For Greece we had brass and now a leopard.

For Rome we had iron and now a terrible beast.

The terrible beast of Rome ends up transforming with ten heads and so on.

It was nearly the same dream as Nebuchadnezzar's with the exact same outcome. The kingdom of God will reign supreme for all of eternity.

Towards the end of Daniel's time in Babylon, he was reading the Scriptures and realized Jeremiah had prophesied that they would only be in exile for 70 years. After doing the math, Daniel realized that the 70 years were almost up! So what did he do? He went straight into prayer and fasting. And God sent Gabriel with an answer. God often provides answers to our questions if we are just willing to ask Him.

**How often do you ask God the burning questions of your heart? Give an example of how He has answered a question of yours.**



I WANT THAT

# Daniél Favor

In Chapter 10, Daniel is fasting and praying again for 21 days, but this time the angel that was sent to him was battling with demons for the entire time until the Archangel Michael came to help him out. It seems that the more we pray and fast, the more activity there is in the spiritual realm between good and evil. Daniel also makes it seem as if there are territorial demons, which could explain many issues throughout the world today. After all, Satan is the prince of this world.

**How does Chapter 10 influence your view of prayer and fasting? Do you understand the power that is within you when you pray?**

Daniel was given insight that far surpassed his understanding, and this insight was used as encouragement for him and the rest of the exiles. And it can be used as encouragement to us. Though we may not fully understand everything regarding the second coming of Christ, the first coming was predicted quite precisely, and we can thank Daniel for providing us with a hope for a better tomorrow.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

As the kingdoms of this world rise and fall and persecution increases, Daniel shows us that the kingdom of God will be eternally victorious. So, no matter what stands in our way, God's plan is always for our good and His glory.

**Look back at Daniel's character and his relationship with God in this book. What are five traits or truths that you can pull out and incorporate into your own life?**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS SIX OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The book of Hosea was written by a man named Hosea, a citizen of the northern kingdom, Israel.

### DATE

Hosea states that his ministry took place during the reigns of Jeroboam II, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, making it around 755-715 BC. He most likely wrote this prophecy towards the end of his ministry.

### CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

Jonah around 770-750 BC, Amos around 755 BC

### AUDIENCE

The book of Hosea was heavily directed towards the ten tribes in the north who were under the impression that they could “do life on their own” without the help of God.

### REASON

Hosea wrote this illustration as a cry of repentance towards the nation of Israel.

### THEME

God's faithfulness to the covenant even when His people fall away.

### KEY VERSE

“I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one.’ I will say to those called ‘Not my people,’ ‘You are my people’; and they will say, ‘You are my God’” (2:23 NIV)

### SECTIONS

Marriage of Hosea and Gomer (Ch 1-3), Marriage of the Lord and Israel (Ch 4-14)

### KEY WORDS

Adultery, Return, Sin, Covenant

## THE BOOK

Hosea's prophecy is the final cry of repentance for the northern kingdom. He was the last one that we see before they fall into the hands of Assyria. This message of romantic imagery was not enough to turn their hearts around.

The first three chapters of this book are a story of Hosea's love life. God then takes that story and spins it into His passionate love for the people of Israel.

Hosea's wife was a prostitute that was stuck in her ways. Even though she was loved by her husband she still chose to fall back into the evil ways of the world. God told Hosea to chase after her with unwavering love.

**What do you think was going through Hosea's mind? Did he truly still love her or was he just doing it out of obedience?**

**Has God ever challenged you to love someone that has betrayed you? If so, what happened?**

God loved the people of Israel unconditionally. They were His pride and joy even though they didn't live it out. Instead of God using Hosea as a vessel to share His anger, God shared His love through a personal experience, which made the prophecy hit home even harder for Hosea.

After going through this crazy situation with his wife, Hosea was commanded to share that experience with the people of Israel. Not as a warning of future judgment, but as a love story with a happy ending. Yes, they would suffer for their disobedience, but they would eventually be brought back into relationship with God.

LOVES  
LOVES  
LOVES  
LOVES  
LOVES

**AS I AM**

The biggest character flaw that made them continually fall was their pride. Time and time again, we will see the prophets talk about the pride of the Israelites which brought them into exile. Pride isn't just a form of confidence over other people. In this case, their pride displayed a false understanding that they could live life on their own. Without God. Solo.

**How does pride play a role in our society today?  
Have you ever struggled with pride issues?**

Not only did God warn them about the future exile, He also showed them how to behave once they were in Assyria. Yet they didn't listen because in their eyes, they were "good".

**Have you ever thought you were doing things right, only to find out that you were going against God's plan? If so, when?**

Even though the Lord provided them with a way out and was the One behind Israel's success in the first place, they were still ungrateful because they couldn't see that God was behind all of it. I wonder how many things we miss from the Lord every day due to our self-centered focus?

One thing I find very helpful in turning my focus from self to God is by practicing thankfulness. I try to thank God as much as possible for what He is doing in my life and I often challenge the people around me to share what they are thankful for every day.

With that said, I want to challenge you to create a "Thankfulness Journal".

It's simple:

Buy a journal.

Begin numbering off things that you are thankful for every day.

When you are feeling down, shuffle through your pages of thankfulness.



# I AM THANKFUL FOR

Being thankful was one thing that Israel had a hard time doing. Since it was the "Golden Age", they assumed all of their blessings came from their hard work. Not true. God had their back even when they rejected Him and His ways.

**Why do you think God remained faithful even when Israel fell away?**

**What does the Lord promise to do to Israel if they repent and return to Him? (Hosea 14:1-7) How does that compare to us today?**

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Have you ever thought about taking a prostitute for a wife? No? Me neither.

Hosea is a crazy illustration of God's pursuit of His people through the marriage of Hosea and Gomer.

She was a prostitute.  
She didn't know how to be loved.  
She was used and abused.  
She was perfect.

Hosea chose her just as God chose His people. They didn't deserve a thing, but they were given it all.

This represented true love.  
Relentless love.  
Unexplainable love.  
The kind of love that only God can be in on.

God doesn't care what you have done in the past or what you are doing right now. He cares about your heart and your willingness to change. He can take any person and use them for His glory in amazing ways. Never underestimate the love of your Maker.

**After studying Hosea, how does this book shape your view of God's love?  
How will you apply this book to your life?**

## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS SEVEN OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The book of Joel was written by a prophet from Judah named Joel, the son of Pethuel. Aside from his prophecy, he was really just an anonymous fellow.

### DATE

Joel wrote his prophecy sometime during the reign of Joash around 835-796 BC.

### CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

Elijah and Elisha in Israel around 875-797 BC, Jonah in Nineveh around 785-775 BC

### AUDIENCE

The book of Joel was directed towards the people in Jerusalem because that was where the temple and priests were located.

### REASON

Joel wrote as a warning of future judgement towards the Judahites in hopes of changing their hearts.

### THEME

The Day of the Lord will bring judgement if they do not repent.

