

WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD KNOW
LESSON 2
THE BIBLE: Old Testament Survey

INTRODUCTION

Last week we learned that the Bible is our source of absolute truth (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is a miniature library made up of 66 books separated into two sections; the Old Testament and the New Testament. God inspired the authors in the writing of the Bible and we use the Bible as our standard of living. Today we are going to do a brief survey of the Old Testament and next week we will survey the New Testament.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

Through studying the Bible we learn the answers to many popular questions. Raise your hand if you have ever heard the following question, "What is the purpose of my life?" I am sure that all of us have heard this important question asked several times in our lives. Jesus was also asked this question. The question was phrased this way: "What is the greatest commandment?" but it is essentially the same question. Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 22:35-40 and we will see how Jesus answered this question.

In Matthew 22:35-40 we read that, "One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind,' "This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

Jesus teaches that the purpose of life is to love God with every part of your life and to love other people. He goes on to say that the entire Law and Prophets are summed up by these two commandments. What does Jesus mean by this statement?

When Jesus was walking the earth the New Testament had not yet been written; so, the Bible, or the Scriptures, was what we refer to as the Old Testament. *Jesus* referred to the Old Testament as the Law and the Prophets, so Jesus is teaching that the entire Old Testament can be summarized by loving God and loving other people.

We were created by God to have a loving relationship with Him and with others. However, in the third chapter of the book of Genesis, Adam and Eve disobey God. God is holy and he cannot tolerate sin, so the sin of Adam and Eve caused separation from God. Since we are all descendants of Adam and Eve, and because we have all sinned (Romans 3:23) we have been separated from God and we cannot fulfill our purpose of loving God and loving other people.

THE OLD TESTAMENT POINTS TOWARD THE COMING CHRIST

Because God loved the world so much, He provided the only way for our sins to be forgiven so that we can fulfill our purpose in life of loving God and loving others. God demonstrates the ultimate act of love by promising to send the Christ who will live a sinless life and will sacrifice his life to provide the only way to redeem us from our sins.

The Old Testament points towards the coming of the Christ. The word "Christ" is not the last name of Jesus; rather it is a title that means the "anointed One." God was sending the Christ, the Messiah, to provide the only way for our sins to be forgiven allowing us to enter into a relationship with God.

What does the Old Testament teach us? In essence the Old Testament teaches two main points: (1) God created us to love Him, but our sin has separated us from Him (2) Because of God's great love for us he will send the Christ who will provide the only way for our sins to be forgiven so that we can fulfill our purpose in life.

You may be asking yourself the question, "Does the Old Testament really point towards the coming Christ?" Open your Bibles to Luke 24:13-35. (You can read this entire section or paraphrase it, but your key verse is 24:27).

Luke 24:27, "Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."

Jesus is on the journey to Emmaus with some of his confused followers. Jesus uses the Scriptures, again the Scriptures in this context refer to the Old Testament, to explain that the Christ would be crucified, buried and would rise again. Jesus uses the Old Testament to teach that he is the long awaited Christ and that through the perfect life, death and resurrection of Jesus we have the only way for our sins to be forgiven.

THE TYPES OF LITERATURE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament is made up of 39 books which are divided into 5 different sections:

- The Books of Law
- The Books of History
- Poetry & Wisdom
- Major Prophets
- Minor Prophets

These sections show that there are several literary types of writings found in the Old Testament, but they are all written to point to the plan of redemption that will come through the Christ.

Before we look at each section and some specific books of the Old Testament, here are some thought questions to get you started: **(TEACHERS:** Depending on the size and makeup of your class, you could have your participants answer out loud. Otherwise, use these just as thought questions):

- Where do we find the stories of: Creation, the Flood of Noah, Joseph's coat of many colors, Moses & the burning bush, the Ten Commandments, Joshua & the walls of Jericho, David & Goliath, the 23rd Psalm, Daniel in the lion's den and Jonah & the whale (big fish)?

