

## **Bible Basics – Lesson 2**

### **Sunday, February 11, 2018**

**\*\*Reflections: Share one “nugget” from a Scripture that interested you.**

### **Our God-Breathed Bible**

The Old Testament is the revelation of God to show man what God is like, who God is, what God tolerates and does not tolerate, and how God desires holiness and punishes sin. In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, God spoke. What we have is the Word of God, not the word of man.

All Scripture is God breathed. God breathed His Word into men and they wrote it down, word by word what God breathed into them. It was more than dictation. They were not just listening to some voice and writing mechanically every word; it was flowing through the heart and their soul and their mind and their emotions and their experiences. But it came out every word the Word of God. As God breathed into them the message and they were carried along by the Holy Spirit, they said it and some of them wrote it down. Miraculous, supernatural, inexplicable process that yields to us the Word of God.

— *John McArthur: “Introduction to the Bible”*

### **Why Study the Old Testament?**

1. Of course, the main reason to study the Old Testament is its inherent character as the authoritative Word of God.
2. It is God Himself addressing us through special revelation.
3. But for Christians there are other impelling reasons to study the Old Testament.
4. You cannot understand the significance of the second part of the story without the first (Creation/New Creation, Fall/Redemption).
5. You cannot understand many of the arguments in the New Testament without understanding the Old Testament (see Philippians 2:5-11; Jesus’ use of Jeremiah 7 when He cleans the temple)
6. You will not understand much of the imagery of the New Testament without the Old Testament (use of Daniel 7 in Revelation 1).
7. You miss out on beautiful portrayals of God and His grace without the Old Testament (Exodus; Hosea; Jonah).
8. You will not understand Jesus and His mission without the Old Testament. People say, “Well, you just need Jesus.” I say that you will not understand Jesus without the Old Testament.

9. Jesus' teachings, what He did, and His person — all these have deep roots in the Hebrew Scriptures.
- a. See, for example, the genealogy in Matthew 1. Matthew is stating that Jesus has a history (from the Old Testament) that must be understood in order to understand the Gospel which follows in the book.

### **Witness of the Old Testament**

- Testimony of Moses: See Exodus 24:4, etc.
- Testimony of the Prophets: The prophetic formula, "Thus says the LORD," implies an equality between the prophet's and God's words (many examples).
- Testimony of the Narrators: Scriptural narrators refer to God speaking "through" the prophets (e.g., Jeremiah 37:2; Zechariah 7:7, 12).
- Thus, the universal view of the Old Testament itself is that the written words are divinely inspired and authoritative.

### **Prophets as Witnesses**

- Perhaps some of the strongest evidence of the Bible's truthfulness and thus authority is the evidence of fulfilled prophecy—particularly regarding Jesus Christ.
- Many clear and specific prophecies are fulfilled by Christ's person and His work.
- For instance, Isaiah correctly sees that the Messiah would be born of a virgin (7:14), would be both God and man (9:6), and would preach good news (61:1).
- Compare Micah 5:2 on His person and Psalm 22 on His work.

### **The Suffering Servant**

- In Isaiah 52:13-53:12, the "Song of the Suffering Servant," we have the most precise Old Testament prophecy regarding Jesus' work. This passage presents a straightforward depiction of our Savior's suffering and substitutionary work.
- So clear is its fulfillment that one could almost read the text and forget it is an Old Testament passage.
- Throughout the centuries this one passage has led thousands to Christ, beginning perhaps with the Ethiopian eunuch (as told in Acts 8:26-40).

