



EQUIPPING HOUR 2016
FROM DUST TO DESTINY

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS COURSE

I. COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To survey the OT books of Genesis through Esther in a broad, overview fashion.
- To fit the unfolding drama of God's plan in the historical, Scriptural setting.
- To identify the central theme(s), key figure(s), dates and major emphases of each book.
- To grow in godliness by better understanding the truth of God's Word through Scripture memorization and by applying lessons learned from these OT books.

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- You are greatly encouraged to read/scan the OT book that we will be discussing from week to week.
- Maximize your understanding & retention of the Word of God—do the *Scripture Memory Challenge!*
- Commit to the 52-week 'Read Through the Bible' plan.

Our goal is to acclimate ourselves with the overarching content of each biblical book. As such, the manner in which these OT books will be surveyed is as follows. In your notes you have a brief outline focusing upon extracting out key information:

OUTLINE – CENTRAL THEME(S) – KEY CHAPTERS – KEY PASSAGES – KEY DATES – KEY PEOPLE

III. COURSE SCHEDULE

January 10	OT Introduction
January 17	Genesis
January 24	Exodus
January 31	<i>Concert of Prayer (Joint EH)</i>
February 7	Leviticus
February 14	Numbers
February 21	Deuteronomy
February 28	<i>Mission's Conference</i>
March 6	Joshua
March 13	Judges
March 20	Samuel Corpus
March 27	Kings Corpus
April 3	Ruth / Esther
April 10	Ezra / Nehemiah
April 17	Chronicles Corpus

April 24	Job
May 1	Psalms
May 8	Ecclesiastes / Song of Solomon
May 15	Proverbs
May 22	Obadiah / Joel
May 29	<i>Concert of Prayer (Joint EH)</i>
June 5	Micah / Jonah
June 12	Amos / Hosea
June 19	Isaiah
June 26	Nahum / Zephaniah / Habakkuk
July 3	Jeremiah / Lamentations
July 10	Ezekiel
July 17	Daniel
July 24	Haggai / Zechariah / Malachi
July 31	<i>Concert of Prayer (Joint EH)</i>
August 7	NT Introduction & The Gospel Genre
August 14	Matthew
August 21	Mark
August 28	John
September 4	Luke
September 11	Acts
September 18	<i>Tim Challies</i>
September 25	Romans
October 2	The Corinthian Correspondence
October 9	Philippians / Ephesians
October 16	Colossians / Philemon
October 23	Thessalonians
October 30	<i>Reformation Celebration</i>
November 6	Timothy / Titus
November 13	Hebrews
November 20	James
November 27	1,2 Peter / Jude
December 4	<i>Annual Business Mtg.</i>
December 11	1,2,3 John
December 18	Revelation
December 25	<i>No EH</i>

IV. **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977).
 John Balchin, ed., *The Compact Survey of the Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Pub., 1985).

Gerard Chrispin, *The Bible Panorama: Enjoying the Whole Bible With a Chapter-by-Chapter Guide* (Leominster, UK: Day One Publications, 2005).

Mark Dever, *Promises Made: The Message of the Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006).

- , *Promises Kept: The Message of the New Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006).
- Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000).
- Irving L. Jensen, *Survey of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978).
- John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2006).
- Tommy Nelson, *The Big Picture: Understanding the Story of the Bible* (Dallas: Hudson Productions, 2000).
- Charles C. Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995).
- John Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994).

FROM DUST TO DESTINY

I. INTRODUCTION TO BIBLE STUDY¹

There are 3 fundamental steps in understanding any portion of Scripture – *Observation, Interpretation & Application*.

A. OBSERVATION: Reading the Biblical Text

1. Content – what are the words on the page as you read them
2. Purpose and Themes
 - a. Purpose: The reason why the book was written
 - b. Themes: Terms, persons, places, events, and/or ideas used repeatedly in a book.

Armed with this information, we then have to interpret what is written – to do this we use a “hermeneutic”, meaning, a method of interpretation. When it comes to the interpretation of Scripture, we ALWAYS use a literal – grammatical – historical hermeneutic.

Here is how it works....

B. INTERPRETATION: Determine Meaning of the Text Using the Literal-Historical-Grammatical Method

1. Literal
 - a. Consistent Definition
 - b. No importing modern day meaning into the text
2. History
 - a. Historical Events (“what”)
 - b. Historical Chronology (“when”)
 - c. Historical Geography (“where”)
 - d. Historical Culture (“why”)
3. Grammar
 - a. Morphology
 - b. Syntax
 - c. Genre


¹ For further readings and introduction to the Bible, please reference *The MacArthur Study Bible* (xi-xxxiv), Howard G. and William D. Hendricks’s *Living by the Book*, and Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart’s *How to Read the Bible for all its Worth*.

C. APPLICATION: Relating the Meaning of the Biblical Text to Present Life

That is how we look at each book of the Bible – take the individual words literally, associating them with the historical context of the day in which they were written, and then make sure we get our grammar right!

II. THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

Scripture is a *supernatural* book, the only Book ever written by God to reveal Himself to man. As the *divinely-inspired* record of God's message, it is the only absolutely authoritative reliable source of written revelation from God. Although written by human authors, the Bible is, nevertheless, God's Word, not merely man's message about God. The Scripture reveals the otherwise unknown mysteries of the kingdom of God, touching upon the profoundest issues, matters of life and death, salvation and judgment, heaven and hell. The Scripture is exactly what it claims to be—the infallible Word of the living God. The apostle Paul wrote:

 “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

In this verse, the apostle declares that the whole of the Bible is *God-breathed*, meaning it is the very voice of God Himself speaking. In other words, the Bible came from God through the men who wrote it. From this, we are to conclude that when the Bible speaks, God Himself is speaking.

A. WHY BELIEVE THE BIBLE?

It is vitally important that each of us understands *why* we believe that the Bible is God's Word. *Why* do we consider it to be so unique? *Why* do we believe it to be God's Word? Everything hinges upon our understanding of this fundamental truth. With either hold that all of Scripture is inspired, infallible teaching from God or none of it is. In this, our Christian faith will be no stronger than our full confidence in the Bible's divine authorship.

Thus, it is imperative that we, as Christians, be rooted and grounded in what are well-developed, well-defined, and well-documented arguments for the Scripture's authenticity. As believers, each one of us should be firmly convinced of these proofs so that our faith will be strong, securely resting upon the unshakable foundation of Scripture. Not only should we know *what* the Bible says, but also know *why* we believe it.

To be sure, there are essential, core reasons that prove the divine authority of the Bible. These pillars of our faith serve to undergird our full trust in the reliability of the Bible. So, here is a brief survey of the supportive evidence, which verifies *why* we should believe the Bible is absolutely true. Although it is not the primary purpose of this course to develop a theological apologetic concerning the Word of God, I do want to provide you with ten compelling reasons that, I believe, affirm that the Bible is God's Word, inspired, inerrant, and infallible.

B. TEN REASONS TO BELIEVE THE BIBLE

1. The Direct Claims by Scripture
2. The Perfect Unity of Scripture
3. The Amazing Indestructibility of Scripture
4. The Prophetic Accuracy of Scripture
5. Jesus Christ's Testimony Concerning Scripture
6. The Scientific Accuracy of Scripture
7. The Historical Accuracy of Scripture
8. The Moral Purity of Scripture
9. The Life-Altering Authority of Scripture
10. The Holy Spirit's Testimony through Scripture

Let us be clear, we want more than mere head knowledge of proofs for the divine inspiration of the Bible. We want more than evidences for the supernatural origin of the Scripture to fill our minds. Rather, we want the message of God's Word, the Bible, to grip our hearts and transform our lives, even direct our destinies. Such was the case in the life of Sir Walter Scott, the brilliant English author who many years ago wrote more than sixty popular books.

As this literary genius lay on his deathbed approaching his moment of death, he asked his son-in-law, Lockhart, to bring him "the book" from his huge library. Perplexed, Lockhart asked, "*Which* book, Sir Walter?" Without a moment's hesitation, pointing to the Holy Bible, Scott answered, "There is only *one* book." In his last breath, Sir Walter Scott, one of the greatest authors of his day, rightly assessed the supreme value of the Holy Scriptures. Believing it to be far greater than all the other books in his treasured library, Scott asked for the Bible—*the* Book—to be brought to his dying side. As he had lived, so he would die, with great confidence in this supernatural book.

So it must be with us. Not only in death, but in daily life, we must turn to *the* Book, the *only* Book,—the Bible. We must supremely desire the Bible more than any other book this world has to offer. We must be fully assured through many convincing arguments that it is, in fact, the Word of the living God. And, as such, we must be unfailingly confident that it is exactly what it claims to be, that is, *absolutely true!*

III. THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE

The Bible is without question the most incredible book every written. A vast project spanning 1600 years, the Scriptures are a collection of sixty-six books, penned by at least forty different authors, men representing every walk of life, written on three different continents, and in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek). Yet, when compiled, the sixty-six books of the Bible fit perfectly together to comprise *one* Book, containing *one* plan of salvation, *one* history of the world, *one* standard of morality, *one* plan for the family, and *one* path for successful

living. On the basis of this extraordinary unity, it can only be concluded that *one* Author stands behind the Bible—God Himself—and that it is, in fact, *inspired* by Him.²

With a book this vast it is important that we have a strategic overview of the Bible. Thus, to begin with the “Big Picture,” we note that the Scriptures are divided into two parts. The first part, the Old Testament records the events from creation of the universe to 400 years before the first coming, advent, of Christ. The second part of Scripture, the New Testament, covers Christ’s first coming, the birth and expansion of the Church, His second coming, and eternity future. Extending from Eden to eternity, the Bible alone can tell us where we come from, who we are, and where we are going.

So, how did the people of God know each book was inspired? How was it recognized as authoritative Scripture? The answers to these questions form the process of what is called canonicity.

The term “canonicity” comes from a Greek word (*kanon*) meaning a staff, straight rod, rule, or standard. Derived from a word, which originally meant a “reed,” it was often used as a measuring rod, or the norm by which something was measured. Regarding the Bible, it refers to the standard that was applied to determine which books were inspired by God. Canonicity did not make a book inspired; it was inspired the moment it was written. Rather canonicity recognized *which* books were inspired at the time they were written.

The God who sovereignly controlled the process of inspiration is, likewise, the God who sovereignly controlled the process of collecting the books, which He inspired. The God who worked supernaturally through men to record the Bible is the God who worked providentially through other men to recognize and collect these same books. God ordains not only the end, but also the means to accomplish the end. So it is with the Bible.

THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON

The process of recognizing the canon in the Old Testament was somewhat easier than in the New Testament. From the first book, Genesis, written by Moses in about 1450 BC, to Malachi, written about 450-400 BC, the Old Testament took about 1000 years to write and was added to the collection as each book was written. Most of the Old Testament books were written one at a time when no other Old Testament books were being written, except for the time immediately before the exile when many of the prophets wrote.

A. THE PERIOD OF THE LAW AND THE LAND (1450 –1385 B.C.)

Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament and these scrolls were kept beside the ark (Dt. 31:26). One psalm written by Moses – Psalm 90 – was also written at this time and surely kept next to the ark, as well. Obviously, Moses could not have written the last chapters of Deuteronomy, which contain his death and funeral (Dt. 34). Surely, Joshua, his assistant and successor, wrote this last chapter and then added the book, which bears his name to the first five

² Although this course is not specifically designed to trace the development and canonicity of Scripture, reference Steven J. Lawson’s article, *How We Got the Bible*, for a further treatment on the subject.

books of Moses (Josh. 1:1). An assistant whom Joshua would have groomed, no doubt, wrote the end of the book which records Joshua's death (Josh. 24:29-33). These six books were stored by the ark for over 300 years.

It should be noted, the book of Job was probably written during this general time, perhaps even centuries earlier during the patriarchal period (ca. 2200 B.C. – 1800 B.C.). We do not know where this book was kept after it was written, especially since it could have been written many years after the events recorded in it occurred.

Also, the first psalm—Psalm 90 which was written by Moses—was written during this time in approximately 1410 B.C. Then, in the time of the kings, centuries later, most of the rest of the psalms were written by David and some of the Levites.

1. Job	unknown
2. Genesis	1445 – 1405 B.C.
3. Exodus	1445 – 1405 B.C.
4. Numbers	1445 – 1405 B.C.
5. Leviticus	1445 – 1405 B.C.
6. Deuteronomy	1445 – 1405 B.C.
7. Psalm 90	1410 B.C.
8. Joshua	1405 – 1385 B.C.

B. THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES AND KINGS (1043-931 B.C.)

During this time, Samuel wrote Judges and Ruth, which were added to the continuing unfolding of Israel's history. Also, the psalms, written by David, other Levites (Asaph, the sons of Korah), Solomon, Heman and Ehan, were written at this time for use in public worship. Then, Solomon, who built the temple in Jerusalem, wrote Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon and kept these portions of Scripture in the central location of the Temple.³ Also, 1 and 2 Samuel was added at this time, continuing the chronological history of Israel.

1. Judges	ca. 1043 B.C.
2. Ruth	ca. 1030 – 1010 B.C.
3. Psalms (Davidic, Levite)	ca. 1000 – 450 B.C.
4. Song of Solomon	971 – 965 B.C.
5. Proverbs	971 – 686 B.C.
6. Ecclesiastes	940 – 931 B.C.
7. 1 Samuel	931 – 722 B.C.
8. 2 Samuel	931 – 722 B.C.

C. THE PERIOD BEFORE THE EXILE (850 – 580 B.C.)

³ Portions of Proverbs were not compiled until the reign of Hezekiah (Prov. 25:1)

This next period was a prolific time in the composition of Scripture as seventeen books were written by the prophets. Beginning with Obadiah (850 – 840 B.C.) and concluding with Malachi (433 – 424 B.C.), this was a time in which seventeen prophetic books were written. Moreover, these canonic books were composed in both the Northern and Southern Kingdom of Israel.

PRE-EXILE PROPHETS. Eleven prophetic books were written *before* the captivity of God’s people which occurred to Israel, the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. at the hands of the Assyrians and to Judah, the Southern Kingdom in 586 B.C. at the hands of the Babylonians. These pre-exilic prophets are:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. Obadiah | 850 – 840 B.C. |
| 2. Joel | 835 – 796 B.C. |
| 3. Jonah | ca. 775 B.C. |
| 4. Amos | ca. 750 B.C. |
| 5. Micah | 735 – 710 B.C. |
| 6. Hosea | 750 – 710 B.C. |
| 7. Isaiah | 700 – 681 B.C. |
| 8. Nahum | ca. 650 B.C. |
| 9. Zephaniah | 635 – 625 B.C. |
| 10. Habakkuk | 615 – 605 B.C. |
| 11. Jeremiah | 586 – 570 B.C. |

PRE-EXILE HISTORY. Lastly, seven additional history books were written to bring forward the record of Israel’s history. Two historical books were written *before* the exile, which are:

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1. I Kings | 561 – 538 B.C. |
| 2. II Kings | 561 – 538 B.C. |

D. THE PERIOD DURING THE EXILE (590 – 530 B.C.)

EXILE PROPHETS. Another three prophet books were written *during* the time of the exile, referring to the period of time when Judah was taken captive out of her land into Babylon. Those three prophetic books are:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Ezekiel | 590 – 570 B.C. |
| 2. Lamentations | 586 B.C. |
| 3. Daniel | 536 – 530 B.C. |

E. THE PERIOD AFTER THE EXILE (520 – 400 B.C.)

POST-EXILE PROPHETS. In addition, three final prophetic books were written *after* the exile when Israel was restored in her land. These last three prophetic books are:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. Haggai | ca. 520 B.C. |
| 2. Zechariah | 480 – 470 B.C. |
| 3. Malachi | 433 – 424 B.C. |

POST-EXILE HISTORY. Also, after the exile, the final five history books were written, documenting the story of Israel's restoration in the land.

