

Bible Survey, part 2 – The Old Testament (The Poetical & Prophetic Books)

OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE

- **WHAT** each book is about
- **WHEN** each one was written
- **HOW** they are all interconnected

The Old Testament:

- The **HISTORICAL** books
- The **PROPHETIC** books
- The **POETICAL** books

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The **POETICAL** books:

- Job
- Psalms
- Song of Solomon
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes

Hebrew poetry is not based on “**cadence**” or “**rhyming**” – but on “**parallelism**.”

Hebrew poetry is based on taking two sentences and juxtaposing them – either in a “**repetitive**” way or in a “**contrary**” way.

“Age should speak; and increased years should teach wisdom.” Job 32:7

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”

Psalm 51:17

“The words of a wise man are gracious, but the words of a fool shall devour him.” Ecclesiastes 10:12

“When there are many words, sin is never far away, but he who restrains his lips is wise.” Proverbs 10:19

The **poetical books** deal with the **everyday affairs of human living**.

PSALMS

- Majority written by David around 1000 B.C.
- Many of them have “titles” located immediately under the Psalm number

Psalm 51

“A psalm of David after Nathan the prophet came to see him after he had gone in to Bathsheba”

Psalm 63

“A psalm of David while he was in the wilderness of Judea”



(Judean wilderness)

“O God, my soul thirsts for You . . . as in a dry land where there is no water.” Psalm 63:1

The Psalms cover the entire range of human emotion – so no matter what we’re facing in life, there’s a Psalm for us!

The “**Messianic Psalms**”

These predict with impeccable accuracy many details regarding the Messiah, even though they were written 1000 years before He was born!

“They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.” Psalm 22:18

“Then the soldiers crucified Him and cast lots for His clothes, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken [Psalm 22].” Matthew 27:35

“They pierced my hands and my feet.” Psalm 22:16b

There are about **twenty “Messianic Psalms”** and their **perfect predictions** about the Messiah is one of the greatest proofs of the Bible’s veracity.

PROVERBS

- Collection of practical and wise sayings regarding the issues of everyday life
- **31 chapters** – so it’s good to read one chapter per day each month

Anybody who runs their life according to what the Book of Proverbs says will save themselves “a bushel and a peck” of trouble!

“When there are many words, sin is never far away, but he who restrains his lips is wise.” Proverbs 10:19

“Physician, heal thyself!” Luke 4:23

Job

Deals with the issue of suffering

Ecclesiastes

Deals with the issue of living for the things of this world

Song of Solomon

- Deals with physical (sexual) love between a husband and a wife
- Makes it clear that God is **pleased** with this expression of love **within the bounds of Biblical marriage**

“Marriage is honorable in all ways and the marriage bed is holy.” Hebrew 13:4

The **PROPHETIC** books

In the Bible, “**prophecy**” means something **much broader than** just “**predicting the future.**”

In the Bible, a “**prophet**” was a person who **received direct information from God Himself** that God wanted that prophet to communicate to people.

- **Sometimes** this involved **foretelling future events**
- **Most of the time**, it involved the prophet simply **telling certain people what God wanted to say to them**

The Bible is merely “**written down prophecy.**”

The Bible is information God wanted you and me to have – which He communicated to a “prophet” – and **then told him to write it down.**

“Now this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: ‘Take a scroll and **write on it** all the words I have spoken to you . . .’” Jeremiah 36:1, 2

“Then Jeremiah called his scribe Baruch and as Jeremiah dictated the words the LORD had spoken to him, Baruch wrote them down.” Jeremiah 36:4

The Bible is written-down direct information from God [prophecy].

The Old Testament divides the Prophetic books into two groups:

- The “**MAJOR**” prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah (including Lamentations), Ezekiel, Daniel
- The “**MINOR**” prophets – Hosea through Malachi

The difference between the “**major**” and the “**minor**” prophets is not one of **importance** – but one of **length.**

The prophetic books cover the period from 800 B.C. (Obadiah/Joel/Jonah) to 400 B.C. (Malachi). (See separate attachment showing the world context of each prophet).

Just as with the Psalms, there are some **Messianic prophecies** in the prophetic books too that **do** predict future events related to the Messiah.

“But you, Bethlehem . . . out of you shall come forth the One who shall be the Ruler of Israel, whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting.” Micah 5:2 [c. 750 B.C.]

“So I said them, ‘If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages.’ So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver . . . Then I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD.” Zechariah 11:12, 13b [c. 500 B.C.]

“Then Judas was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver . . . and threw them into the Temple . . . then the chief priests took the silver . . . and bought a potter’s field.” Matthew 27:3, 5a, 6a, 7

The final prophet (Malachi) wrote around 400 B.C. – after which the Bible goes silent until the birth of Jesus.

So What?

“For what was written in earlier times [Old Testament] was written for our **learning**, that, through the **encouragement** of the [Old Testament] Scriptures, we might have **hope**.” Romans 15:4

“And the king appointed for these young men a daily provision of the king’s choice food and his wine. And he appointed that they be educated for three years that at the end of that time, they might serve before the king.” Daniel 1:5

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king’s food.” Daniel 1:8a

#1 – Under the Old Covenant, much of the king’s food was forbidden for Jews to eat.

#2 – The animals would have been slaughtered in a non-kosher way

#3 – The animals would have been offered to the idols of Babylon first.

“And the vizier said, ‘I am afraid of my lord the king. For he will see your face looking worse than the other young men, which will endanger my head before him.’” Daniel 1:10

“Then Daniel said, ‘Please test the four of us for ten days. Give us only vegetables to eat and water to drink and then compare our appearance to that of the other young men.’” Daniel 1:12, 13a

Daniel believed God was powerful enough – that if he **put God first in his life** and **honored God above the king** – God would **honor him back** and **supernaturally** nourish his body!

“At the end of ten days, the appearance of Daniel and his friends was better and their bodies fatter than all the others who had been eating the king’s food.” Daniel 1:15

“And God gave these four young men wisdom and knowledge and insight into all things.” Daniel 1:17a

“And when the king interviewed them, there was no one who matched up to them . . . and therefore, the king chose **them** to serve before him out of all the others.” Daniel 1:19, 20

“‘Those who honor Me, I will honor,’ saith the LORD.” 1 Samuel 2:30b

God has kept His promise for every man and woman who has ever put 1 Samuel 2:30 to the test – and **He’ll keep it for you and me as well!**

In every situation of life, figure out what course of action will bring the most honor to God – and then, with the Lord’s help, do it!

“‘Those who honor Me, I will honor,’ saith the LORD.” 1 Samuel 2:30b

We can **never lose** if we live this way!