

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY 1

OVERVIEW AND GENESIS



Course OT1a

(Complete)

Name: _____ Student ID: _____ Date: _____

Instructions for this course

All the reading material for this course is included in this study guide and your Bible. Materials needed are this study guide, your Bible, and answer sheets.

Before each lesson: pray for God to give a teachable heart and understanding. Begin the lesson by reading the related section in the book provided.

Answer the questions for the corresponding lesson in this study guide.

Use the required answer sheet format, putting your name and course information on each sheet (sample after the Table of Contents). Use any standard note paper (or the answer booklets if provided).

Skip a line between answers.

Always use your own words in your answers.

Try to be as clear and concise as possible.

Please do not rush! Meditate on what God wants you to learn.

Don't go to the next question until completing the current one.

If, and only if, you are taking the course as ***correspondence study*** (with written feedback from others):

After completing lessons 1 to 4, send the completed answer sheets to your course coordinator.

Only mail your answers sheets, not other materials.

All sent answers are handled confidentially.

Label the envelope's lower left with: student ID, course, and lesson numbers.

Two months are allotted for course completion.

Extensions may be granted upon request.

Your answer sheets are returned to you after review.

Keep all materials and returned answers together for future reference.

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

COURSE OT1a: OVERVIEW AND GENESIS

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Sample Answer Sheet

Your name Student ID OT1a
Course Lesson Date
number number

Question Answer

skip a line between questions

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The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed.

—Augustine (354-430)

God in the gospel brings forward nothing but what the Law contains.

—John Calvin (1509-1564)¹

The Old Testament may be likened to a chamber richly furnished but dimly lighted; the introduction of light brings into it nothing which was not in it before; but it brings out into clearer view much of what is in it but was only dimly or even not at all perceived before... Thus the Old Testament revelation is not corrected by the fuller revelation which follows it, but only perfected, extended, and enlarged.

—B. B. Warfield (1851-1921)

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Romans 15:4

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

John 5:39

For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

John 5:46-47

If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Luke 16:31

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition.

1 Corinthians 10:11

¹ *Commentaries of Calvin*, 46 vols. (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society; 1843-55; reprinted in 22 vols., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), Jeremiah 31:31-32.

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

COURSE OT1a: OVERVIEW AND GENESIS

The Old Testament Survey consists of a series of nine courses, with a total of 43 lessons. Some of the lessons are longer and some are shorter than others. We suggest not to do a longer lesson all at one time, but to break it into several different study sessions. In this first course of the series, Lesson 1 is of average length; Lesson 2 is shorter; Lessons 3 and 4 are longer.

Lesson 1

Introduction

In this lesson, please memorize the five point outline of the Old Testament (in part 4B) and the key dates of the Old Testament (part 4C). We will ask you to write these from memory at the end of the study questions.

This study guide is intended to be your guide as you study the Old Testament. The study that we are beginning must cover a great deal of material, and that material will not all be the same. There is in the Old Testament a great variety of subject matter, which will help to make our study interesting. But before we turn to this variety, it is necessary to notice some facts that will provide unity for our study. In order to do justice to our study of the parts of the Old Testament, we must first observe the Old Testament as a whole.

1. The Old Testament Is God's Word

A. From God

It is impossible to study the Old Testament fairly and honestly without first recognizing and acknowledging one basic fact: the Old Testament is God's revelation to men. It is not the entire revelation of God, but all of the Old Testament is God's Word. Unless we start with this fact, our study of the Old Testament is doomed to failure. Some people claim that this is a human

idea, imposed upon the Old Testament by men. It is not. It is found in the Old Testament. It is also found in the New Testament. The Bible testifies clearly to its divine authorship.²

It is impossible to present all the evidence to support this statement. Nor is it necessary for us to do so. Let us simply notice that over four hundred times the Old Testament says about its message: “Thus saith the LORD...” And notice what the New Testament says about the Old Testament: “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2Pe 1:21). In other words, the words of God declare that they are *God’s Word*, and for Christians that is enough.