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. Ezra | 457 – 444 B.C. |
| 2. I Chronicles | 450 – 430 B.C. |
| 3. II Chronicles | 450 – 430 B.C. |
| 4. Esther | 450 – 331 B.C. |
| 5. Nehemiah | 424 – 400 B.C. |

F. THE PERIOD OF AUTHENTICATION (A.D. 28–30)

By the time of Christ, the complete Old Testament canon was recognized. When Jesus accused the scribes of being guilty of slaying all the prophets God had sent to Israel “from Abel to Zechariah” (Lk 11:51), He was acknowledging the completed canon. Abel's death is recorded in Genesis; Zechariah's death is found in 2 Chron. 24:20-21, the last book in the Hebrew Bible of Jesus' day. Thus, to say “from Abel to Zechariah” is to say “from the beginning of the Bible to the end.” To put it into modern vernacular, we would say, “from cover to cover”, or “from Genesis to Malachi.”

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

It is crucial that every Christian know his or her Bible better than any other book. It is not enough that we be familiar with great verses or great stories in the Bible. We must know the Bible as a whole and be familiar with the individual parts which make the whole. Thus, we begin a book-by-book journey through the pages of the Old Testament. As we begin this study, let us remember: “Bread is baked, not for analysis, but for consumption. A house is built, not to be surveyed, but to be inhabited. The Bible is given to us that we might know God and live the life of His plan for us.”⁴

I. HOW DOES THE BIBLE REFER TO THE OLD TESTAMENT?

- Daniel 9:2 refers to the Old Testament prophetic writings as “the Scriptures”.
- Our Lord customarily referred to the Old Testament books as “the Scriptures” (Matt. 21:42; Mk. 14:49; Jn. 5:39).
- Christ’s followers likewise called the Old Testament “the Scriptures” (Lk. 24:32; Acts 18:24; Rom. 15:4).
- Paul referred to the Old Testament as “the sacred writings” (2 Tim. 3:15), “the Holy Scriptures (Rom. 1:2), and “the very words of God” (Rom. 3:2).
- Jesus once referred to them as “the law of Moses, and the Prophets and the Psalms” (Lk. 24:44), echoing the formal arrangement in the Hebrew.
- The Old Testament is more briefly termed “the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 5:17; 11:13; Acts 13:15).
- Even more briefly, the term “law” comprehends all the Old Testament (Lk. 10:34; 12:34; 15:25; 1 Cor. 14:21).
- The term “Scripture”, referring to all of the Old Testament (2 Tim. 3:16), was later taken to refer to the books of the New Testament as well (2 Pet. 3:16)

II. WHAT DOES THE TERM OLD TESTAMENT MEAN?

Since the close of the second century A.D., the terms “Old Testament” and “New Testament” have been used to differentiate the Hebrew from the Christian Scriptures. The terms Old Testament and New Testament mean strictly Old and New Covenant. The word “covenant” meant an arrangement made by one party, which the other party involved could accept or reject but could not alter. Specifically, the OT primarily records God’s dealings with Israel on the basis of the covenant given through Moses at Mount Sinai, while the New Testament describes the new arrangement of God and men through Christ on the basis on the New Covenant. (Ex. 24:1-8; Lk. 22: 24-20; 2 Cor. 3:6-11).

The Old Covenant revealed the holiness of God in the righteous standard of the law and promised a coming redeemer; the New Covenant shows the holiness of God in His righteous Son, Jesus Christ. Further, the Old Covenant, or Old Testament, is then a designation for the

⁴ W. Graham Scroggie, *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption: An Inductive Study of Salvation in the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Pub., 1994).

thirty-nine books of the Mosaic Law, the book of the Covenant (2 Kings 23:2). Paul, in this sense, speaks of reading the “Old Covenant” (2 Cor. 3:14).

III. WHAT ARE THE LANGUAGES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The Old Testament was written almost entirely in Hebrew, a Semitic dialect akin to Phoenician and Ugaritic. The only portions written in Aramaic, another Semitic language similar to Hebrew, were Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Daniel 2:4-7:28, and Jeremiah 10:11.

IV. WHAT ARE THE DIVISIONS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The Bible begins with the Old Testament (OT). As previously mentioned, the word “testament” means covenant, meaning a contractual agreement between two people—in this case, between God and man. Here is God’s arrangement for salvation under the Old Covenant, or what is sometimes called the “Covenant of the Law.” The OT consists of thirty-nine books written over a period of approximately 1000 years, beginning with Genesis, which was recorded in c. 1450 B.C. and spanning until the book of Nehemiah, written in c. 400 B.C. Moreover, the OT can be divided into three major sections: *historical*, *practical*, and *prophetical*.⁵

HISTORICAL SECTION:

Genesis to Esther (17 Books)

These first seventeen books record a consecutive historical account of Israel, beginning with the creation of the earth and continuing until the time of Israel’s return to its land after the days of Babylonian exile.