Now...let's look at a quick overview of each of the 5 sections. [The first paragraph of the overviews comes from the *Rose Book of Bible Charts, Maps and Time Lines.*]

The Books of the Law

The first five books of the Old Testament are referred to as the Law, or the Pentateuch, or the Torah. The traditional evangelical view is that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch. The law contains stories about the creation of the world (Genesis 1 & 2), the flood (Genesis 6-9), Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph (his coat is found in Genesis 37) the children of Israel in Egypt, the Exodus, and the time the children of Israel spent in the wilderness before entering the Promised Land under the leadership of Moses. The burning bush story is found in Exodus 3. The Books of the Law also recorded the law God gave to the people on Mt. Sinai which laid down the regulations for sacrifice, worship, and daily living.

The Christ is predicted all throughout the pages of the Pentateuch. Genesis 3:14-15 records the first prediction of the Christ when God tells the serpent that the anointed one will be coming to destroy Satan and his plan. The entire sacrificial system found in the Pentateuch points towards the Christ, the perfect lamb, who will be sacrificed to provide the way for our sins to be redeemed. Moses is the great prophet and Aaron is the high priest, but they serve as forerunners to the perfect prophet and priest who will be fulfilled through the Christ.

How does the book of law teach us to love God and to love other people? This is a fair question, but remember that Jesus made the statement that the entire law can be summed up by loving God and loving others. Take a look at the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). The first 4 commandments have to do with our relationship with God and the last 6 commandments deal with our relationship to one another.

The book of Leviticus demonstrates the same truth as the Ten Commandments. The first 9 chapters are filled with rules regarding the relationship between God and the people of Israel. Then chapter 10 contains a story about two of Aaron's sons. His sons mishandle their relationship with God (they disobeyed the first 9 chapters of the book) and they were punished by death. After this story the second half begins with rules regarding the Israelites relationship with other people. You may be asking, "How does removing mold from my house show that I love others (Lev. 14:33-57)?" If you do not remove the mold it will move over to your neighbor's house as well. So the loving thing to do is to remove the mold so that your neighbor is not affected. Jesus of course was right when he said that the law can be summed up through loving God and loving others, sometimes we just have to dig a little deeper to see that truth contained in the Pentateuch.

The 5 books are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

The Books of History

The 12 History Books continue with the story of the people of Israel and the conquest of the Promised Land in the book of Joshua (Battle of Jericho), the continuous cycle of disobedience in the book of Judges, the first kings and the United Kingdom, Divided Kingdom, the Assyrian invasion, Babylonian invasion, the years in exile, and the return from exile during the Persian rule.

The book of Judges can be summarized by the phrase "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6)." Judges portrays story after story of people living in total opposition of why God created them to live. We were created to love God and love others, but in Judges people were so sinful that they did whatever they pleased with no regard to God or to other people. When the sin got so grotesque God would bring a judge to free the people from their captors. There would be a short time of peace over the land, but as soon as the judge passed away the people would fall back into their sin.

1st and 2nd Samuel teaches us that God establishes King David, a man after God's own heart, to lead the people. The story of David & Goliath is found in 1 Samuel 17. David is known for his incredible leadership, but he too had his major moral failures. David was the great king, but he was not the perfect king. David's life pointed towards the Christ who would serve as the perfect King over the people of God.

The 12 books are: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

Poetry and Wisdom

The five Poetry and Wisdom books include hymns, proverbs, poems, and dramas. They illustrate the creative ways the people of Israel expressed themselves to God and to each other.

The Book of Psalms is the songbook of the Bible. King David is the author of a large portion of the songs. The songs serve as a way to worship God by expressing your emotions to Him. There is also a selection of Psalms that are referred to as the Messianic Psalms. The Messianic Psalms serve as a means of worship, but they also serve as prophetic materials that predict the coming of the Christ. There are numerous prophecies contained in the book of Psalms that have been fulfilled through the perfect life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ (Psalm 22 is an excellent example of a Messianic Psalm. Jesus lived out this song through his death and resurrection. Feel free to assign this Psalm for at home reading or you can read through it in class if time permits). The 23rd Psalm, which many people have heard, is the next Psalm in the songbook!

The 5 books are: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon.

Major Prophets

The five Major Prophets are not called “major” because of their message or quality, but rather because of the length of the books. The prophets brought God’s word which included warning of judgment warnings and hope for the immediate future (as well as warnings and hope for the distant future), and hope in the coming Messiah.