### KEY VERSE

"I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I send among you." (2:25 ESV)

### SECTIONS

Judgement and Repentance (Ch 1:1-2:17), Future Blessings (Ch 2:18-3:21)

### KEY WORDS

Day of the Lord, Locusts, Return, Land

## THE BOOK

The prophecy of Joel displays great imagery in comparison to the other minor prophets. He also makes the interpretation a little difficult because of his use of metaphors. Therefore, the reader gets to decide when Joel is talking about actual locusts and when he is talking about an actual army.

Israel most likely endured a massive locust attack that wiped them out for a good amount of time and this is what caused Joel to begin his prophecy.

**Google “locust plague” and write out three things that locusts can do when they swarm:**

1.

2.

3.

**What are three descriptions that Joel gives of the locusts in 1:1-12?**

1.

2.

3.

The first locust plague that had hit Israel messed with their food supply. It also forced them to stop worshipping God through grain offerings because there wasn't any more grain to be found. Sadly, the Israelites didn't seem to care. Their views on God were changing, and they began taking things into their own hands.

It's easy to follow God when things are going well in your life, but it takes real faith to follow Him even when all hell is breaking loose.

**How do you remain faithful when everything else in your life seems to be falling apart?**

Not only was life tough for the Israelites because of the locust plague wiping them out, but a worse day was on the horizon according to Joel. The locusts were the warm-up round. The Day of the Lord was on the way.

Joel was begging the people to fast as a nation and called them to repent of their sin. The Lord is always faithful to His word. And He loves giving second chances, even when people don't deserve it. So, Judah's fate lay in their own hands.

**Has God ever given you a second chance? If so, how does that influence the way you treat others?**

The Lord wanted to protect the people from the coming attacks, but He gave them a choice. Unfortunately, they chose their own strength over His. Bad move.

**What is the “Day of the Lord” that Joel speaks of? When will it occur?**

Read Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:17-21.

**What was happening in Acts at the time? What do Joel and Peter say we should expect to happen? Have you witnessed any of those things firsthand?**

I believe that we are currently in the last days, which began with Joel's prophecy coming true on the Day of Pentecost. Peter was showing that deliverance was NOW and the Spirit will continue to be poured out until the coming Day of the Lord. That means we are in the last era before Jesus returns again. We are the final part of history. There is no greater time to live than now. We must rise up in our faith and press on harder than ever to fight against the works of the devil and to share Jesus and God's truths with all of those around us.

**Have you ever considered that you may be around during Jesus' return? If so, does that lead you towards evangelism?**

During the last chapter of Joel, he speaks a lot about the judgment of other nations. Nations that don't believe in Him and choose to go against His people. Joel speaks of a time when all of the nations will gather and God will judge them according to their ways. For eternity.

It won't be a pleasant time. Hell won't be a party. That view is a trick from the devil to keep many on the broad road that leads to destruction instead of on the narrow road that leads to life.

But there is a way out and the Lord promises restoration for those that turn back to Him. THANK GOD FOR THAT!

**When will that restoration begin? At the time of your Salvation? During the Tribulation? Millennial Reign?**

# FINAL THOUGHTS

You know what I can't stand?

Street corner preachers that yell "Hell, Fire, and Brimstone" remarks at every passerby.

"Turn or BURN"

"Stop sinning you SINNERS!"

You get the point. I hate it. In my eyes, that is the worst type of evangelism and it gives Christianity a terrible name that I would rather not be associated with.

The truth of the matter is that sometimes they are right and their statements actually do hold weight.

Yes, if you do not repent, you will burn in hell.

Yes, we are called to be holy, which means being set apart and not sinning.

Where they are wrong is in the approach. They are putting themselves in the shoes of God at this point and judging others in a way that they have no right to do. That in itself is a major sin so now they are in a lose-lose situation.

**In what ways can you share such a serious message in a peaceful manner?**

## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS EIGHT OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The book Amos was written by a man named Amos from a small town called Tekoa. Amos was unlike the rest of the minor prophets as he was just a poor shepard that was called by God to prophesy.

### DATE

Amos wrote this prophecy around 760 BC.

### CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

Jonah in Nineveh around 770-750 BC, Hosea around 750-715 BC

### AUDIENCE

Although Amos was living in the southern kingdom, he wrote to the wealthy, oppressive folks in the northern kingdom. That was a massive deal because the two kingdoms didn't get along.

### REASON

The book of Amos was written to call the northern tribe of Israel to repent of their materialistic nature and turn from their ways.

### THEME

Judgement will come on the northern kingdom because of their materialism and social injustice.

### KEY VERSE

"This is what the Lord says: 'The people of Judah have sinned again and again, and I will not let them go unpunished! They have rejected the instruction of the Lord, refusing to obey his decrees. They have been led astray by the same lies that deceived their ancestors.'" (2:4 NLT)

### SECTIONS

Judgement of Nations (Ch 1-2), Against the Northern Kingdom (Ch 3-6), Destruction and Restoration (Ch 7-9)

### KEY WORDS

Judgement, Covenant, Righteousness, Nations



## THE BOOK

Amos was just a poor shepherd from a small town in the south. He loved God and could be trusted. God knew that He could use Amos because of his obedience, not because of his skills. That's such a common choice by God throughout the entire Bible. He always uses the least qualified and through that, He is able to show His power and receive the glory.

**Name a few ordinary people in modern culture that God has used to do great things:**

**Why do you think God chose to use a man from the south to prophesy to the north?**

The beginning of Amos's prophecy was first directed towards all of the Gentile enemies in order to get Israel on his side, and then he drops the ball by giving them their own judgment.

**Why do you think Israel was going to be judged more severely than the other nations? How does that compare to us today?**

Amos 3:7 is an amazing promise, which says, “For the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets” (ESV). Some believe that this verse means everything God does will be found in the Scriptures alone, while others believe He still reveals His plan to modern day prophets as well.

**Do you have any thoughts on this? How does this understanding bring comfort to you?**

Amos was also a strong man of prayer. He was confident in his relationship with the Father and knew that He cared about what Amos had to say. So, when Amos receives terrible visions of judgment coming upon God's people, he pleads on behalf of them and God ends up showing them mercy by not following through. The God from back then is the same God whom we serve today. The Father is more than willing to change His plans if we provide Him with a good reason to do so.

**Beginning in Chapter 4, list the five times that God said, “yet you have not returned to Me” and the reason behind the statement:**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



**Sharing testimonies of answered prayer builds up faith within us. So, what are a few examples of answered prayer in your life?**

Amos concludes his prophecy with the eventual restoration of the nation of Israel. He says that they will be brought back into their land and remain there forever. One of the most amazing things to witness in history is how God's promises are still coming true today. In 1948 Israel became a nation, which is one of the biggest, most important Old and New Testament prophecies to be fulfilled. Jesus needs a place to reign from during the 1000 years of restoration and his chosen location is Jerusalem. Since 1948 we have been one step closer to his return. Hallelujah!

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Amos was just a poor shepherd from a small town near Bethlehem.  
He wasn't famous.  
He wasn't even known as a prophet.  
He was a nobody. But God chose to use him.