The *Westminster Confession of Faith*³ presents this thought beautifully. After listing some of the “incomparable excellencies” of the Scripture that move us to esteem it highly, it adds: “our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by, and with, the Word in our hearts.” God the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in the hearts of His people, teaches us that the Bible is His revelation to us. Beyond this we need no proof.

B. Inspired

While we affirm that the Bible is God’s Word, we do not maintain that God wrote it directly. No hand from heaven wrote the Old Testament, as it did when it traced the message of doom on Belshazzar’s wall (Dan 5:5). God used men to write the books of the Old Testament. This fact poses a question: How can books written by men be God’s Word? The Bible gives its own answer: by means of inspiration. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2Ti 3:16). By “inspiration,” we mean that God guided the authors of the Old Testament books so that they wrote what He wanted them to write. God did this in a wonderful way. He did not ignore the personalities of the authors. He did not force them all to use the same style. He used them as they were, or perhaps we should say, as He prepared them for their work. They received His words and wrote them—each in his own style, each with his own vocabulary, each according to his own education. But what they wrote was not their own; it was God’s. The words they used were the words chosen by God, and the thoughts they expressed were God’s revelation to men.

² For more about the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, see *The Infallible Word* by C. H. Spurgeon and *The Doctrine of Revelation* by A. W. Pink, and the two courses based upon these: *The Infallible Word of God* (course IWG) and *The Divinely Inspired Word* (DW1 and DW2); all available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

³ *Westminster Confession of Faith* – one of the great confessions of the Christian faith, produced in 1645-1646 by an assembly of 121 theologians appointed by the “Puritan” Long Parliament to make proposals for reforming the Church of England.

We cannot understand precisely how this took place. That is not strange: there are many things in life that we accept without understanding them. Why should we be surprised that we cannot understand everything about such a wonderful and mysterious subject as God's inspiration of His Word? As Christians, we must humbly confess that we cannot fathom most of the ways of God (Isa 55:9). We do not understand in order that we may believe; we believe in order to understand. And when we believe that God inspired the writers of the Old Testament, the door is opened for us to understand what He has written.

C. Infallible

1. Incapable of Error

By our recognition that the Old Testament is God's inspired Word, several facts about that Word are brought to our attention. We then recognize that the Old Testament is infallible. This simply means that there are no errors in it, and more: that it is not capable of error. It does not mean that the writers of the Old Testament knew everything; there were many things they did not know. But when they wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they were kept from any error. After all, they wrote God's words; and it is impossible for God to make an error. Man may not always know what is true, but God always does: He is omniscient, He knows everything. Whether it be history or science or a basic truth of redemption, God knows it. Moreover, it is impossible for God to lie. He Himself tells us that (Ti 1:2). He is altogether holy, of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity.⁴ Thus it is impossible that there should be any errors in the Old Testament. Let us never forget what Jesus said about it: "thy word is truth" (Joh 17:17). If Jesus proclaimed the Bible to be true and yet it had errors, we could not trust Jesus or the Bible. But when Jesus proclaims it to be true and it is in fact true, then both Jesus and the Bible are reliable, trustworthy, and demand our attention.

2. Science

We should realize that not everyone believes that the Old Testament is infallible. Unbelievers often take great pleasure in pointing out places where they think the Bible is wrong. Even some people in Christian churches are influenced by such men, and give up their belief in the infallibility of Scripture. In this scientific age of ours, we are told that belief in infallibility is impossible. But this is simply not true: science has never proven the Bible to be wrong. On the contrary, new discoveries often have shown that the Bible is right and its critics are wrong.

The science of archaeology, which deals with the remains of past civilizations, studies the Bible more directly than any other science—and archaeology supports the Bible. A few examples, chosen from many, will show

⁴ **iniquity** – wickedness.

that this is so. For many years scoffers laughed at the story told in Exodus 5 about the Israelites making bricks without straw. Impossible, they said. The ancient peoples always needed a binding material for their bricks. But excavations made at the Egyptian city of Pithom, which was built by the Israelites (Exo 1:11), proved otherwise. In these buildings, the lower courses of brick were made with good chopped straw. The middle courses were made with less straw, and much of that was stubble. The upper courses were made without any straw. This agrees perfectly with the biblical story.