The Law: The first five books—Genesis to Deuteronomy—were written by Moses and, are thus, called *The Books of Moses*. They are also referred to as *The Law* because they contain the giving of the Mosaic Law at Mount Sinai. These foundational books were written by Moses during Israel’s wilderness journey from 1450-1410 B.C. and focus upon the birth and development of the nation of Israel. A brief overview of these books are:

- Genesis – the *Election* of Israel
- Exodus – the *Redemption* of Israel
- Leviticus – the *Sanctification* of Israel
- Numbers – the *Direction* of Israel
- Deuteronomy – the *Instruction* of Israel

⁵ The OT was originally divided into two main sections: the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 7:12; Luke 10:16, 29, 31). This was later expanded into a three-fold division: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings (Luke 24:44). The Greek translation of the Old Testament (e.g. the Septuagint) arranged the books into the four divisions that we use today: the Law (Genesis-Deuteronomy), History (Joshua-Esther), Poetry (Job-Song of Solomon), and Prophecy (Isaiah-Malachi).

Books of History: the next twelve books—Joshua to Esther—pick up the story where it left off at the end of Deuteronomy and contain the continuing history of Israel in their Promised Land from the time of their entrance under Joshua, through their successes and struggles as a nation under the judges, kings, and prophets, to their return under Ezra and Nehemiah. These books can be further divided into two sections: pre-exile and post-exile.

Pre-exilic: The first seven history books were written *after* Israel entered the Promised Land and *before* they were taken captive into Babylon and record the conquest and settlement of Canaan in Joshua-Ruth (1405-1043 B.C.), as well as the history of Israel's monarch under the kings in 1 Samuel-2 Chronicles (1043-586 B.C.).

Joshua – the *Possession* of Israel
Judges – the *Oppression* of Israel
Ruth – the *Devotion* of Israel
1 Samuel – the *Stabilization* of Israel
2 Samuel – the *Expansion* of Israel
1 Kings – the *Deterioration* of Israel
2 Kings – the *Deportation* of Israel

Post-exilic: The last five historical books were written when Israel returned to their land after seventy years of Babylonian captivity (605-536 B.C.) to repossess their land and rebuild the holy city of Jerusalem, which had fallen into ruin (536-420 B.C.).

Ezra – the *Restoration* of Israel
Nehemiah – the *Reconstruction* of Israel
Esther – the *Preservation* of Israel
1 Chronicles – the *Administration* of Israel
2 Chronicles – the *Administration* of Israel

PRACTICAL SECTION:

Job to Song of Solomon (5 Books)

This middle section of the OT consists of five books containing practical instruction for how to live abundantly by walking in “the fear of the Lord” (Job 28:28; Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7; 9:10; Eccl. 12:12-13). These five books are sometimes called the *poetical* books because they are written in the form of Hebrew poetry. Every realm of human experience is conveyed here—worship, suffering, love, marriage, child rearing, work, finances, integrity, trials, etc.

Job – How to *suffer*
Psalms – How to *worship*
Proverbs – How to *walk*
Ecclesiastes – How to *enjoy*
Song of Solomon – How to *love*

PROPHETICAL SECTION:

Isaiah to Malachi (17 Books)

These final seventeen books of the Old Testament—Isaiah to Malachi—are prophetic in that they were recorded by a prophet of Israel looking into the future of Israel and the nations of the world, focusing upon the coming Messiah and “the Day of the Lord.” Sometimes called *The Prophets*, this section comprises approximately one-fourth of Scripture and can be further divided into two sub-categories: the *major* and *minor* prophets.

Major Prophets: The first five prophetic books, Isaiah to Daniel, are called the *major* prophets, not because their writings are more important than those of the minor prophets, but because the length of their material is relatively exhaustive. They primarily focus upon the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and the Kingdom of God. The identity of these books are:

Isaiah – *Servanthood* of Messiah
Jeremiah – *Salvation* of Messiah
Lamentations – *Severity* of God
Ezekiel – *Splendor* of Messiah
Daniel – *Sovereignty* of Messiah

Minor Prophets: The final twelve prophetic books, Hosea to Malachi, are called the *minor* prophets because their message, when compared to the major prophets, is concise and brief. But, clearly, their content is a major message of massive importance. Written over a period of 400 years from Obadiah (840 B.C.) to Malachi (430 B.C.), these minor prophets, like the historical writings, can be divided into two sub-sections: *pre-exile* and *post-exile*.

Pre-exilic: After Israel entered and possessed her land, these first nine books were written in the years of Israel’s kings when it was a divided nation, *prior* to her Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. Three were prophets to the northern kingdom (Jonah, Amos, Hosea) and six were prophets to the southern kingdom (Obadiah, Joel, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk).

Hosea – *Compassionate* Lover
Joel – *Strong* Refuge
Amos – *Powerful* Rebuilder
Obadiah – *Holy* Deliverer
Jonah – *Resurrected* One
Micah – *Ruling* Judge
Nahum – *Jealous* Avenger
Habakkuk – *Sovereign* One
Zephaniah – *Righteous* Christ

Post-exilic: These final three books of the Old Testament—Haggai to Malachi—were written *after* Israel returned to her land from Babylonian captivity. Each is a clarion call to God’s people to complete the work of rebuilding Jerusalem and, more importantly, to recommit their hearts to the Lord.