God chose to use him to prophesy about times that we are currently in the midst of. He spoke of the destruction of Israel in 722 BC by the Assyrian exile, but then he also spoke about the rebuilding of the Davidic Kingdom and what was to come after that.

The cool thing about all of this is that God chose to use Amos, just a random shepherd from Tekoa, whose words are coming to life almost 3000-years later.

You may never know why God calls you to do certain things. That's the mystery of life. We can be confident in the fact that there is a purpose behind it all because God is faithful and intentional in every situation. My word of advice is to obey without hesitation.

Who knows, your words just may influence people 3000-years from now.

**In hindsight, how has God used you in ways that you didn't originally see?**

## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS NINE OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The book of Obadiah was written by a prophet named Obadiah.

### DATE

There is much debate around the dating of Obadiah. The answer lies in which invasion of Edom you believe Obadiah is talking about. Either around 850 BC during the reign of King Jehoram or in 586 BC at the fall of Jerusalem. I tend to agree with the early date, but feel free to decide for yourself.

### CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

Elijah and Elisha in Israel around 875-797 BC

### AUDIENCE

Obadiah wrote to the Judahites that were recently attacked by the Edomites.

### REASON

The book of Obadiah was written to bring hope to Judah through the promise of Edom's judgement.

### THEME

Edom will be judged.

### KEY VERSE

"For the day of the Lord is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head." (15 ESV)

### SECTIONS

Judgement of Edom (Ch 1-16), Hope for Judah (Ch 17-21)

### KEY WORDS

Edom, Jacob, Day of the Lord, The Nations

## THE BOOK

Obadiah may be the shortest book in the Old Testament, but it sure has a lot to say about Judah's enemy, Edom.

The nation of Edom is actually located within the boundaries of the Promised Land, but Israel has yet to occupy it. The Edomites had attacked the Judahites, which led to a lot of anger in the eyes of Judah. So Obadiah was prophesying about how the Edomites will eventually get a piece of their own medicine. God had promised to protect His people so He wasn't going to let a small nation like Edom walk all over them.

**Can you think of any times that God has protected you from harm? When?**

There is a lot of judgment taking place in this book, but that is what the time called for. As we have looked at briefly before, Old Testament prophecy was much different than the New Testament prophecy we live under today. You see, before Jesus, the only way to be righteous was to hate wickedness and provide offerings to cover your sins. There was no new creation, being covered by the blood of Jesus, or grace. So, whereas the Old Covenant was based off of a lot of hate towards things that were not from God, the New Covenant is based off of love and grace.

Back then they would hate their enemies.

Now we are called to love our enemies.

Back then they would call out character flaws.

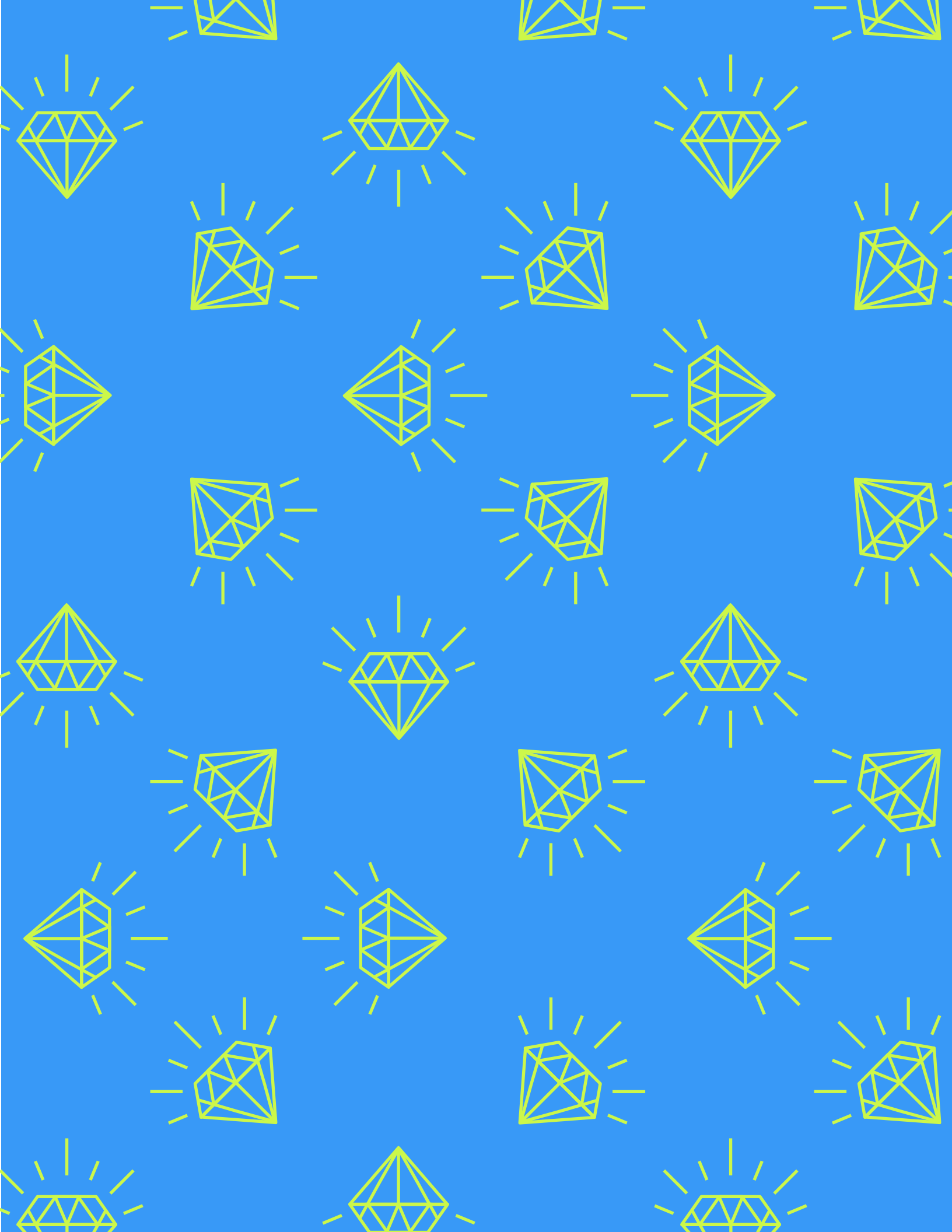
Now we are to call out the gold in people's lives and speak God's truth over them.

Yes, some prophecies today may still warn of future judgment, but that should never be the main focus. Retaliation is not in the Father's heart at all. He loves every one of us, Jew or Gentile, righteous or wicked, and desires all of us to be saved. So as we are studying the Old Testament prophets, we need to remember how we approach prophecy today and how it differs from the past.



**TREASURE HUNTER**





**How does that alter your view of prophecy?**

Obadiah has yet to be fulfilled since he speaks of ALL of the nations being judged for how they treated Israel. This complete fulfillment won't be until the final tribulation period, but God continues to protect His people today. Just pay attention to the news.

One of the biggest reasons that Edom was being judged by God in this book was because of their pride. Edom thought they were the greatest and did everything they could to prove it. That seems to be the case time and time again in the prophetic books.