A second example comes from Jericho. Although sceptics have denied that the walls of Jericho could fall miraculously as pictured in Joshua 6, excavations at the site of ancient Jericho showed that this is precisely what happened. There is no evidence of the walls being battered in. “The bricks that composed the east wall lie as a streak down the eastern slope gradually getting thinner, with conspicuous traces of a general fire. Thus the outer wall fell outwards, and down the hillside, quite flat, making it possible for the invaders to enter ‘every man straight before him’ (Jos 6:5, 20).”⁵ Time after time the critics of the Bible have been silenced by the findings of archaeology.

Thus we see that science attests to the infallibility of the Bible. But notice this: science does not prove that the Bible is infallible. The infallibility of the Bible is proved by its divine authorship. It needs no human proof. Science can show that particular statements of the Bible are true, but it can never provide an adequate foundation for our belief in an infallible Bible. Only God can do that.

3. *Predictive Prophecy*

I have declared the former things from the beginning...I did them suddenly, and they came to pass. Because I knew that thou art obstinate...I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldst say, Mine idol hath done them.—Isaiah 48:3-5

God used a significant tool in the creation of His infallible Word. He used this tool because He wants us to know beyond any doubt that His Word is from God and is infallible. That tool is “predictive prophecy.” As we shall see, prophecy refers to the proclaiming of God’s truth to man. These proclaimed truths often involve God’s holiness, man’s sin, and his need to repent and return to God. But God also proclaimed another category of truth: predictive prophecy, or proclaiming beforehand what will happen in the future. The Bible is unique among the holy books of the world in its focus on the fulfilment of predictive prophecy. Most importantly, the Bible has many, many predictions of events that actually have come to pass in history. This is so important because it also establishes the Bible as coming from

⁵ Halley, H. H., *Bible Handbook*. Chicago: Henry H. Halley, 1955.

God. No one but God knows the future; He knows it because He has designed it and ordained it. He holds it all in His hands. God put predictive prophecies in the Bible so that we would know that the Bible comes from God.

In order to guard against false prophets who would mislead His people, God commanded that they be put to death (Deu 18:22). But how are people to distinguish between true and false prophets? First: does what they say match the Word of God? If not, the Word of God remains true, and the prophet is false. Second, if they predict a future event and the event does not come to pass, they are clearly a false prophet. Today we do not inflict the death penalty upon false teachers, but God's people should be discerning and avoid them at all costs (2Pe 2:1-9).

2. The Relevance of the Old Testament

A. Purpose

In our study of the Old Testament, we must never think of it as a complete unit. It is like a house that is finished on three sides. The one end is left open, because there is another room to be added. And that room is the most important room of the house: it is the New Testament. The entire Old Testament exists to lay a foundation for, and provide an introduction to, the New Testament. This is true because Jesus Christ is the center of the biblical narrative. The Old Testament points forward to Him; the New Testament centers on Him. So in our study of the Old Testament, we must always have our eyes to the future, looking ahead for the rising of the Sun of Righteousness (Mal 4:2).

The whole of God's Word is the revelation of His eternal purpose of redemption through His only begotten Son. And the Old Testament is a massive part of that revelation bearing witness to Christ. Jesus Himself declared this: "Search the scriptures...they are they which testify of me" (Joh 5:39). Likewise, after His crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus rebuked two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus for their unbelief, saying, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luk 24:27). To another group of disciples, Jesus explained, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Luk 24:44). Jesus is referring to the traditional Hebrew division of the Old Testament when He mentions the Law, prophets, and psalms. So Jesus is declaring that, from beginning to end, the Old Testament is about Him and His saving work. The apostles affirmed the same thing. For example, when Paul addressed the Jews of Rome, he persuaded them "concerning Jesus,

both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening” (Act 28:23). The whole Bible then, including the Old Testament, is God’s testimony about Jesus Christ.