Haggai – *Rebuilding* the Temple
 Zechariah – *Redemption* of the Messiah
 Malachi – *Appearance* of the Messiah

Amazingly, the thirty-nine books of the OT fit together with perfect balance and symmetry. The three sections—historical, practical, and prophetic—comprise of five books in the middle (poetical) with seventeen books on either side. Both of the two sections with seventeen books are sub-divided into two smaller categories of five books (The Law and the Major Prophets) and twelve books each (Historical and The Minor Prophets). Thus numerically speaking, the OT is (historical, prophetic) grouped in clusters of [17-5-17] or [(5-12)-5-(5-12)].

Between the two Testaments (OT/NT), God was silent as no prophet spoke from heaven, and no Scripture was recorded from God. It was as though the Heavens were brass as there were 400 years of silence until the time of Christ’s advent upon the earth.

V. WHAT IS THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT?

< 6000 BC	Creation Adam & Eve Cain & Abel
Between 6000 & 4000 BC	Noah World-wide Flood
Between 2300 & 2000 BC	Abraham Isaac Jacob & Esau Twelve Sons of Israel 400 years in Egypt
Between 1400 & 1290 BC	Moses Exodus from Egypt Judges
1020 BC	King Saul
1000 BC	King David
961 BC	King Solomon Temple constructed
925 BC	Kingdom divided
722 BC	Northern kingdom to Assyria
605, 597, 589 BC	Southern kingdom to Babylon Temple destroyed
538 BC	Persian defeat of Babylon Exiles begin to return
520 BC	Temple rebuilt
458 BC	Ezra – teacher of the Law
445 BC	Nehemiah Rebuilding of Jerusalem’s walls
332 BC	Conquest by Alexander the Great
63 BC	Conquest by Rome

It should be noted that the arrangement of the books of the Old Testament that we have in copy today does not follow the chronological order in which the recorded events occurred.

The following listing shows which books cover approximately the same periods of time:

- Promised Patriarchs: Genesis, Job
- Egyptian Enslavement: Exodus
- God's Call to Holiness: Leviticus
- Wilderness Wanderings: Numbers
- Second Giving of the Law: Deuteronomy
- Land Possession: Joshua, Judges, Ruth
- United Kingdom: 1 & 2 Samuel
- Divided Kingdom: 1 Kings, 1 Chronicles, Song of Solomon, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes
- Pre-Exilic Kingdom: 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah
- Exilic Kingdom: Daniel, Ezekiel, Lamentations
- Post-Exilic Kingdom: Ezra, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Nehemiah

VI. WHAT IS THE UNIFYING THEME OF THE OLD TESTAMENT?

Although the Old Testament consists of thirty-nine individual books, it is nevertheless comprised of one central theme, namely, the coming of Jesus Christ. Astounding, Jesus, Himself, speaks to this very point as Christ made direct claims to be the unifying theme of Old Testament Scripture (Lk. 24:27, 44; Jn. 5:39; Matt. 5:17).

To be sure, the Old Testament predicts His coming in prophecy and prepares His coming in history. The Gospels then present Jesus redemptively as the Son of God, Son of Man, come to seek and to save that which was lost. Moreover, the book of Acts likewise portrays Him preached and His Gospel propagated in the world. The Epistles expound His redemptive work, present intercession and imminent return. Finally, the Revelation reveals Him as the consummation of all the plans and purposes of God.

Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament! He is the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies (Lk. 24:27, 44). He is the fulfillment of the Levitical priesthood (Heb. 10:5-7). He is the fulfillment of the moral precepts (Matt. 5:17). And He is the fulfillment of the salvation promises made to God's chosen people (Jn. 5:39). Simply put, "through all the ages, one increasing purpose runs, a way is being prepared for the feet of the Redeemer." The historical, practical and prophetic books that are the Old Testament point to one core truth, the foundation of Scripture, that is, Jesus Christ.

OLD TESTAMENT

NEW TESTAMENT

Anticipation of Christ	—————>	Realization of Christ
Christ concealed	—————>	Christ revealed
Christ contained	—————>	Christ explained
Christ in shadow	—————>	Christ in substance
Christ in ritual	—————>	Christ in reality
Christ in picture	—————>	Christ in person
Christ as foretold	—————>	Christ as fulfilled
Christ in prophecy	—————>	Christ in history

VII. REASONS TO STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. The Bible is incomplete without the Old Testament.
2. The ministry of Christ would be an enigma without the Old Testament.
3. The historical setting of Christianity is furnished by the Old Testament.
4. Key truths concerning God are to be found and gleaned from the Old Testament.
5. The Old Testament is spiritual food for the Christian.

INTRODUCTION TO “THE LAW”

The first five books of the Bible—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy—form the first divinely prompted literary collection acknowledged as Scripture by the Hebrew community. Further, these five books comprise a complete literary unity called the Pentateuch, from the Greek meaning “five scrolls” or five-volume book”. The Hebrew speaking Jewish community traditionally referred to these five books as the “Torah” (or instruction, direction in holiness). Likewise, there are numerous biblical designations for this portion of Scripture. The first five books are referred to as:

- a. The Law (Josh. 8:34; Ezra 10:3; Matt. 12:5; John 7:19)
- b. The Book of the Law (Josh. 1:8; Neh. 8:3; Gal. 3:10)
- c. The Book of the Law of Moses (Josh. 8:31; 2 Kin. 14:6)
- d. The Book of Moses (Ezra 6:18; Mark 12:26)
- e. The Law of Moses (Dan. 9:11; Mal. 4:4; Luke 2:22; John 7:23)
- f. The Law of the Lord (Ezra 7:10; Luke 2:23, 24)
- g. The Law of God (Neh. 10:28, 29)
- h. The Book of the Law of God (Josh. 24:26; Neh. 8:18)
- i. The Book of the Law of the Lord (2 Chr. 17:9; Neh. 9:3)

Still, all together, the five independent books of the Pentateuch were written as an unbroken unity in content and historical sequence, with each succeeding book beginning where the former left off.