Not only that, but there has been tension between Edom and Israel for centuries. The Edomites came from Esau; the Israelites came from Jacob.

**What happened between Esau and Jacob that caused this tension? (Gen 27)**

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Today, Israel is one of the smallest nations around and they pose very little of a threat, yet everybody wants them destroyed for some reason. It's a modern day Israel – Edom situation.

From what we have studied, we know that one day there will be judgment on the land. That's a promise because God doesn't lie. We are currently in a time that people nearly 3,000 years ago prophesied about.

It's time to open our eyes on this truth and not skip over Old Testament prophecies. The church is not the “new Israel”. Israel is Israel. If you desire to live after God's heart, standing beside Israel should be one of our top priorities.

**How can you stand with Israel and bless the Jewish people?**

## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS TEN OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The book of Jonah was written by a prophet in the northern kingdom named Jonah.

### DATE

Jonah most likely wrote this story shortly after the events took place around 770-750 BC.

### CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

Amos around 755 BC, Hosea around 755-715 BC

### AUDIENCE

Even though Jonah was writing about the city of Nineveh, his main audience were his fellow patriots in the northern kingdom.

### REASON

Jonah wrote to show that salvation was for the gentiles, too.

### THEME

Running from God and eventual revival.

### KEY VERSE

"When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way. God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it." (3:10 ESV)

### SECTIONS

Running Away (Ch 1), Turning His Heart Back (Ch 2), Preaching in Nineveh (Ch 3), Complaining to God (Ch 4)

### KEY WORDS

Nineveh, Destruction, Compassion, Turn

## THE BOOK

This prophetic book is far different from the others considering it talks about Jonah's experience instead of a prophecy. Jonah was a very patriotic prophet of the northern kingdom that had his ministry around the same time as Jeroboam II's reign. He often preached repentance, yet hoped for doom towards his enemies, especially the great city of Nineveh.

Nineveh was the capital of Assyria and basically the pagan capital of the world, housing over one million people. Nineveh was 350 square miles with 100 foot walls surrounding the city. It was not a city to mess with.

They were the greatest enemy of Israel. Since Jonah was so patriotic, having God tell him to go to his enemies would have been the last thing he wanted to do. So he ran. He literally tried to run away as far as he could from God's presence because he wanted Nineveh to be judged by God.

**Have you ever tried to run from God? If so, what happened?**

Jonah didn't make it too far before God whipped up a storm in order to get his attention. It definitely got Jonah's attention, but he was so disgusted that he didn't even want to think about it. Jonah would rather die at sea than have to go to Nineveh. That is some serious pride.

**Has your pride ever gotten in the way of being obedient to God's plan?**

As we all know from Sunday School, the Lord sent a giant fish to swallow up Jonah right when he was thrown overboard.

Read Matthew 12:39-42.

**What was the “sign of the prophet Jonah”? Out of all of the characters in the Old Testament, why do you think Jesus chose to compare himself to Jonah and Solomon?**

If you look at the approach that Jonah took in prophesying over Nineveh, it contradicts most of the Old Testament prophets. Jonah preached judgment, not repentance. Also, notice how it was the GENTILE king that thought if they repented then God may change His mind.

**What do you think convinced every person, even the king, to change their ways on the spot?**

**Do you think Jonah’s illustration of being in the belly of Sheol meant that he died inside of the fish? Why?**

God gives Jonah a second chance just like He does with countless people in the Bible and continues to do with us today. God loves giving second chances. **Do you?**

It's interesting to see that the people of Nineveh knew exactly what they were doing wrong. They also knew who this God was and how serious He should be taken.

**Do you think non-believers today know when they are doing something wrong? What do they use to gauge their goodness/wrongdoing?**

Obviously, Jonah's heart wasn't right this whole time. That's why he didn't tell them destruction would come if they didn't repent. He just said they would be destroyed in 40 days. He was only choosing obedience if things went the way he wanted them to and Nineveh was destroyed. So Jonah watched from the hillside and pouted as the people began to repent.

**Why was Jonah so upset? What didn't he realize about the Father's heart?**

**There are 10 miracles in the book of Jonah. List them below:**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.







# FINAL THOUGHTS

The book of Jonah is one that hits home with me because I tend to really relate to his story. As you know, there was a time in my life when I tried running away from God, and it wasn't until I hit rock bottom that I went running right back.

We can't hide from God. He is always present, and He always desires the best for us, whether we realize it or not.

God used Jonah to accomplish one of the greatest miracles in the Old Testament once Jonah chose to walk in obedience to the Lord. So this is a story of hope no matter how far you have tried to run in the past.

**Explain a time when you have run from God's plan. What was the outcome?  
How can Jonah's experience be a story of hope for your life?**

## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS ELEVEN OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The book of Micah was written by a Prophet from Moresheth Gath in Judah named Micah. Most of his ministry remains a mystery.

### DATE

Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, which meant he wrote this book around 700-686 BC.

### CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

Isaiah around 700-680 BC.

### AUDIENCE

Micah's audience was, for the most part, directed at the political and religious leaders of Judah who were oppressing the poor.

### REASON

Micah wrote to share God's heart towards social injustice and the destruction that will follow, but he also offered a way out.

### THEME

Judgement against social injustice.

### KEY VERSE

"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (6:8 ESV)

### SECTIONS

The Judgement (Ch 1-3), Hope for the Future (Ch 4-5), Case Against God's People (Ch 6-7)

### KEY WORDS/PHRASES

Children of Zion, Sin, Jerusalem, Samaria, Remnant

## THE BOOK

The prophets Isaiah and Micah were contemporaries of their time. Many people believe that Micah was a disciple of Isaiah, calling his book the “Little Isaiah”. Both prophets were speaking into the same situation. Both ended up being ignored by the masses.

Unlike Isaiah, Micah came from a small town where he knew the social injustice of the wealthy all too well. These were his people. His life. So you can feel the emotion in his words as he speaks. Micah was going to do everything in his power to stop the injustice from spreading.

**Are you involved in any groups against social injustice? Which category are you most passionate about?**

**How does Jesus deal with social injustice? With Jesus as an example, what can we do on behalf of those that are hurting?**

It's amazing to see how similar of a situation these prophets were dealing with compared to today. As social injustice runs crazy, we have a job to do. But first, we need to understand the Father's heart behind it. And that's something that Micah did very well. Instead of attacking them with anger, he wept and showed them what true love is. That's a very “new covenant way” of approaching injustice. Micah was after their hearts.

**In Micah 5:2, Micah prophesies something very accurate about the coming Messiah. What was it? How did Jesus fulfill that prophecy?**

**What is righteousness again? How do you become more righteous?**

Micah then breaks into a courtroom setting where God describes His legal right to judge His people and their enemies, while Micah was representing the people. No matter how “good” the people have been in presenting themselves, the Lord sees and hears everything. He knows their hearts, and that is what is most important. It's never just about your actions, it's always about the condition of your heart behind those actions. Micah shows that the sacrificial system was never about the act of the sacrifices. It was created as being about the heart behind them and the pursuit of righteousness.