New Testament believers should study the Old Testament because the *whole* Bible is inspired, infallible, and all about Jesus Christ. Because this is true, a caution is appropriate here: our reason for taking a survey such as this should not simply be a matter of wanting to know Scripture better. If this is the case, we will truly miss the point. Our heart’s desire should be to *know God*: “And this is life eternal, *that they might know thee* the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (Joh 17:3). We will know God by knowing and believing His Word; and in knowing Him, we will know ourselves as we really are and our need of Him. May the Lord reveal Himself to us as we survey the Old Testament.

B. Importance

When we see that the Bible is God’s Word, we also recognize that the Old Testament is authoritative. It speaks with all the authority of God Himself. We who are God’s creatures, and especially we who are His children, must obey His Word. What He says we must believe; what He commands we must do. We can tolerate neither doubt nor disobedience in ourselves. And this is so simply because it is God Who speaks to us in the Old Testament. If the Old Testament contained the ideas of men about God, we would be free to accept or reject their thoughts. But since it is God Who speaks, we have no choice but to believe and to obey—or else we are in rebellion against Him.

Since the Old Testament is part of God’s Word, it is applicable to our lives. If it were merely a human account of the religious experiences of the ancient Jews, this would not be true. We might find it interesting, but insist that it was of no value to us. Changing times and differing cultures might make their example nearly worthless to us. But the Old Testament is God’s Word, and God’s Word does not change. His holiness and righteousness, His loving-kindness and mercy, His wisdom and grace are the same today as they were thousands of years ago. Therefore we can discover in the pages of the Old Testament directions as to how we may live holy lives and please God. In fact, Paul tells us that the things which happened to the Israelites were recorded for our benefit (Rom 15:4). Since this is true, our study of the Old Testament must be practical. We must continually ask ourselves how these things apply to us. Therefore, we must approach our study of the Old Testament in a spirit of prayer, asking God to reveal to us His will as it is contained in His inspired Word.

God presents important lessons to us by telling isolated stories from the lives of His people. The Hebrew way of thinking is not in deductive logic like the Greeks, but in stories that illustrate universal principles of God’s truth. The principles are then emphasized through more stories, which repeat the same principles for emphasis.

In preparation for our study, then, three things are necessary for a proper understanding of God's Word: the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit, prayer, and a teachable heart. So before you begin this survey, pray that the Author of Scripture, God the Holy Spirit, will teach you. And as you study, if you discover that "what *you* think" conflicts with the Bible, throw out what you think and believe God's Word!—for the Bible says, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom 12:2). This will be a significant step toward applying God's truth to your life and obtaining the peace, joy, and eternal life that only Jesus Christ can give.

3. The Composition of the Old Testament

A. Authors

We have seen that it is impossible properly to understand the Old Testament without taking into account its divine origin and its infallible character. We must also recognize that it is impossible properly to understand the Old Testament unless we have some knowledge of its historical background. The Old Testament is a collection of thirty-nine books. Two of these books, Psalms and Proverbs, are themselves collections, containing the writings of various authors. So we can see that God used many men to write the Old Testament. In addition, He used men who lived at various times in the history of Israel. The earliest books of the Old Testament were probably written about 1500 B.C., and the last book was not written until about 400 B.C. So the writing of the Old Testament covers a period of a thousand years or more. In addition, they were written in various parts of the Middle East. Most of them originated in Palestine, but some came from Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), and some from Egypt or the Sinai Peninsula. Finally, the authors came from dramatically different backgrounds: shepherds, farmers, noblemen, and kings.

All of these factors point to the great diversity that is present in the books of the Old Testament. Yet, in spite of all these differences, there is one consistent message about who God is, what He is like, and His plan for redemption from sin. This is ensured by God the Holy Spirit inspiring each of the authors. In addition, there is one factor that links all the books and their authors together: all these authors were members of God's chosen people. All these books originated within the framework of the covenant nation. And the covenant nation was a divinely constituted organization. It was the Church⁶ of God in the Old Testament.