A prophet in the Old Testament served as a mouthpiece for God. A prophet would proclaim the word of God by both forthtelling and foretelling. Forthtelling is proclaiming the truth of God. “God wants you to quit sinning and live for him” is an example of a forthtelling statement. However, foretelling is when a prophet proclaims a word from God that will be fulfilled in the future. The book of Isaiah contains many examples of foretelling prophecies regarding the Christ. (Isaiah 48:2-5, Isaiah 9:6-7, Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 11:1-5 etc.) By the way, the story of Daniel in the lion’s den is found in Daniel, chapter 6.

The 5 books are: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel.

Minor Prophets

The 12 Minor Prophets are just as important as the Major Prophets. They are called “minor” because of the shorter length of the books. The Minor Prophets also brought God’s word to the people regarding judgment and hope and they contain both prophecies of forthtelling and foretelling.

God’s desire is for us to love him and to love other people. He hates sin, but he loves a repentant heart. God teaches us in Jeremiah 18-7-9 that if a sinful nation repents God will forgive the nation and hold back his punishment. The teaching of Jeremiah 18 is portrayed beautifully through the book of Jonah. Jonah is commissioned to proclaim destruction on the evil city of Nineveh. Jonah does not want to go to the city of Nineveh, but after an adventure with a large fish, God changes Jonah’s mind. When the people of Nineveh heard that the judgment of God was upon them they repented of their sins. God, being true to his word, forgave them and did not destroy them. God’s desire is for us to love him and to love other people and he spared the people of Nineveh when they repented of their sinful ways.

Those 12 books are: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

CONCLUSION

The Old Testament answers the question of the purpose of life and it points to the coming Christ who will enable us to fulfill our reason for living. The Old Testament predicts the coming Christ, but it is not until the New Testament that we realize that the Christ is Jesus of Nazareth.

We are some times tempted to spend all of our quiet time in the New Testament, because we do not feel that the Old Testament applies to us today. This is an incorrect understanding of the Old Testament. God has inspired all scripture and it is applicable to our lives to grow in our walk with the Lord. We need to challenge ourselves to view the Old Testament as inspired scripture that points to the Christ and to spend more time studying the books of the Old Testament.