**So, after looking at the key verse, what does the Lord require of you?**

## **How do you show God that you love Him?**

Back in the day, it was required of people to sacrifice animals in different ways in order to show their love for God and to restore their relationship with Him. I'm thankful that things have changed because, quite frankly, I don't do well with blood.

The prophecy of Micah is a book that tells of future judgment and the restoration that follows. Some things have taken place; some are still to come. Towards the end, Micah is trying to figure out how he can restore his relationship with God since Israel had drifted so far away from Him. He brings up the best of the best offerings. They were above and beyond what anybody could afford, but he just wanted to know what it would take because no matter God's response, the action would be worth it.

You know what the Lord wanted? What he required of His people?  
He told them to do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with their God.

That's it.

God doesn't care what you bring to the table. He doesn't care what you offer Him. He already has everything He needs. All He wants is your HEART. It's the cheapest, yet one of the hardest things that you can give while living in this society.

## **In what ways can you better position your heart towards God this week?**

## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS TWELVE OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The book of Nahum was written by the otherwise unknown prophet Nahum of Elkosh.

### DATE

Nahum wrote this prophecy before the fall of Nineveh in 612 BC and sometime after the destruction of Thebes in 663 BC.

### CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

Zephaniah around 640-621 BC, Jeremiah around 626-585 BC

### AUDIENCE

Nahum wrote his prophecy to Nineveh and Judah. Very different cities. Very different reasoning behind them.

### REASON

Nahum was written to share of the coming judgement of Nineveh and to bring comfort to Judah.

### THEME

The fall of Nineveh.

### KEY VERSE

"The Lord has given a command concerning you, Nineveh: "You will have no descendants to bear your name." (1:14a NIV)

### SECTIONS

The Lord vs. Nineveh (Ch 1), Judgement of Nineveh (Ch 2), Reason for Judgement (Ch 3)

### KEY WORDS / PHRASES

I Am Against You, Nineveh, Evil

## THE BOOK

Nahum seems like a real patriotic fellow, similar to Jonah 150 years before him. They both preached judgment towards Nineveh, and they both had different outcomes.

**What do we know about the “Great City of Nineveh” from when we studied Jonah?**

Nahum is a book of destruction. There is no turning back with his prophecy. Judgment was going to come whether they repented or not. I must admit, that shows God in an entirely different way than we have seen Him in the past. From what we have seen, there is always a way out.

**What are your thoughts on this?**

At that time, the best place to be was in Judah, because God promised that He would wipe out their enemies and protect them in the end. God wanted to comfort them even when there was a threat of exile looming on the horizon.

Nahum jumps back to his focus on Nineveh and tells them what God has in store for their future.

**What does Nahum say will happen to Nineveh?**

# FINAL THOUGHTS

The city of Nineveh was far past redemption. God knew that they wouldn't change again, no matter what He did for them. Yes, God forgives sin, but if you remain in your sin He will turn against you. Being a new creation means that you are moving from glory to glory. You are no longer a sinner. You are now a saint. Remaining in sin contradicts your entire nature. After being saved, you literally have to choose to separate yourself from God and continue to sin. He doesn't want that. And you shouldn't either.

I'm the type of guy that enjoys knowing what is happening in the world. I'd say I'm pretty on top of the news because I find that to be very important. Honestly, I'm amazed that people my age can live their lives ignorant of it all. I just don't get it.

Yeah it's a messed up world.

Yeah some things can be scary.

Yeah the news doesn't show much good.

But if you look closely, you can see God move.

**In what ways can you see God moving in the background of the madness?**





EXTRA



EXTRA



EXTRA



## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS THIRTEEN OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The book of Habakkuk was written by the Judean prophet Habakkuk.

### DATE

Habakkuk ministered to the people of Judah during the end of the seventh century BC and most likely wrote this book around 609-605 BC.

### CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

Jeremiah around 626-585 BC.

### AUDIENCE

Habakkuk was directed towards the religious and political people of Judah who were oppressing the working class.

### REASON

Habakkuk wrote this prophecy to show God's holiness and to answer some of his own personal questions.

### THEME

The righteous will live by faith.

### KEY VERSE

"Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith." (2:4 ESV)

### SECTIONS

The First Question and Answer (Ch 1:1-11), The Second Question and Answer (Ch 1:12-2:20), The Prayer (Ch 3)

### KEY WORDS

Why, Faith, Woe, Proud



# THE BOOK

Habakkuk was a man who questioned everything. He wrestled with God until he received an answer that was fitting for his narrow perspective. But, Habakkuk wasn't God so some things would never fully make sense. Same with today. We can wrestle as much as we want, but in the end, some things will remain a mystery.

In this book, Habakkuk is asking very basic questions that contradict his view of the Father's heart. I think it's a good idea to question things you don't understand in order to align your heart to His.

**What are some of the “big” questions that you tend to wrestle with?**

So many times we place God in a box that fits our theology properly, but contradicts some of Scripture. That's never a good spot to be in. Habakkuk expected God to act a certain way, and when He didn't, that's when the questions began to fly.

**What was the first question that Habakkuk asked God?** (Hab 1:2)

**How does God respond?** (Hab 1:5-11)

**Does that fit with your view of God today? How?**

**How does God respond?** (Hab 2:2-5)

**What was the second question that Habakkuk asks God?** (Hab 1:12)

In 2:4, Habakkuk says, “...the righteous shall live by faith.” What does it mean to live by faith? What happens if you stop believing? Do you think you can lose your salvation?

# FINAL THOUGHTS

There are so many times when I will pray for something, then pray some more, then pray some more, and never get a response. Either that or I get a response that was far different from what I was anticipating. I know many of you can relate. We even jump to conclusions and make excuses for why God does what He does.

I think that's a dangerous thing.

In the book of Habakkuk, he hadn't heard from God in a while, and he was getting upset. When God did show up it was far different than what Habakkuk could have imagined. It sucked for his people actually. He found out that their enemies would eventually destroy them. Bummer.

Question after question arises, and the Lord becomes silent again.

The next part is crucial. Habakkuk sits and waits. Listening for God. Praying that He will respond. He doesn't, but it's in that place of silence and prayer that Habakkuk realizes he is part of something far bigger. Something God sized. Where even the things that don't make sense still happen on purpose in regards to the big picture.

It's in the waiting, listening, and praying that Habakkuk comes to acceptance of his position and where humility kicks in.

It's in the waiting that refines your patience.

It's in the listening that refines your ear to hear what needs to be heard.

It's in the praying that refines your character and builds your relationship with God.

It's in the times of frustration with God that learning this is most important.

**What prayers are you waiting for God to respond about? What has Habakkuk taught you about the waiting process?**

## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS FOURTEEN OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The book of Zephaniah was written by the great-great-grandson of King Hezekiah, the prophet Zephaniah. Considering his royal connection, Zephaniah was heavily influenced by politics.

### DATE

Zephaniah had his ministry during the reign of King Josiah, before the major religious reform. That means Zephaniah wrote this prophecy sometime around 640-621 BC.

### CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

Nahum around 663-612 BC, Jeremiah around 626-585 BC.