"Though the Bible has in it 66 books, written by 40 different authors over a period of 1,600 years, covering 4,000 years of history and so many generations of the world, relating to widely different states of society, con-

⁶ **Church** – the spiritual "invisible Church" universal, which includes all true believers throughout the world and throughout all of time, as differentiated from the "visible church": local assemblies of professing Christians.

taining such a variety of matter upon so many different subjects, and abounding in supernatural incidents—*yet it agrees in all its parts*, which becomes increasingly evident the more closely it is examined. Their consistency without collusion is too uniform to be accidental, and too incidental to have been mutually planned.”⁷ The whole Bible, therefore, must be the divinely inspired Word of God.

B. The Collection of the Books

The writers of the Old Testament recorded God’s revelation as He had given it to them. As these books appeared, God’s people recognized that they were God’s Word, used them as such, and gradually gathered them into a collection. This collection is known as the Jewish canon (a “canon” is simply a list, in this case a list of inspired books). The Jewish canon is exactly the same as our Old Testament. The collection was completed by the early part of the fourth century B.C., and it has remained the same ever since. One point needs to be made clear: the collectors of the Hebrew canon did not give these books authority by including them in the canon. The Old Testament Church acknowledged that they had divine authority because they were internally consistent, useful, important, and transcendent⁸ in their truths. These books showed their inspiration clearly, and therefore they were included in the canon. Other religious books did not possess the marks of inspiration, and they were rejected.

C. Typology

One of the means⁹ by which the Old Testament points to Christ is its system of types. A type may be defined as something (a person, object, or event) in the Old Testament that is designed by God to resemble and foreshadow a greater spiritual truth in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, God taught the same truths as in the New Testament, but the revelation of the Messiah was not as clear. In the Old Testament, God prepared certain things so that they would point forward to the New Testament expression of His truth.

Perhaps we can better understand typology (i.e.,¹⁰ the study of types) if we see its connection to symbolism. Certain historical events symbolize divine truths. They teach lessons. And this is no accident; God designed it that way. Take, for example, the brass serpent that Moses prepared (Num 21:8). The historical purpose for which that serpent was made was to save the Israelites from death by snake bite. It did that. Anyone who looked at it was healed. Now if any Israelite thought about that brass serpent for a while, he

⁷ Pink, A. W. (1886-1952); *The Doctrine of Revelation*, 1947; Pensacola: Chapel Library, reprint, 157.

⁸ **transcendent** – surpassing others of its kind; going beyond the ordinary limits of men.

⁹ **means** – methods by which something is accomplished.

¹⁰ **i.e.** – *Latin: id est*, “that is”; to make the meaning more clear, to say the same thing in different words.

would see that it taught a lesson. It taught him that faith in God was really the means by which he was saved from death. He believed God, he looked, he was healed; if he did not believe and refused to look, he died. He learned the lesson that faith in the God-provided remedy was absolutely necessary. That was the symbolism of the brass serpent.

The typology of the serpent is like its symbolism. But as a type, the serpent points forward to that which is a higher revelation of the same truth. The serpent is a type of Christ, Who is the God-appointed remedy for sin. And here, too, it is necessary to have faith in the God-provided remedy. “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (Joh 3:14-15). This is the “typical” lesson of this incident.

So we see that God taught Israel certain lessons through symbols. The same lessons, spelled out in New Testament language, are called types. What God taught Israel through symbols, He teaches the Church through types.

We will find some types presented as such in the New Testament. In Hebrews, for instance, the Tabernacle and its worship are presented as types of the way we now approach God through Christ. But there are other types that are not mentioned in the New Testament. We must recognize these types, too. If a person, event, or object was a symbol for Israel of old, then we may examine it to see if it is a type for us. By means of these types, we shall have our attention drawn constantly to the New Testament. Types are one method by which “The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed.”¹¹

D. Theme

In choosing a theme for our study, it is important that we look ahead to Christ and to the New Testament. We need a theme as a highway to direct our travel through the Old Testament. There are so many side roads we could travel, so many interesting lanes into which we could take excursions. But there we would lose sight of the whole picture that the Old Testament presents. We want to follow one road, and we want to be sure that road is the main highway which leads us directly to Christ and the New Testament. We find this highway in the theme “The Kingdom of God.” We will see in our study how this constitutes the main line of thought in the Old Testament. We will see how every book contributes to this basic theme.