Additionally, the Pentateuch has two basic divisions: Genesis 1-11 and Genesis 12-Deuteronomy 34. In view of the fall of mankind and the subsequent fellowship fracture in fellowship between God and man, the first division poses the question, “How can that relationship be repaired or restored?” The second division then provides the answer, or at least partial answer, to the human dilemma as depicted in Genesis 1-11. The solution is rooted in the idea of covenant bonding between God and Abram in Genesis 12:1-3. This passage constitutes the focal point of the second division and actually summarizes the key themes of the Pentateuch narratives: Yahweh’s covenant, Abraham’s posterity, divine election and blessing, and the grant of a “promised land.”

Part II explains how Israel (through Abraham) became the elect, covenant people of Yahweh and God’s instrument for revealing Himself and restoring the broken and corrupted relationship between the Creator and His creation. The Pentateuchal accounts are significant both for Israel, due to their unique covenant relationship with Yahweh, and for the nations of the world, since the destiny of humanity is ultimately tied to Israel’s covenant with God.

A. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PENTATEUCH

1. These Books are Foundation for Spiritual Insight (Deut. 31:9-13; Josh. 1:7-8; Ps. 1:2)
2. These Books Point Specifically to Christ (Luke 24:27, 44)

B. THE MAJOR THEMES

1. GOD

a. The Creator (Gen. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 14; Ex. 20, 31; Deut. 32)

- Creator [*qana*] (Gen. 14:19, 22; Deut. 32:6)
- to create [*bara'*] (Gen. 1:1, 21, 27; 2:3, 4; 5:1, 2: 6:7)
- to make [*asah*] (Gen. 1:7, 16, 25, 31; 2:3, 4; 3:1; 5:1; 6:6, 7; 7:4; 9:6; Ex. 20:11; 31:17; Deut. 32:6, 15)
- to form [*yasar*] (Gen. 2:7, 18, 19)

b. The Powerful One (Gen. 6-9; Ex. 7-11, 14, 16, 17)

c. The Faithful One (Gen. 8:1; 19:29; Ex. 2:24; 6:5; Lev. 26:42, 45)

2. COVENANT: a relationship between two parties formalized by a binding agreement with a sworn oath

a. Secular (Gen. 21:27, 32; 26:28; 31:44)

b. Theocratic

- Noahic (Gen. 6:18; 9:8-17)
- Abrahamic (Gen. 15:18; 17:1-21)
- Mosaic (Ex. 19:5; 24:7, 8; Lev. 26:15, 25; Deut. 4:3; 5:6-22; 31:24-29)
- Priestly (Num. 25:10-13)

3. SIN (Gen. 3, 6, 11; Ex. 32; Lev. 10; Num. 14, 20, 25; Deut. 1)

4. ELECTION (Gen. 11-12, 25, 49; Deut. 7)

5. EXODUS (Gen. 15, 50; Ex. 12-15, 19, 20; Deut. 5)

6. LAW (Ex. 20-23; Lev. 1-7, 11-15, 17-27; Num. 5-6, 18-19, 28-30; Deut. 5-26)

7. THE LAND (Gen. 10:19; 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:7-21; Ex. 3:8; Num. 13:17-33; 34:1-12; Deut. 1:7-8)

C. THE KEY FIGURES

1. ADAM (Gen. 1-5)

2. NOAH (Gen. 5-11)

3. ABRAM/ABRAHAM (Gen. 11-25)
4. JACOB / ISRAEL (Gen. 25-50)
5. MOSES (Ex. 2- Deut. 34)

D. THE PURPOSE

1. The Promise/Fulfillment Understanding: The partial fulfillment of God's promise to the Patriarchs pertaining to the seed, divine relationship and land. God's promise is both the divine initiative in a world where human initiatives always lead to disaster and a reaffirmation of the primal divine intentions for man. (Gen. 12:1-3)
2. The Kingdom Understanding: God chose Israel as the seed of Abraham to be the priestly nation that would restore mankind to its proper role as rulers for God over His created earth. (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 19:4-6)
3. The Faith/Failure Understanding: The importance of faith toward God seen before Sinai and the failure of Israel under the Mosaic Covenant because of a lack of faith pointing to a future King and a New Covenant. (Gen. 15:6)