The Law

GENESIS
EXODUS
LEVITICUS
NUMBERS
DEUTERONOMY

Poetry

JOB
PSALMS
PROVERBS
ECCLESIASTES
SONG OF SOLOMON

Major Prophets

ISAIAH
JEREMIAH
LAMENTATIONS
EZEKIEL
DANIEL

The Structure of the Old Testament

JOSHUA
JUDGES
RUTH
1 SAMUEL
2 SAMUEL
1 KINGS
2 KINGS
1 CHRONICLES
2 CHRONICLES
EZRA
NEHEMIAH
ESTHER

History

Minor Prophets

HOSEA
JOEL
AMOS
OBADIAH
JONAH
MICAH
NAHUM
HABAKKUK
ZEPHANIAH
HAGGAI
ZECHARIAH
MALACHI

The Old Testament Prophecies Fulfilled By Christ

OLD TESTAMENT PREDICTION	NATURE OF THE PROPHECY	NEW TESTAMENT FULFILLMENT
1. Isa. 7:14	BORN OF A VIRGIN	Mt. 1:22, 23
2. 2 Sam. 7:11, 12; Ps. 1:32:11; Isa. 9:6; 16:5; Jer. 23:5	GIVEN THE THRONE OF DAVID	Lk. 1:31, 32
3. Dan. 2:44; 7:14, 27; Micah 4:7	THIS THRONE TO BE AN ETERNAL THRONE	Lk. 1:33
4. Isa. 7:14	TO BE CALLED EMMANUEL	Mt. 1:23
5. Isa 40:3-5; Mal. 3:1	TO HAVE A FORERUNNER	Lk. 1:76-78; 3:3-6; Mt. 3:1-3
6. Micah 5:2	TO BE BORN IN BETHLEHEM	Mt. 2:5, 6
7. Ps. 72:10; Isa. 60:3, 6, 9	TO BE WORSHIPPED BY WISE MEN AND PRESENTED WITH GIFTS	Mt. 2:11
8. Num. 24:8; Hosea 11:1	TO BE IN EGYPT FOR A SEASON	Mt. 2:15
9. Jer. 31:15	BIRTHPLACE TO SUFFER A MASSACRE OF INFANTS	Mt. 2:17, 18
10. Isa. 11:1	TO BE CALLED A NAZARENE	Mt. 2:23
11. Ps. 69:9; 119; 139	TO BE ZEALOUS FOR THE FATHER	Jn. 2:16, 17
12. Isa. 11:2; 61:1, 2; Ps. 45:7	TO BE FILLED WITH GOD'S SPIRIT	Lk. 4:18, 19
13. Isa. 53:4	TO HEAL MANY	Mt. 8:16, 17
14. Isa. 9:1, 2; 42:1-3	TO DEAL GENTLY WITH THE GENTILES	Mt. 12:17-21; 4:13-16
15. Isa. 6:9, 10	TO SPEAK IN PARABLES	Mt. 13:10-15
16. Isa. 53:3; Ps. 69:8	TO BE REJECTED BY HIS OWN	Jn. 1:11; 7:5
17. Zech. 9:9	TO MAKE A TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM	Mt. 21:4, 5
18. Ps. 8:2	TO BE PRAISED BY LITTLE CHILDREN	Mt. 21:16
19. Ps. 118:22, 23	TO BE THE REJECTED CORNERSTONE	Mt. 21:42
20. Isa. 53:1	THAT HIS MIRACLES WOULD NOT BE BELIEVED	Jn. 12:37, 38
21. Ps. 41:9; 55:12-14	TO BE BETRAYED BY HIS FRIEND FOR THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER	Mt. 26:14-16, 21-25
22. Isa. 53:3	TO BE A MAN OF SORROWS	Mt. 26:37, 38
23. Zech. 13:7	TO BE FORSAKEN BY HIS DISCIPLES	Mt. 26:31, 56
24. Isa. 50:6	TO BE SCOURGED AND SPAT UPON	Mt. 26:67; 27:26
25. Zech. 11:12, 13; Jer. 18:1-4; 19:1-4	HIS PRICE MONEY TO BE USED TO BUY A POTTER'S FIELD	Mt. 27:9, 10
26. Isa. 53:12	TO BE CRUCIFIED BETWEEN TWO THIEVES	Mt. 27:38
27. Ps. 69:21	TO BE GIVEN VINEGAR TO DRINK	Mt. 27:34, 48; Jn. 19:28-30
28. Ps. 22:16; Zech. 12:10	TO SUFFER THE PIERCING OF HANDS AND FEET	Mk. 15:25; Jn. 19, 34, 37; 20:25-27
29. Ps. 22:18	HIS GARMENTS TO BE PARTED AND GAMBLER FOR	Lk. 23:34; Jn. 19:23, 24
30. Ps. 22:7, 8	TO BE SURROUNDED AND RIDICULED BY HIS ENEMIES	Mt. 27:39-44; Mk. 15:29-32
31. Ps. 22:15	THAT HE WOULD THIRST	Jn. 19:28
32. Ps. 31:5	TO COMMEND HIS SPIRIT TO THE FATHER	Lk. 23:46
33. Ps. 34:20; Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12	NO BONES TO BE BROKEN	Jn. 19:33-36
34. Zech. 12:10	TO BE STARED AT IN DEATH	Jn. 19:37; Mt. 27:36
35. Isa. 53:9	TO BE BURIED WITH THE RICH	Mt. 27:57-60
36. Ps. 16:10	TO BE RAISED FROM THE DEAD	Mt. 28:2-8
37. Ps. 24:7-10; Isa. 52:13	TO ASCEND	Mk. 16:19; Lk. 24:51

The Eight Main Periods of the Old Testament

Time Period	Major Person Associated	Books of Bible
Beginnings Creation Fall Flood	Adam, Eve, Noah	Genesis 1-9
Founding Fathers	Abraham	Genesis 12-50
Exodus: The Law	Moses	Exodus Deuteronomy
Conquest	Joshua	Joshua
Judges	Samson	Judges Ruth
The Kingdom	David	I Samuel through II Chronicles
Exile	Daniel	Ezekiel Daniel
Return	Ezra	Ezra through Esther

SILENCE