But before we do this, we should jump forward to the New Testament and assure ourselves the same highway is to be found there. And here too we find it to be a main thoroughfare. We are told that Jesus came “preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mar 1:14-15). Many of Jesus’ parables were

¹¹ **Augustine** of Hippo (354-430) – early church theologian born in Tagaste, North Africa. Known by many as the father of orthodox theology; taught the depravity of man and the grace of God in salvation.

about the Kingdom. When He announced the founding of His Church, He said, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom" (Mat 16:19). After the Resurrection, He taught His disciples about the "things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Act 1:3). And when He returns in glory, He will come as "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev 19:16). The road marked "The Kingdom of God" is the highway that leads from one end of the Bible to the other. It is the road we shall walk together.

E. About This Study

Before we begin this journey, it would be well to survey the road ahead. Rather than follow the order of the English Old Testament, this study takes up the books in the order in which it is estimated they were written. The historical books form the backbone of this guide. The poetic and prophetic books are inserted after the history of the time in which they were written. It is hoped that these features will make it easier to see the way in which God's kingdom and redemption developed over the centuries.

In addition to an outline for the Old Testament as a whole, there also will be outlines for each book. All the outlines are designed for memorization, and for this reason they are short. The biblical references of the outlines have been restricted in most cases to chapters, even when accuracy might demand that division come in the middle of a chapter.

This study is designed primarily to be straight forward, and this is reflected in both form and content. The vocabulary is kept to a basic international standard. Technical terms have been defined as simply as possible. Some "interesting" non-essential problems have been ignored and others have been greatly simplified.

4. The Structure of the Old Testament

A. Divisions

1. The Hebrews' Sacred Books

When the Hebrews themselves collected the sacred books given to them by God, they put them into three groups: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. This grouping is a natural one.

The Law, consisting of the five books of Moses, was the first written revelation that Israel had. It contained the basic revelations of God, such as those at Mount Sinai, which not only were the foundation of Israel's religious and civil life, but also a more complete revelation of the holiness of God. It is natural that these books should have a unique place in the thinking of believers everywhere.

The second group, the Prophets, derives its name from the office held by the authors of the books. A prophet was a man who was called of God to receive His revelation and to communicate it to the people. The Hebrews divided the Prophets into two groups, Former and Latter. The Former

Prophets include Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. The contents of these books testify to the authors' prophetic offices, because they portray the history of Israel as a revelation of God's redemptive work. The Latter Prophets were written by the men whose names are attached to them and include both the Major and Minor Prophets. The Major Prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. They are "major" because their writings are longer and include multiple themes. The Minor Prophets are also called "The Twelve." They include some history, but chiefly they contain the words of prophecy spoken by these prophets on one theme.

The third group is called the Writings. The Writings have one thing in common: they were written by men who were not prophets by profession, though the books are equally inspired by God. That is its distinguishing feature. The Writings mix several types of books: poetry, history, and five books used by the Jews in their sacred festivals. These five are called the Megilloth ("five rolls"). The Song of Solomon was read on the eighth day of the Feast of Passover; Ruth on the second day of the Feast of Pentecost; Lamentations at *Tisha B'av*, a feast commemorating the destruction of the Temple; Ecclesiastes on the third day of the Feast of Tabernacles; and Esther at the Feast of Purim.

The Hebrew Bible was originally comprised of twenty-four books. While this is fifteen fewer books than the thirty-nine books of the English Bible's Old Testament, the material in both is identical, the only difference being in the labeling of books and parts of books.¹²

2. *The English Bible's Old Testament*

In the English Bible, we can list these thirty-nine books into five groups: five books of the Law, twelve *historical* books, five *poetry and wisdom* books, and five *major prophets*, and twelve *minor prophets*.