E. THE LITERARY STRUCTURE

- 1a. Traditional: Five Books
- 1b. Promise/Fulfillment:
 - a. The Need for Abraham (Gen. 1-11)
 - b. The Giving of a Son (Gen. 12-50)
 - c. The Giving of the Law (Ex. 1 – Lev. 27)
 - d. The Giving of the Land (Num. 1 – Deut. 34)
2. Kingdom
 - a. The Primeval History (Gen. 1-11)
 - b. The Patriarchal History (Gen. 12-50)
 - c. The Beginning of the History of the Nation of Israel (Ex. 1 – Deut. 34)
3. Faith/Failure
 - a. The Faith and Failure of the Patriarchs (Gen. 1-50)
 - b. The Faith and Failure of the Sons of Israel (Ex. 1 – Num. 25)
 - c. The Future Failure of Israel in the Land and the Future Repentance and Restoration of Israel to the Land (Num. 26 – Deut. 34)

THE ETERNAL DECREE OF GOD

The Bible begins with the statement, “In the beginning,” and ends with a book called, “The Revealing,” or “The Revelation.” To be sure, it is a look through time and into eternity. The Bible describes a divine plan begun in the mind of God, and it ends with man before the face of God. It unfolds historically in time and space. God purposes some events, and God permits evil events. But all are a part of His divine will. In the pages of Scripture, God’s plan gradually unfolds in time-space events, purposed and permitted, which ultimately result in the glory of God. In the study of the Big Picture of Scripture, we will trace the goodness of God and show how our understanding of His sovereign, eternal plan brings us insight, hope, and a clear sense of direction and guidance for our lives.

God’s ‘decree’ speaks of a singular act of His infinite mind whereby the future is ordained, and is the theological term from the comprehensive plan for the world and its history that God sovereignly established in eternity past. In Ephesians 1:11, Paul refers to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will. Likewise, the Shorter Version of the Westminster Confession states, “The decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.” By this statement, the decree of God is to fulfill His eternal purpose in history. The outworking of history, then, is designed to demonstrate the glorious character of God.

The Scriptures, likewise, make mention of God’s decree in numerous passages, and under a variety of terms. The word ‘decree’ is found in Psalm 2:7. In Ephesians 3:11 we read of His “eternal purpose.” In Acts 2:23 we find mentioned, His “determinate counsel and foreknowledge.” In Ephesians 1:9 of the mystery of His “will” and of His “good pleasure.” In Romans 8:29 that He also did predestinate. God’s decrees are called His “counsel” to signify they are consummately wise. Psalm 33:10-11 states, “The LORD nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation.” Likewise, Peter asserts in Acts 15:18 that all of God’s works are known unto God before the foundation of the world.

Therefore, we affirm the doctrine of God’s eternal decree because of the overwhelming testimony of Scripture. But additionally, A.W. Pink is quick to point out that were we to deny God’s divine decree, such an offense “would be to predicate a world and all its concerns regulated by undesigned chance or blind fate. Then what peace, what assurance, what comfort would there be for our poor hearts and minds? What refuge would there be to fly to in the hour of need and trial? None at all. There would be nothing better than the black darkness and abject horror of atheism.” But to the contrary, Pink adds, “O my reader, how thankful should we be that everything is determined by infinite wisdom and goodness! What praise and gratitude are due unto God for His Divine decrees. It is because of them that ‘we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose’ (Rom. 8:28).”

Having briefly examined the doctrine of God’s decree and before we venture into the Genesis account, a very important set of historical events took place that we want to touch on: the entrance of evil, the angelic creation, and the rebellion of Lucifer.

We know from many passages in Scripture that God created angels to carry out His will. The word angel itself means “messenger.” But, in the providence of God, there was a mutiny in Heaven. Ezekiel 28:12-17 reads,

"Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord GOD: "You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you."

Also, Isaiah 14:12-15 states,

"How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' "Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit."

At this very moment Satan exalted himself and attempted to assassinate God, he was evicted from heaven. Since that moment, Satan has worked to destroy everything God has done.

- God created angels (sons of God, sons of the mighty, hosts of the Lord, His servants, burning ones, seraphim, cherubim, watchers) for the purpose of worshipping and serving Him
- The elect angels (1 Tim. 5:21) remain in the presence of God and will never fall away, but the non-elect (demon) angels fell with Satan in their rebellion
- God created man – Satan attacks Adam & Eve, corrupting everyone to follow
- Satan attacks creation by perverting the world with sin – God destroys the earth in the flood
- Satan attacks and stirs up mankind to build the tower of Babel – God disperses everyone
- God designates Abraham as the father of His chosen people, Israel, and Satan attacks...

Satan is always looking for a way to destroy God’s work. Though temporarily he has a measure of freedom, he is damned eternally and that promise is made right here in the beginning of Genesis. Satan is currently the “prince of the power of the air,” and “ruler of this world,” but has been foreordained unto eternal judgment in the lake of fire. That is just a brief background that

we will come back to so that you continue to see the war that Satan continually wages against God – but more importantly so that you can see how invincible God is and utterly foolish and irrelevant Satan has become!

Again, all of the operations of human history have been ordained and permitted by God. In His eternal decree, He declares the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:10).

REFLECTION / DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is the thought of God's grand, eternal design stimulating, comforting or confusing to you? Explain.
2. Church history reveals that the doctrine of God's eternal decree is typically, only held by those with a high view of God ('big God' people). In light of this, how do 'big God' people typically respond to conflicts, tragedies and disappointments in life?
3. How do 'little God' people typically respond to these problems? What counsel can be given to these?
4. What are some characteristics of angels as the Bible describes them?
5. What do you need in order to withstand Satan's attacks so you can walk with Christ more fully?