<b>The Old Testament (39 Books)</b>		
<b>History (17 Books)</b>	<b>Poetry (5 Books)</b>	<b>Prophecy (17 Books)</b>
<b>The Law</b>		<b>Major Prophets</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Genesis</li> <li>2. Exodus</li> <li>3. Leviticus</li> <li>4. Numbers</li> <li>5. Deuteronomy</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Job</li> <li>2. Psalms</li> <li>3. Proverbs</li> <li>4. Ecclesiastes</li> <li>5. Song of Solomon</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Isaiah</li> <li>2. Jeremiah</li> <li>3. Lamentations</li> <li>4. Ezekiel</li> <li>5. Daniel</li> </ol>
<b>History</b>		<b>Minor Prophets</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Joshua</li> <li>2. Judges</li> <li>3. Ruth</li> <li>4. 1 Samuel</li> <li>5. 2 Samuel</li> <li>6. 1 Kings</li> <li>7. 2 Kings</li> <li>8. 1 Chronicles</li> <li>9. 2 Chronicles</li> <li>10. Ezra</li> <li>11. Nehemiah</li> <li>12. Esther</li> </ol>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hosea</li> <li>2. Joel</li> <li>3. Amos</li> <li>4. Obadiah</li> <li>5. Jonah</li> <li>6. Micah</li> <li>7. Nahum</li> <li>8. Habakkuk</li> <li>9. Zephaniah</li> <li>10. Haggai</li> <li>11. Zechariah</li> <li>12. Malachi</li> </ol>

The Bible is the Word of God. It is inerrant (incapable of being wrong), the truth, and not contradictory.

- The Scriptures were written by approximately 40 different men.
- These men lived in several different countries and cultures.
- They lived in different eras (1400 B.C. through A.D. 90).
- They wrote in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek

Despite these differences, God moved the writers to focus on His glory in man's redemption through one central figure – Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

## The Old Testament (39 Books)

### The Pentateuch (*Penta too*) (5 Books)

The first five books of the Old Testament were written by Moses around 1400 B.C. They often are referred to as the “Five Books of Moses” or the “Pentateuch.”

List the books of the Pentateuch in the order you find them in your Bible.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The book of beginnings: Creation, man, sin, redemption, God’s nation.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ God delivers His people from Egypt.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Atonement, holiness, and worship through sacrifice and purification.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ God’s people continually disobey and wander in the wilderness for 40 years.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Moses’ great discourses to prepare Israel to enter the Promised Land.

### History (12 Books)

The historical books were written between 1400 and 450 B.C. and describe God’s dealings with His chosen people, Israel, the Hebrew nation.

List these books in the order you find them in your Bible.

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 7. _____  |
| 2. _____ | 8. _____  |
| 3. _____ | 9. _____  |
| 4. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 12. _____ |

### **Poetry (5 Books)**

The following five books are poetic, describing in poetry and song God's greatness and His dealings with men.

List these books in the order you find them in your Bible.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The suffering and loyal trust of a man who loved God
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Songs of praise and instruction
3. \_\_\_\_\_ God's practical wisdom for daily life
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The emptiness of an earthly life without God
5. \_\_\_\_\_ A celebration of marital joy

### **Major Prophets (5 Books)**

A prophet was a person commissioned by God to deliver His message to men. These books are called "Major Prophets" because they generally are longer than the writings of the "Minor Prophets." The Major Prophets were written approximately between 750 and 550 B.C.

List these books in the order you find them in your Bible.

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ |          |

### **Minor Prophets (12 Books)**

The last 12 books of the Old Testament were written approximately between 840 and 400 B.C.

List these books in the order you find them in your Bible.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Summary of the Books of the Old Testament**

*biblehub.com/summary*

### **Genesis**

The genre of Genesis is a Narrative History, and Genealogies. It was written by Moses about 1450-1410 B.C. Key personalities include Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Joseph. This book was written to record God's creation of the world and to demonstrate His love for all that He created.

Genesis is the first book of the Law and also the first book of the entire Bible. The name Genesis literally means "In the Beginning". It explains the actual events of one of the most debated subjects of our current day...the origin of life. Genesis describes the Lord God, who is infinite and all-powerful, creating everything that exists, by the power of His spoken Word, out of nothing. He essentially creates material matter out of nonmaterial nothing.

### **Exodus**

The book of Exodus consists mainly of two genres, Narrative History and Laws. It was written by Moses about 1450-1410 B.C. The key personalities include Moses, Miriam, Pharaoh, Pharaoh's daughter, Aaron, and Joshua.

It was written to record the events of Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt. It describes the events to the reader in chronological order and also lists the Laws that God has given to the Israelites, in order to guide them in their relationship with Him.