The thirty-four historical and prophetic books span a period of at least 4,000 years, from Creation to the prophet Malachi about 400 B.C. However, the books are not chronological in sequence, nor do they cover time at the same pace. Some stories are brief, while others are told in great detail. While the overall span of the Old Testament is about 4,000 years, the first eleven chapters of Genesis cover the entire first half of this time—approximately 2,000 years! One can read this in about 45 minutes, which would be like covering the entire history of the world since Jesus Christ in 45 minutes, a fast pace indeed! These chapters consist of only four accounts: the Creation of the world and of man, the Fall of man, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel. But after those first eleven chapters, we come to the story of Abraham in chapters 12 to 24, and the pace slows considerably—a period of only about 25 years!

¹² The Hebrews considered 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah as single books. The twelve Minor Prophets were combined into the *Book of the Twelve*, which brings the number to twenty-four. Some editions combined Jeremiah with Lamentations, and Ruth with Judges, bringing the number to twenty-two.

So the first eleven chapters of the Old Testament cover the first 2,000 years, and the remaining 900+ chapters cover 1,600 years before Christ up to 400 B.C. The bulk of the Old Testament is about Abraham and his descendants (his seed), which starts approximately 2000 B.C.

When we look at the thirty-nine Books of the Old Testament, we see that the five in the middle are in a class by themselves: Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. We generally call these books *personal literature* in the sense that much of their content reflects the experience of one individual with God personally. We can relate to their personal expressions as if they were our own. While much of their content is set in the context of the unfolding story of the history of Israel, we do not always have to know much history in order to understand them. They are personal books about personal experience with God. They include both poetry and wisdom literature.

The remaining thirty-four books are *national* in nature, and are in two groups of seventeen on either side of the *Personal Literature*. Men formulated this sequence when they assembled the books together into the Old Testament, but it is interesting and helpful to realize how orderly is the structure. Some of the first seventeen books are written by prophets, but all seventeen can be labeled *History* because they are chronological stories of the actual events. The last seventeen are labeled *Prophets* (the Latter Prophets), where a particular prophet speaks to the kingdom during a specific period. The first five books of the History (called the “Pentateuch”) are foundational in nature. If these five are understood, then all the rest will be understood, because all the major principles and themes are introduced in them. In the same way, the first five books of the Prophets can also be grouped together as the Major Prophets: the books are longer and contain all the major themes of redemption.

Of the remaining twelve historical and twelve prophetic books, the first nine of each category are *pre-exilic*, i.e., they were written prior to the exile into Babylon, during the Divided Kingdom. The last three of each are *post-exilic*, i.e., they were written after the Babylonian captivity began. We call all twelve of these last prophetic books the Minor Prophets, because each book is shorter and, in contrast to the major prophets, deals with only one theme in one setting.

Books of the Old Testament

<u>History</u>	<u>Personal Literature</u>	<u>Prophets</u>
<i>The Pentateuch (foundational)</i>		<i>Major Prophets*</i>
Genesis	Job	Isaiah
Exodus	Psalms	Jeremiah
Leviticus	Proverbs	Lamentations
Numbers	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel
Deuteronomy	Song of Solomon	Daniel
		<i>Minor Prophets**</i> (<i>"The Twelve"</i>)
<i>Pre-exilic</i>		<i>Pre-exilic</i>
Joshua		Hosea
Judges		Joel
<u>Ruth</u>		<u>Amos</u>
1 Samuel		Obadiah
2 Samuel		Jonah
1 Kings		<u>Micah</u>
2 Kings		Nahum
1 Chronicles		Habakkuk
2 Chronicles		Zephaniah
<i>Post-exilic</i>		<i>Post-exilic</i>
Ezra		Haggai
Nehemiah		Zechariah
Esther		Malachi
<p>* <i>major prophets: include all major themes</i> ** <i>minor prophets: one theme only</i></p>		

B. Outline

Our journey will take us through various stages of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom does not suddenly appear in perfect final form. Instead it develops, much as a plant does. It does not grow by additions, as earthly empires grow by adding new areas of land. It grows as does a plant, by the development of something that is already present. We might compare it to a tulip bulb. If you hold a bulb in your hand, you hold a tulip. The tulip is hidden in the bulb. But you cannot find it by cutting the bulb apart. You must plant it and allow it to grow. In a similar way, God planted the seed of His kingdom in the earth of human history. He watered it abundantly with His grace. And it grew—first a shoot, then a plant, a bud, and finally the perfect flower. In the Old Testament, we will not find the flowering, that is reserved for the New Testament. But we will be privileged to see the necessary early stages of development, and that is a wonderful unfolding of God’s truths.