### AUDIENCE

Zephaniah was addressed to the southern kingdom of Judah.

### REASON

Zephaniah wrote to warn people of the coming Day of the Lord and the judgement that goes along with it.

### THEME

Seek righteousness before the Day of the Lord.

### KEY VERSE

"Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the Lord." ((2:3 ESV)

### SECTIONS

Judgement Against Judah (Ch 1), Judgement Against the Nations (Ch 2:1-3:8), Promise of Restoration (Ch 3:9-20)

### KEY WORDS / PHRASES

Day of the Lord, Remnant, Daughters of Zion, Nations

## THE BOOK

The book of Zephaniah is a short prophecy that warned the southern kingdom of Judah about the coming “Day of the Lord”, and that set the tone for the rest of the book. Israel was already taken into exile so they are the last remaining group that has a chance of being free from judgment if they turned from their sins. Although, that may be easier said than done.

**From what we have seen in the Old Testament so far, what do you remember about the Day of the Lord?**

Zephaniah urges them to join together as one, in order that they all repent and possibly be saved as a nation. God is a Man of His word and according to 2 Kings 24:14 there was a group that God protected from exile. It says that all were taken captive except the poorest of the land.

**Why do you think the poorest of the land were more inclined to repent?**

Zephaniah also shares about how God will judge the other nations who are the enemies of Israel. He brings up the Moabites, Ammonites, Cushites, etc. The Lord promises to diminish them for their pride and taunting because He always fights on behalf of His people. No matter what judgment the Lord may have put His people through, He always had the upper hand and protected them in the end. That’s why the Jewish people have never been wiped out, no matter how much persecution they have gone through.

**SEEK THE LORD**



[illegible]

**What is the main reason for all of this judgment?**

(Zeph 1:4-6, 3:11)

Every time the prophets prophesied over the Lord's people, there was always hope attached to the ending. We have seen it time and time again. There is a way out. Either before or after the judgment, they will be taken care of in the end because the Lord always keeps His promises and always holds true to His covenants, even if the Israelites continue to break their side of the deal.

**What does the Lord promise for the future of Israel?**

(Zeph 3:14-20)

**What can they do to prevent it?** (Zeph 2:3)

Pride

/noun/

A feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements, the achievements of one's close associates, or from qualities or possessions that are widely admired.

(Oxforddictionaries.com)

We have studied quite a few of the prophetic books up until this point. We have learned about a lot of destruction and a lot of restoration. Stuff that has already happened and stuff that is still to take place.

Want to know the one trait that all of the books claim as the reason for destruction?

Pride.

It's only the humble that God saves His wrath from. You can think you're the MAN, but you must understand that you can't do it all on your own. God is in charge right now. You can accept that fact or you can wait and learn later. I'd suggest the former. The proud never win.

**Do you struggle with pride? Spend some time meditating, and ask God to show you places in your life that are holding you back from being truly humble. Then ask God to forgive you of any pride and to reveal to you a plan of attack in order to defeat it.**

## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS FIFTEEN OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The book of Haggai was written by the prophet Haggai.

### DATE

Haggai dated his prophecies more precisely than any other Old Testament author. We know that all four of his messages were written over a five-month period in 520 BC.

### CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

Zechariah around 518 and 480 BC.

### AUDIENCE

Haggai wrote to the returning remnant who began building the temple in 536 BC, but soon became discouraged and allowed to lay untouched for 16 years until Haggai and Zechariah came along.

### REASON

To encourage the remnant to finish the temple instead of spending all of their time focusing on making their homes great first.

### THEME

Finish rebuilding the temple.

### KEY VERSE

"It is a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?" (1:4 ESV)

### SECTIONS

Call to Action to Rebuild the Temple (Ch 1), God's Presence Will Return (Ch 2:1-9), Blessing the Defiled People (2:10-19), Zerubbabel Will Lead the Way (Ch 2:20-23)

### KEY WORDS

Temple, House, Consider, Lord of Hosts

## THE BOOK

Whereas most Old Testament prophets prophesied over a large span of time, Haggai had four short messages that he shared in under five months. And his tone was also different. Haggai wasn't preaching judgment like the others, he was encouraging them to keep going with the temple. He knew they weren't living up to their capacity so he chose to speak words of encouragement regarding their talents.

**Explain a time when you went above and beyond your usual ability because of an encouraging word from another person:**

**Why did the Israelites stop working on the temple in the first place?**

(Hag 1:9b)

Haggai shares with them how pleased the Father will be once the building itself is complete. The Lord doesn't necessarily even care what the building looked like or how it was decorated, He just wanted it to EXIST so that he could live among them. It's the ability to live together and the obedience of the people that He cares the most about.

Since the foundation of the temple was laid, the Israelites thought the prophecy had come to pass, so now they decided to kick back and work on their own houses instead. They didn't think that they had to put in a large amount of work towards the temple. That's very similar to many believers today. Since they have grace many don't think they need to put in any work on their own temple, which is incredibly far from God's heart behind grace.

**What are a few ways that you can continue building your temple while dealing with the busyness of life?**

Haggai must have been a great communicator because after he encouraged the people they turned and were motivated to keep building. An interesting thing to note is that the Lord stirred up their spirits AFTER they decided to start working again. He reassured their decisions and motivated them further.

What destiny are you waiting to step into? God always equips those that are willing to go after His plan, but He will never force you into obeying His plan. He gives us a choice so that our response is genuine, and He often asks us to step out in faith...not knowing in advance all of the details.

**Have you ever stepped out in faith? How did God provide for your needs?**

The third message that Haggai delivered was to the priests because they were the ones that knew the Law best. He made it clear that just because they were touching/working on the temple it didn't make them holy. The Lord cares about the heart and that's it.

Modern day believers tend to either be full of head knowledge or heart knowledge, with a small percentage blending the two together. **With that said, in which area do you more closely associate? How can you get better at the other?**

After Haggai shows how the Lord will take care of the surrounding nations, he says that God will raise up His Servant, which was a reference to Jesus coming from the line of Zerubbabel, who was a descendant of David and would be used to stamp ownership on the earth. The royal line would be reestablished through this man, and something interesting to note, is that the two genealogies of Jesus from Matthew 1 and Luke 3 both contain the name of Zerubbabel. So he was an ancestor on both his father and mother's line, just as David was. Amazing.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

I've been to big churches and I've been to small churches.

Churches worth millions of dollars and churches worth nothing.

I've seen God move in places that you wouldn't expect it, and I've seen Him silent in places that you wouldn't expect Him to be.

By the end of Haggai we see that it's not about the temple and what it looks like. It's about their heart behind building it and finally having a place where God can reside among His people.

As we have seen in so many of the previous books, God cares about your HEART. That's all He wants. It's everything to Him. Because from the place of a pure heart is where change can happen, and God can use you for His greater purposes.

Don't go to church for the entertainment.

Go for the relationship.

**How can you align your heart to be closer to the Father's?**

## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS SIXTEEN OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The book of Zechariah was written by the priest/prophet Zechariah.