### **Leviticus**

Leviticus is composed of two basic genres Narrative History and Law. It was written by Moses about 1445-1444 B.C. The setting of Leviticus mainly appears to take place at Mt. Sinai. The key personalities of Leviticus include Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu Eleazar, and Ithamar.

It was written to draw the Israelites to the understanding of the infinite holiness of God, and that He desires them to act in a holy manner toward Himself. In doing this, God gives them many instructions to carry out. It describes Moses giving procedural instructions for the Israelites, especially to the Levitical priests, about how they are to carry out offerings, ceremonies, and celebrations. The word "Holy" is mentioned more times in Leviticus, than any other book in the Bible.

## **Numbers**

The book of numbers is largely Narrative History as far as its genre. It was written by Moses about 1450-1410 B.C. Key personalities include Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Joshua, Caleb, Eleazar, Korah, and Balaam.

The purpose of the book of Numbers is to tell about how Israel prepared to enter the promise land but sinned and was punished. It describes Moses taking two population censuses, hence the name Numbers.

## **Deuteronomy**

The genre of the book of Deuteronomy is not much different from that of Exodus. It is Narrative History and Law, although there is a Song from Moses just after he commissions Joshua. This song describes the History that the Israelites had experienced. Moses wrote Deuteronomy approximately 1407-1406 B.C. The key personalities are Moses and Joshua.

Moses wrote this book to remind the Israelites of what God had done and to remind them of what God expects of them. The name literally means "Second Law". Moses gives "the Law" for the second time.

## **Joshua**

The genre of the book of Joshua is Narrative History. It was authored by Joshua the leader of the Israelites circa 1405-1383 B.C. The key personalities are Joshua, Rahab, Achan, Phinehas, and Eleazar. It was written to assure the Israelites the Living God will reward obedience, and also to record the entrance and conquest of the promise land.

Joshua demonstrates his faith in God as He follows the orders given to Him and takes leadership of the nation. Joshua truly was "*strong and courageous*" (1:7).

## **Judges**

The book of Judges includes several interesting genres; Poetry, Riddles, and mainly Narrative History. Its author is anonymous but it is usually assumed that Samuel, the prophet wrote it. It was written about 1086-1004 B.C. Key personalities include Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Abimelech, Jephthah, Samson, and Delilah.

Its purpose was to teach Israel that God is faithful and certain to punish sin therefore each person must remain loyal and devoted to Him. This book shows the immediate generations after the conquest of the promise land and unfortunately, the results of unfaithfulness are similar to what we have seen in the past... awful.

## **Ruth**

The book of Ruth is the Narrative of a love story, yet also has some important Genealogy. The timeline of this book is intertwined during the period of the Judges. The author was anonymous, but some believe it was perhaps written by Samuel the prophet; however, it is unlikely that he was alive when this book was written. It was written about 1046-1035 B.C. Key personalities include Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz.

Its purpose was to demonstrate the kind of love, and faithfulness that God desires for us. It shows the difference between what happens when a nation does not follow in obedience to the covenant of God (Judges), and when God's people follow in faithfulness within the covenant (Ruth).

## **1 Samuel**

1<sup>st</sup> Samuel is a story of Narrative History and includes a great deal of Drama. It is written by the last of the Judges for which the book is named, Samuel. It was written at about 930 B.C. Key personalities include Eli, Hannah, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, and David. It was written to show Israel how they chose a king but in the process, they blatantly neglected and abandoned God.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel**

The book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel is a Narration of David as he becomes the King of Israel and the time during his reign, yet it also includes two psalms in hymns of praise in the final chapters. Its author is Samuel the prophet who wrote it at about 930 B.C. The key personalities are David, Joab, Bathsheba, Nathan, and Absalom. It was written to record the history of David's reign and to demonstrate effective leadership under the submission of God. Approximately half of the book tells of King David's success and the other half shows his failures.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Kings**

The book of 1st Kings is Narrative History and Prophecy. The author is anonymous; however, some suggest the prophet Jeremiah. It was written about 560-538 B.C. The key personalities are David, Solomon, Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Elijah, Ahab, and Jezebel. The purpose of 1st Kings is to contrast those who obey and disobey God throughout the ruling kings of Israel and Judah. The book describes the rule of Solomon as the last king of Israel and then the split of the kingdom after his death. It includes a great prayer to the Lord in chapter 8. The writer of the books of Kings describes the events of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms after the division.

