

SUMMARY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE PENTATEUCH

Genesis – Creation and fall/Promises to the patriarchs

- 1-2 Creation
- 3 The Fall
- 3:15 *Protoevangelium* (“first gospel”)
- 12:1-7 Promises to Abraham (later confirmed to Isaac and Jacob)

Exodus – Rise of Moses/A nation freed and founded

- 12-14 The Exodus
- 19-24 Covenant at Sinai (Mosaic Covenant)

Leviticus – Covenant regulations (covenant people were to be a holy people)

- 27:34 Covenant stipulations

Numbers – Preparing to possess the land (from Mt. Sinai to Moab)

- 36:13 Preparing the people to possess the land

Deuteronomy – (“Second law”) An amplification of the law to the second generation

- 27:1-8 Remember the covenant
- 28 Blessings for covenant obedience / curses for covenant disobedience

HISTORICAL BOOKS

Joshua – Concerns the land (claim, conquer, distribute, live, and rest in the land)

- Leadership moves from Moses to Joshua
- 1:7-8 Live according to the covenant
- 24 The covenant renewed

Judges – Covenant unfaithfulness and the resulting oppression

- 2:10-23 The downward spiral of covenant unfaithfulness
- 21:25 The theme of the book

Ruth – Transition from the patriarchs to the monarchy

- God’s faithfulness shown by his preserving a family line, which led to David
- 4:18-22 Lineage of David

Samuel – Transition from the judges to the monarchy

- Samuel – Saul – David
- 2 Sam. 7:8-11 An echo of Genesis 12
- 2 Sam. 7:16 Davidic Covenant

Kings – Explains why Israel went into exile (God brought punishment because they failed to keep the covenant)

- Kingdom is divided after Solomon's reign (Judah in the South / Israel in the North)

2 Kings 17:6-8 Northern Kingdom fell – 722 BC (Assyrian Captivity)

2 Kings 25 Southern Kingdom fell – 587-6 BC (Babylonian Captivity)

2 Kings 25:27-30 Hope of restoration (Jehoiachin was a descendant of David)

Chronicles – God's faithfulness to the Davidic Covenant (lots of similarity to Kings but important differences too)

- From Adam to Abraham (Gen. 3:15)

- From Jacob to David (Gen. 12:1-3)

- From David to post-exilic descendants (2 Sam. 7:16)

- God's promises had not been abandoned

2 Chron. 36:22-23 Edict of Cyrus (539 BC)

Ezra-Nehemiah – Restoration of Israel/Return to the Land

Ezra 1:1-4 Edict of Cyrus (539 BC)

Ezra 3:8 Zerubbabel – grandson of Jehoiachin, descendant of David

Neh. 9:5ff Confession of sin

Neh. 10 Renew the covenant

Esther – God's providence in the life of his people

- Tells the story of those Jews who did not leave from exile

9:1ff God delivers his people

POETRY/WISDOM BOOKS (a category to themselves)

- Contain inspired human responses to the words and deeds of God that take place throughout the history of Israel

- Contrasts the righteous and the ungodly, the believer and the unbeliever

- Emphasizes the fear of the LORD and love for the Law

- The righteous may suffer but they will be vindicated in the final judgment

Job – Wrestles with the suffering of the righteous and the justice of God

Psalms – The hymnbook of the Israelites (prayers of praise, confession, lament, thanksgiving, trust, hope, etc.)

Proverbs – Encourages wisdom and warns against folly / teaches that true wisdom is found in fearing the LORD

Ecclesiastes – Ponders the fleeting nature of earthly life / discusses the foolish pursuits of humanity that do not take the fear of God into account

Song of Songs – A love poem celebrating the sexual love between a husband and wife

Lamentations – Laments Jerusalem’s tragic destruction

MAJOR PROPHETS

Isaiah – Ministered in Judah from about 742-700 BC / His prophecy addresses issues facing his contemporaries as well as the situation of the future exilic generation in Babylon.

7:14;9:1-7 The birth of Christ foretold
53 The suffering servant

Jeremiah – Lived and ministered in Judah during its final days prior to the fall of Jerusalem. After the fall of the city, he was forced to accompany a group of refugees to Egypt. His prophecy focuses both on contemporary events and the hope of future restoration.

31:31-34 The New Covenant

Ezekiel – An exile in Babylon whose prophetic ministry took place between 593-571 BC. He prophesied both judgment and restoration for God’s people.

34 Yahweh as Israel’s Shepherd / Promise of a New David
36:22-28 Echo of the New Covenant

Daniel – Lived in Babylon during the exile and served both Babylonian rulers (Nebuchadnezzar) and Persian rulers (Cyrus). Daniel portrays God as the sovereign Ruler of the universe, who controls the destinies of both pagan empires and his exiled people. Through divine revelation, Daniel prophesied of God’s future plans to restore his people Israel once the times of the Gentiles had run their course.

MINOR PROPHETS

Hosea – God’s love is constant and stubborn. It would not give up despite Israel’s apostasy. (c. 758-722 BC)

3:1-5 Judgment and restoration prophesied

Joel – Sin is great and serious; judgment (“the day of the LORD”) had to come (uncertain, perhaps c. 590 BC, but possibly after 500 BC)

2:28-29 Outpouring of the Spirit prophesied

Amos – Israel’s sin and that of their neighbors was full; judgment was near (c. 760 BC)

Obadiah – God’s rule is shown by judgment on Edom (the Edomites took advantage of the Jews during the Babylonian invasion) (right after the fall of Jerusalem, 586 BC)

Jonah – God shows compassion for the nations: Nineveh (during the reign of Jeroboam II, see 2 Kings 14:25)

Micah – Announces judgment on both Israel and Judah for their idolatry and social injustice (sometime between 740 BC and 686 BC)

Nahum – God’s wrath was revealed in the destruction of Nineveh (sometime before the fall of Nineveh in 612 BC)

Habakkuk – The trials of faith due to Babylon had to be patiently endured (sometime between 612 BC and 599 BC)

Zephaniah – Joel’s theme about “the day of the LORD” resumed (sometime during the reign of Josiah, 640-609 BC)

Haggai and Zechariah 1-8 – Zerubbabel’s building the temple showed that the time for fulfillment of God’s benevolent purposes for Jerusalem was near. It was happening. (520 BC)

Zechariah 9-14 – The history of pre-exilic Israel is summarized from the viewpoint of post-exilic Judaism under Persian rule. (520 BC until sometime early in the 400s)

Malachi – God’s love has been revealed. Remember God’s instruction. Listen for God’s prophetic word. (unknown, perhaps c. 460 BC)

So at the close of the Old Testament, you have these promises which are not yet fulfilled (particularly, the promises made to Abraham and David). This shows that the Old Testament is pointing forward to the One who can fulfill these promises, Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:1; Luke 1:30-33).