### DATE

Zechariah wrote his prophecy over a large time period. Chapter 1-8 were most likely written in 518 BC, while Chapters 9-14 were around 480 BC.

### CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

Haggai in 520 BC.

### AUDIENCE

Zechariah was writing to the same people that Haggai was, the returned remnant who were slacking on the rebuilding of the temple but advancing in their home remodeling.

### REASON

Zechariah wrote to encourage them to finish rebuilding the temple and to give them hope for the coming Messiah.

### THEME

The current temple and the future temple.

### KEY VERSE

"And the Lord will be King over all of the Earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one." (14:9 ESV)

### SECTIONS

Call to Repentance (Ch 1:1-6), Eight Visions (Ch 1:7-6:15), Future Restoration (Ch 7-8), Deliverance by the Messiah (Ch 9-14)

### KEY WORDS / PHRASES

Temple, I Saw, Covenant, King, Nations



## THE BOOK

Zechariah is one of the most messianic books in the entire Old Testament. I'm sure you noticed that it is jam-packed with prophetic visions of the immediate and distant future. The Lord loves speaking through visions and says that the "young will see visions and the old will dream dreams" during the end times.

**Has the Lord ever spoken to you through visions or dreams? If so, when?**

**Have you seen them fulfilled?**

Visions in the Bible are not necessarily the easiest things to understand. And in some cases the interpretation is in the eye of the beholder, while other times they are obvious. Since we are looking at Zechariah's visions from the future we can pick out what has already happened and what still needs to take place.

In the first vision, God shows Zechariah that he is going to give the nation of Israel a break from all of the fighting. He understood that they needed time to regroup and get their bearings right. Otherwise He was just setting them up for failure.

The second vision shows four horns and blacksmiths.

**What do horns usually mean in other prophetic visions (eg. Dan 7:24)? What could this vision be referring to then?**



The image is a full-page collage. It features numerous palm fronds in various shades of green and brown, some appearing to be dried or pressed. The fronds are arranged in a dense, overlapping pattern. In the center, there is a white rectangular box containing the word "BRANCH" in a bold, dark green, serif font. To the right of the central box, there is a vertical strip showing a close-up of a tree trunk with rough, textured bark.

**BR  
AN  
CH**



**In Chapter 3, who was Joshua and what did he represent in this vision? What would be so important about him being cleaned up? What do you think that means for the future of the Jews?**

**Jesus is referred to as “the Branch” here. Who are the branches in John 15:5?**

Zechariah shares a vision of a golden lampstand and olive trees in Chapter 4. Draw out the vision below and label it accordingly. Then describe what the illustration means.

In Chapter 6, Zechariah shows that Joshua, the high priest, was being crowned and the office of the priest was now the highest authority in Jerusalem. You see, the nation of Israel was not allowed a king at the time because they were still under Persian rule, but they could crown their priests and allow them to lead the people. This was a major deal because even when Jesus was born the two leaders at the time were Caiaphas and Annas, the high priests. So we know that it stuck.

**What office(s) does Jesus hold? King? Priest? Prophet? All of the above?**

I'm blown away by how well the Jews knew the Hebrew Bible, yet so many of them missed the Messiah when he was right at their fingertips. Zechariah shows prophecy after prophecy that was DIRECTLY fulfilled by Jesus, all the way down to the fact that he would ride in on a donkey. But when the time came for Jesus to enter Jerusalem, they missed it. They didn't want a Prince of Peace. They wanted a conquering King.

List ten Messianic prophecies from Zechariah that were directly fulfilled in the Gospels:

**1. Zech 6:12-13 and Heb 8:1**

**2. Zech 9:9 and Matt 21:6-9**

**3. Zech 10:4 and Eph 2:20**

**4. Zech 11:7 and Matt 9:35-36**

**5. Zech 11:8 and Matt 26:3-4**

**6. Zech 11:10-11 and John 14:7**

**7. Zech 11:12-13a and Matt 26:14-15**

**8. Zech 12:10a and John 19:34-37**

**9. Zech 13:7 and Matt 27:35**

**10. Zech 13:7b and Matt 26:31-56**

**Which one of those strikes you as the most obvious?**

Zechariah gives us a lot of insight into what will happen during the end times as well. He speaks of all the nations gathering against Israel, at which time God will fight on their behalf and show the world that He is alive and well. He even shares that the Jews will mourn for not realizing that the Messiah was who he said he was the first time around.

During the Millennial Reign, the one feast that all believers will celebrate is the Feast of Booths. **Why? Do you think Christians should be celebrating that now?**

# FINAL THOUGHTS

In Zechariah, there are thirty Messianic prophecies. Some are big picture; some are very detailed. The detailed prophecies really intrigue me. It's always so cool to see how God makes claims hundreds of years in advance and they come true in the exact fashion that they were claimed.

We're talking all the way down to the fact that Jesus would ride in on a donkey.

He would be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver.

His body would be pierced.

He would be the Cornerstone and the Branch.

Israel would be scattered as a result of his death.

And the list goes on.

In other books, we learn the town that he was born in. How he was born of a virgin, etc, etc. It all blows my mind how spot-on it is.

**If the first coming prophecies of Christ were so exact, why would the second coming prophecies be any different? Yet many people teach end times prophecies as symbolic...what are your thoughts on all of this?**

## THE PROPHETIC BOOKS SEVENTEEN OF SEVENTEEN

### AUTHOR

The book of Malachi was written by the otherwise unknown prophet, Malachi, whose name means "My Messenger."

### DATE

Malachi wrote this prophecy around 430-420 BC, 100 years after the last prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah.

### AUDIENCE

Malachi wrote to the remnant of Israel that had lost their passion for the Lord.

### REASON

Malachi was written to rebuke the priests and people for falling so far away from the Lord and to warn them of the future Day of the Lord.

### THEME

Judgement will come unless they return to the Lord.

### KEY VERSE

"For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts." (3:6-7 ESV)

### SECTIONS

Israel's Blessings (Ch 1:1-5), Rebuking of Priests and the People (Ch 1:6-2:16), The Coming Day of the Lord (Ch 2:17-4:6)

### KEY WORDS

Covenant, Priests, Sacrifices, Curse

# THE BOOK

At the time that Malachi was writing this prophecy, Jerusalem was in rough shape. The Israelites were doing alright by their own standards, but the main city was far from their main focus. They became selfish. Content. Satisfied.

A good relationship with God was the last thing that they were focused on because they felt God had left. And the priests didn't take it seriously, so why should the citizens?

The Lord directs His attention to the wickedness of the priests right off the bat and calls them out for their polluted offerings. All that they offered was in vain, so the Lord wouldn't accept it as sincere. He demands worship. Awe. Only when people treat Him as He deserves to be treated will the offerings be accepted the way that they want them to be accepted...as purification and blessing.

**In what ways can we give offerings to the Lord today?**

The main problem that the Israelites were dealing with is that they were messing with God's name...who He is. That's a big no-no. He has a reputation to hold to and anything or anyone that tries to defame Him is not taken lightly.

**As a Christian, how can you better represent God in your day-to-day life?  
List five ways.**

1.