## **2nd Kings**

The book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings is Narrative History and Prophecy concerning the affairs of the divided kingdoms. The author is anonymous; however, some suggest the prophet Jeremiah. It was written about 560-538 B.C. Key personalities are many; they include Elijah, Elisha, the woman from Shunem, Naaman, Jezebel, Jehu, Joash, Hezekiah, Sennacherib, Isaiah, Manasseh, Josiah, Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, and Nebuchadnezzar. Its purpose was to demonstrate the value of those who obey God, and the fate of those who refuse to obey and make Him ultimate ruler.

In this book, God performs amazing miracles through his prophets as He sends these messengers to herald His messages. The two kingdoms are far from the Lord and lost in the monotonous confusion of their sins. God's prophets bring the only hope to this lost yet, chosen nation.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles**

The book of 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles is a book of Narrative History, and Genealogies. The author appears to be the prophet Ezra who wrote it circa 430 B.C. It covers the events from 1000 to 960 B.C. Key personalities are King David and Solomon. This book parallels some of 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel, and therefore describes similar events. It was written after the exile; its purpose was to encourage the remnant that had come out of the Babylonian captivity. It begins with the ancestry of the nation's past, but it is not chronological.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles**

The book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles is a Narrative History. The author appears to be the prophet Ezra who wrote it circa 430 B.C. It covers the events from the beginning from King Solomon's reign in 970 B.C. up to the beginning of the Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C. The key personalities are King Solomon, the queen of Sheba, Rehoboam, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Joash, Uzziah, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, and Josiah.

It was written to emphasize the blessings of the righteous kings and to expose the sins of the wicked kings. It parallels some parts of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings. Like 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles, it is written from the viewpoint of a priest who spoke from spiritual perspectives, including revivals. It too, was written after the exile and focuses on correct worship to YHWH.

## **Ezra**

Ezra is a book of Narrative History and Genealogies. It was written by Ezra at approximately 440 B.C. and records events up to 450 B.C. Key personalities include Cyrus, Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, Darius I, Artaxerxes I, and Zerubbabel.

Ezra's purpose was to accurately record the events of the return from the Babylonian exile, after a seventy-year period and the events that surround the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. God is faithful in fulfilling His promises and so the Jews return to Jerusalem from their exile in Babylon.

### **Nehemiah**

The book of Nehemiah is Narrative History. Nehemiah authored it at about 430 B.C.

Key personalities include Nehemiah, Ezra, Sanballat, and Tobiah. Nehemiah wrote it to records the events of returning to Jerusalem and rebuilding the walls in 445 B.C.

Jerusalem had a temple but there was no protection for the city from further attack. Nehemiah travels to Jerusalem and uses his leadership skill to rally a citywide construction crew. Within a few weeks, the walls around Jerusalem were built and standing tall and their enemies lost their confidence.

### **Esther**

The genre of the book of Esther is Narrative History. Its author is anonymous however; some believe Mordecai, (Esther's cousin and guardian), wrote it. It was written approximately 470 B.C. in Persia. Esther became queen in 479 B.C. The key personalities are Esther, Mordecai, King Ahasuerus (or Xerxes), and Haman.

Its purpose is to demonstrate God's love and sovereignty in all circumstances. It is a post-exile story about Jews who stayed behind after most returned to Jerusalem after captivity. Babylon was conquered by Persia and Esther miraculously becomes the queen of the land, and saves her people.

### **Job**

The book of Job is Narrative History. Its author is unknown yet it is possible that Job himself wrote it. It is possible that Job is the oldest of any book of the Bible written approximately 2100-1800 B.C. Key personalities of this book include Job, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Naamathite, and Elihu the Buzite.

In Job, we see a man who God allows to be directly attacked by Satan. He is an example of faithfulness as he loses everything important to him yet remains faithful to God. Its purpose is to illustrate God's sovereignty and faithfulness during a time of great suffering.

## **Psalms**

The genre of Psalms is Songs and Poetry of all kinds. It is written by multiple authors; David wrote 73, Asaph wrote 12, the sons of Korah wrote 9, Solomon wrote 3, Ethan, and Moses each wrote one (Ps. 90), and 51 of the Psalms are anonymous. They were written over the span of approximately 900 years (Beginning at the time of Moses 1440 B.C. and through the captivity in 586 B.C.).

The Psalms include praises of joy, laments, blessings, and thanksgivings. They are directed at God and they help us to express and communicate ourselves to Him. We read about the Psalmist's emotions from one extreme to another, from praising, delighting in and worshipping God with fervor, to repentance and crying out to Him in despair.

Psalms sits at the very center of the Bible. The major themes found in Psalms are Praise, God's Power, Forgiveness, Thankfulness and Trust. *"My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever"* (145:21).

## **Proverbs**

The genre of Proverbs is mainly "Proverbs" as the name describes, there are also some Parables and Poetry. This book was written mainly by Solomon, the wisest king ever to rule, however some of the later sections are written by Lemuel and Agur. It was written during Solomon's reign 970-930 B.C. He asked God for wisdom to rule God's nation and He granted the request.

The main purpose of this book is to teach wisdom to God's people. Proverbs are short clever explanations, which are easy to remember. They contain truisms. These are things which are typically true however, not always. For example, *"He who tills his land will have plenty of bread"* (12:11), it is typically true that one who works his land will have bread but it is not a guarantee to always be true. They deal with life, principles, good judgment, and perception. They often draw distinctions between a wise man and a foolish man with parable type examples.

## **Ecclesiastes**

The book of Ecclesiastes contains Proverbs, maxims, sayings, and is largely an autobiographical story. Solomon wrote it late in his life, approximately 935 B.C. He had become aware of the mistakes that he made throughout his life and began to document them.

The purpose of Ecclesiastes is to spare future generations the suffering and misery of seeking after foolish, meaningless, materialistic emptiness, and to offer wisdom by discovering truth in seeking after God.

It appears that Solomon once again, wants to teach the reader wisdom, *“I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven. It is a grievous task which God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with”* (1:13).

### **Songs**

The book of Song of Solomon is a large love poem filled with smaller poems of different kinds. Solomon is the author and he wrote it sometime during his reign 970-930 B.C. It is a story of a bridegroom who is in love with his bride. Key personalities are King Solomon, the Shulamite girl, and friends.

The story greatly emphasizes the sanctity of marriage and that it is designed, blessed and consecrated in the eyes of the Lord. The purpose of “Song of Songs”, as it is also called, is a picture of God’s love for His people. Although there is explicit sexual content, it is a book in which we can learn the depths of God’s authentic love for us and what should be in the sacredness of marriage.

### **Isaiah**

The book of Isaiah is Narrative History, Prophetic Oracle, and even a Parable (*chapter 5*). The prophet Isaiah wrote it at approximately 700 B.C. (Chapters 40-66, written later in his life approx. 681 B.C.). Isaiah is the first book in the section called Major Prophets. They are called Major Prophets because of the large amount of material they wrote not because their message was more important than any other prophets were. Key personalities are Isaiah, his two sons, Shearjashub and Maher-shalal-jash-baz.

Isaiah contains some of the most incredible prophecies of any book. It contains foreknowledge, in incredible details about the Messiah, and the future reign of Jesus Christ. The purpose of the book of Isaiah was to call God’s nation, the nation of Judah, back to faithfulness and to declare the coming Messiah “Immanuel”. God calls and commissions His prophet to declare to Judah and Israel condemnation, conviction, and ultimately great hope.

### **Jeremiah**

The book of Jeremiah is Prophetic Oracle and Narrative History, although not completely in chronological order. The prophet Jeremiah wrote it sometime during his ministry about 626-586 B.C. Key personalities are the many kings Judah, Baruch, Ebdemelech, King Nebuchadnezzar, and the Rechabites.

Its purpose was to warn of the destruction that they were about to face and to urge Judah to return and submit to God. Jeremiah was a priest who God calls to be His prophet. Jeremiah identifies their sins and treachery, as he wants them to realize the serious condition of their sinful ways. He then gives prophecies of the coming king and the New Covenant that would be made.