2.

3.







ner\*, och luttra dem, lifasom silf-  
ska skola de då offra spiseoffer uti  
offer, såsom  
G. 6, 7  
alems  
n fordo

all nalkas eders till dom\*, och skall  
\*\* wittne† mot de trollkarlar, hor-  
edare, och emot dem, som wäld och  
dagafarlen††, enkan och den fader-  
da främlingen, och icke frukta mig,  
Zebaoth.

skärdige bland eders själswa, och icke blott bland hed-  
de. såsom I knuten uti  
år öfwer eders  
och hämnare  
entligen: w  
carlens lön.  
som icke alle  
icke alle  
lige, trofaste  
den luttran  
enom min tu

den allt i an edra fäders  
bud, och icke hållit dem. Så omwänder  
mig, så will jag och wända mig till eders  
Zebaoth. Så sägen I då: Hwarutin-  
omwända oss?  
rätt, att en menniska beswiker Gud,  
wiken mig? Så sägen I då: Hwarmed  
big? Med tionde och häsoffer\*.

hållen till försång för mitt tempel och bef. tjenare, der-  
och bewisen, att tuktan till  
och förban  
\*\*  
gnelse i lan  
erfwade stora  
tionden  
hus må  
\*, säger  
uppläser eders himmelen  
signelse neder tillfyllest\*\*.

härmed. \*\* ordagrant: till icke nog, det är: till mer än  
jag will för eders näpsa frätaren\*, att

14. I sägen: Det är förgä-  
tionar, och hwad  
före ett strängt  
grant: tage wara  
fora (såsom de  
15. I föreföre pri  
\*, de försö  
e, öfwerme  
\* ordagran

6. Då bespråkade  
den ene med den andre: och Herr  
det, och der wardt en tänkestrift  
wen, för dem\*\* som frukta Herr  
hans namn.

\* den lilla hopen af werkligt fromma, som  
knorrande stryktare. \*\* dem till godo. I  
lyses af seden hos Perserna, att de som gjort  
bednades i en minne  
1. Och de skolo  
ndom på den  
All skona  
en honor  
18. I skolen de  
r emellan  
emellan  
som icke tjear.

#### Kap. 4.

Herrans tillkommelses dag, förberedd af

1. \* Ty si, den dag\*\* kommer,  
lifasom en ugn: så skola då alle stol  
wara halm, och den tillkommande  
färdä dem, säger Herr  
gmarken rot eller  
\* I äreissa texten fortfä  
kommelses dag wid  
i Israel aff  
i ännu  
christliga  
er, som mitt  
ens sol\*  
och I skole  
gödd

\* en rättfärdiggörande nådens sol i Christi  
Luc. 78. \*\* eg.: läsebon. † strålar, värma  
och upplifwande såsom den ruswande fogelns wing  
†† I skolen gå ut, och hoppa x., det är: I  
bet. och glade wara i denna frihet, såsom utslä  
i denna

4.

**What promises has God given you that have yet to be fulfilled? Is there anything that you can do to speed up the process? Do you need to step out in obedience?**

5.

The Lord's covenant with Levi was still in effect. Since it was a covenant it meant that it could not be broken by God no matter how badly He may have wanted to. He is faithful to His word, He means what He says, and it is impossible for Him to lie. His problem was that Judah profaned the covenant for no reason at all. They profaned the temple and married foreign women; two unacceptable things in the Lord's eyes. The Judahites still didn't understand why the Lord wasn't accepting their offerings though. They were blind to their own actions, and it caused them to stumble even harder.

**Think about it. What has made you stumble that wasn't obvious until later? What made you realize it?**

Malachi teaches us that the Lord does not change at all. Thank goodness for that. No matter what the New Covenant brought, His promises were still the same. He would NEVER wipe out His people completely. Yes, they will go through struggles and many will die, but He will always keep His promises to Abraham until the end. Even if they didn't play their part, He would still be good to them in that sense.

The Great Day of the Lord may be just around the corner. The timeframe that is spoken of by Malachi is at the end of the world, during the tribulation period and just before Jesus' Second Coming. Sometimes the Day of the Lord means a time when the Lord is stepping in, but this great day is on a whole different level. This is "the BIG ONE". The last hoorah. And it's coming in hot. A time when all wickedness will be judged and only the righteous will be left standing.

**Do you think this will happen during our lifetime? Can you think of any "signs" that might point to that happening soon?** (see: Matt 24)

The last three verses of the Old Testament are centered around two of the greatest men in the Old Testament: Moses and Elijah. It's God's last appeal to Israel before 400 years of silence. He told them to get back to the way of Moses, and God would give them another chance. He would send one more prophet to them, Elijah, who would prepare the way for the Messiah. We saw this happen through the life of John the Baptist in the New Testament, but many people believe the real Elijah will come back to earth before the Second Coming. Nobody knows for sure...we'll just have to wait and see!



One of my favorite verses in Malachi says, "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, 'I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!" (Malachi 3:10).

It's interesting because in Proverbs it talks about the same concept. If you bless God or His people, He will bless you in return. Some Christian groups are a big advocate of God taking care of your needs. And if He isn't, give more. It's a very strange concept if you've never seen it in full effect, but if you have you know how true it is.

One week, when I was out in Australia we had a "giving morning" to kick the week off. It was a time where if you had a need you would write it on the board, and anybody could go up and anonymously pledge to help you out with it.

We gave over \$40,000. In 30 minutes. Between 100 people. Three-quarters of whom were under the age of 30. That's INSANE!

People that had money were giving. People that didn't have money were giving. It was like a big game of Monopoly with all of the money being passed around.

One of the coolest parts about all of it was that nobody was stressing out. They had so much faith in God that they knew He would provide for their needs. This was just a group of 100 people walking out what they believe. It was truly a transformational thing to witness.

If you have never seen God provide in your life and are stingy with your money, give some of it away. Something big enough to make a dent. He's the one that told His people to test Him and promised blessings in return. Why not give it a shot?

**How can you better apply this text to your life?**

**SUNDAY.**

**SUNDAY.**

**SUNDAY.**

**SUNDAY.**

**SUNDAY.**

**BEST  
DAY  
OF THE  
WEEK**

KINDNESS  
JUSTICE  
LOVE  
HUMILITY

KINDNESS  
JUSTICE  
LOVE  
HUMILITY

**THE  
BIBLE  
IS  
GOOD  
FOR  
YOU**



**THE  
BIBLE  
IS  
GOOD  
FOR  
YOU**

BE

HOLY

HOLY

HOLY

HOLY

**BE**

**KIND**

**KIND**

**KIND**

**KIND**

THE AUTHOR

ABOUT

THE AUTHOR



Zach Windahl is an entrepreneur who loves helping others realize their identity and encouraging them to chase their dreams. Zach grew up a Christian, but in 2014 he went on a journey to Australia in search of the God of the Bible. He needed his stagnant faith to become real. God showed up and completely transformed Zach's life. He splits his time between Minneapolis, Minnesota and south Florida.



# THE BIBLE IS GOOD FOR YOU