### **Lamentations**

The book of Lamentations is book of sorrowful songs or poems. The name implies that the topic is expressing grief over something (to lament). Jeremiah, also known as the “weeping prophet” writes this after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. It was written soon after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.; he was an eyewitness. He predicted this destruction (as did others), watched it take place, and now in this book he is sadly reflecting on it. Key personalities are the prophet Jeremiah and the people of Jerusalem.

Its purpose was to express despair and teach God’s people that disobedience to the Lord results in immense suffering and distress. Jeremiah pours out his emotions in compassion, and empathy for God’s nation, as he watches them inhabit a foreign land.

### **Ezekiel**

The book of Ezekiel is Narrative History, Prophetic and Apocalyptic in genre and even contains Parables. The prophet Ezekiel wrote it approximately 571 B.C. (this date is accurately precise because this book contains more defined dates than any other book in the Bible.) Key personalities include Ezekiel, Israel’s leaders, Ezekiel’s wife, King Nebuchadnezzar, and “the prince”.

It was written to announce judgment upon Judah, to allow them one last chance to repent. It also foretells of the coming deliverance of God’s nation from captivity in Babylon. It mainly discusses the events during the Babylonian captivity. Ezekiel is a priest who is called by God to deliver His messages.

### **Daniel**

The genre of the book of Daniel is Narrative History, Prophetic Oracle, and it includes Apocalyptic material. The prophet Daniel wrote it around 530 B.C. and his writings records the events of the Babylonian captivity in 560-536 B.C. to which Daniel was a servant. It also describes the apocalyptic visions given by God, and reveals the events and plans for everyone’s future. Key personalities of this book include Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Belshazzar, and Darius.

The purpose of this book is to provide a historical account how the Lord God protected and provided for His faithful followers while in captivity. It also includes a vision of future redemption and hope.

### **Hosea**

The book of Hosea is a Narrative History and Prophetic Oracle. Hosea is the first book in the sections of Minor Prophets. They are called Minor Prophets not because their material is less important or insignificant, but because of the size of the book they wrote was shorter in length. The prophet Hosea wrote it at approximately 715 B.C. It records the events from 753-715 B.C. including the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722. The key personalities are Hosea, Gomer, and their children.

Its purpose was to illustrate the spiritual adultery of Israel and God's boundless love for His sinful people. Hosea brings God's message to the wicked Northern Kingdom.

During this time, they are active in oppressing the poor in slavery and worshipping idols. God, because of His grace, sent another opportunity for Israel to repent and turn to Him. Shortly thereafter, the Northern Kingdom went into permanent captivity.

### **Joel**

The genre of Joel is Narrative and Prophetic Oracle. The prophet Joel wrote it around 841-835 B.C. sometime before the fall and exiles of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Key personalities are Joel and the people of Judah. Its purpose was to call the Southern Kingdom to repentance or prepare for the coming judgment. Joel describes the locust that inflicts severe damage to everything in their paths and warns that it is only the beginning of what is to come.

### **Amos**

The purpose of the book of Amos was to announce God's holy judgment on the Kingdom of Israel (the Northern Kingdom), call them to repentance, and to turn from their self-righteous sins and idolatry. God raised up the prophet Amos, as an act of His great mercy to a people who repeatedly shunned and disobeyed Him.

### **Obadiah**

The book of Obadiah is a book of Prophetic Oracles. The prophet Obadiah wrote it. Its authorship is difficult to date but was possibly written about 853-841 B.C. or 605-586 B.C. The key personalities are the Edomites.

The purpose of Obadiah is to show that God will judge all those who are against His children, His chosen people; Edom is used as the example of this truth.

Obadiah is only one chapter (*the shortest book in the Old Testament*) yet it tells of God's prophet Obadiah as he announces God's powerful and authoritative judgment on the nation of Edom. This is the fateful end of the nation of Edom. They had been in conflict with Israel since ancient times, in reality Edom is the descendants of Esau, Jacobs's brother.

### **Jonah**

The book of Jonah is Narrative History and a Prophetic Oracle. The prophet Jonah wrote it approximately 785-760 B.C. before Assyria conquered Israel's Northern Kingdom. Key personalities include Jonah, the captain and the ship's crew and the people of Nineveh.

The purpose of this book is to show that God is a merciful and gracious God. Although the wicked city of Nineveh deserved to be crushed immediately, God was patient towards them. A reluctant prophet, Jonah originally ran from God before delivering a message of repentance to the nation of Nineveh.

### **Micah**

The book of Micah is a Prophetic Oracle. The prophet Micah wrote it 742-686 B.C. shortly before the Northern Kingdom's fall in 722 B.C. Key personalities are all the people of Samaria and Jerusalem.

The purpose of the book of Micah was to proclaim warning and judgment to both the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms. His message was similar to that of Isaiah and was written at about the same time. Micah described the impending judgment that would eventually exile the nation.

### **Nahum**

The book of Nahum is a Prophetic Oracle. The prophet Nahum wrote it approximately 663-612 B.C. just before the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. He was raised up to preach God's judgment for a second time to Nineveh. Jonah was the first about 120 years earlier.

Its purpose is to pronounce the final warning and judgment upon Nineveh, and he also addresses the rest of the Assyrian empire. They returned to wickedness shortly after they repented back in Jonah's day. They would neglect Nahum and his message. Within fifty years, Nineveh would be completely decimated and utterly wiped from the face of the Earth.

## **Habakkuk**

The book of Habakkuk is Narrative History and displays Prophetic Oracle. Habakkuk wrote it approximately 612-589 B.C. just before the fall of Judah in the Southern Kingdom. Key personalities are Habakkuk and the Babylonians. As is true of the many other prophets, Habakkuk is a short book. The information in it was vital since it carried God's message to His people. Its purpose was that Habakkuk was announcing a familiar message of judgment. He was identifying the wickedness and sin of Judah before them. Habakkuk declared that God is the "Rock" (1:2) and that they would be judged.

## **Zephaniah**

The small book of Zephaniah is Narrative History and Prophetic Oracle. Zephaniah wrote it circa 630 B.C. very soon before the fall of Judah in the Southern Kingdom. The purpose of this book was to show that God raised up his prophet Zephaniah to proclaim a warning of coming judgment and to encourage repentance.

The Southern Kingdom was complacent in their wicked lives. They not only suffered under wicked kings they also would suffer under the holy judgment of God. Zephaniah was God's method in bringing a stern warning of the day of the Lord "Near is the great day of the Lord...a day of wrath is that day" (1:14-15). He also brought a message of hope, when the nation would be restored.

## **Haggai**

The book of Haggai is Narrative History and Prophetic Oracle. The prophet Haggai wrote it approximately 520 B.C. Haggai is among the most carefully and precisely dated books in the entire Bible. It is a post-exilic book, meaning it was written after (*post*) the captivity (*exile*) in Babylon. Key personalities are Haggai, Zerubbabel, and Joshua.

The purpose of this book was that Haggai was called by God to encourage the people to finish the construction of the temple in Jerusalem. The construction had ceased because of opposition and because the neighboring countries, and the Jews were frightened.

## **Zechariah**

The book of Zechariah is Narrative History, Prophetic and Apocalyptic in genre. It is a post-exilic book, meaning it was written after (*post*) the return from captivity (*exile*) in Babylon. The prophet Zechariah wrote chapters 1-8 approximately 520-518 B.C. (Before the temple completed), and then wrote chapters 9-14 approximately 480 B.C. (After the temple is completed).

Zechariah is among the most precisely dated books in the Bible. Key personalities are Zechariah, Zerubbabel and Joshua.

The purpose of this book is that Zechariah wrote to encourage the remnant, who had recently returned from exile. Their faith in God was weak and they were not motivated to build the temple. They needed to learn and conform to the law of God again.

### **Malachi**

Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament and is a book of Prophetic Oracle. It is a post-exilic book, meaning it was written after the return from captivity in Babylon. The prophet Malachi wrote it approximately 430 B.C. Key personalities include Malachi and the priests. The purpose of this book is that Malachi wrote to ensure that the hearts of the Jews was right and that they were keeping God first in their lives.