We are now ready to trace the development of God's kingdom in the Old Testament. In order that we may see the development clearly, we will divide the time covered by the Old Testament into five periods. Each period will tell us something about the Kingdom of God. Creation, the Exodus from Egypt, the establishment of the nation's united kingdom, the split of the kingdom into Judah and Israel, the judgment of God taking His people into exile—all are major historical events that mark the boundaries of each period. All ends with the people's return to the land in preparation for the coming of Christ.

	<u><i>The Period of</i></u>	<u><i>Content</i></u>	<u><i>Begins with</i></u>
I.	Theocratic Beginnings	Creation & Abraham	Creation
II.	Theocratic Establishment	Wanderings & Judges	Exodus
III.	Theocratic Development	United Kingdom	Reign of Saul
IV.	Theocratic Decline	Divided Kingdom	Reign of Rehoboam
V.	Theocratic Transition	Remnant	Exile

This is not the only possible outline of the Old Testament. But if you will examine the Old Testament Time Line (after section "C. Dates"), you will see that this outline is a guide to our study.

In this outline, the word *theocratic* is used repeatedly as a synonym for that which pertains to the Kingdom of God. For example, "The Period of Theocratic Beginnings" could also be called "The Period of the Beginning of the Kingdom of God." But that is not as easily remembered. The term *theocratic* is easier to use. Since the word may be unfamiliar, let us examine it. The word *theocratic* resembles the word *democratic*. "Democratic" comes from two Greek words: *demos* (people) and *kratos* (power). It means that the power resides in the people. So a democratic government is a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." "Theocratic" likewise comes from two Greek words: *theos* (God) and *kratos* (power). It means that the power resides in God. God is the ruler. And since God is an absolute monarch, "theocratic" refers to the Kingdom of God.

C. Dates

In addition to an outline, it is essential to our study that we have in mind a few very important dates. Since the Old Testament may use much space dealing with a short period of time, and may pass over a longer period of time in silence, we can become confused as to when various people lived and various events occurred. The only solution to that problem is the memorization of a few dates. The dates given below are not exact, but close approximations.

Call of Abraham	2100 B.C.
Exodus	1450 B.C.
Saul becomes king	1050 B.C.
Division of kingdom	930 B.C.

Exile of Israel	720 B.C.
Exile of Judah	586 B.C.
End of Old Testament	400 B.C.

Rounding these dates even more, notice a general pattern that should be easier to memorize:

Abraham	~2000 B.C.
Exodus	~1500 B.C.
Saul and David	~1000 B.C.
Exile of Judah	~500 B.C.
<i>Birth of Christ</i>	~0 B.C.

A detail time line follows, which can serve as a reference throughout the course.

Old Testament Time Line

<u>BC</u>		<u>duration</u>	
<u>Theocratic Beginnings</u>			
~4000+	Creation	(7 days)	Gen 1-2
	- Fall	(1 day)	Gen 3-7
~3000	Noah, Flood, Tower of Babel		Gen 8-11
~2000	Abraham	100	Gen 12-23
	- covenant (one-way, unconditional)		
	Isaac Ishmael	150	Gen 24-26
	Jacob Esau	"	Gen 27-36
	Joseph and 11 brothers	"	Gen 37-50
	- slavery in Egypt	400	
<u>Theocratic Establishment</u>			
	Moses – preparation	80	Exo 1-2
~1500	The Exodus	1	Exo 3-40
	- covenant (two-way, conditional)		Exo 19-24
	Law: Mount Sinai	(9 mo.)	Leviticus
	- wanderings in the desert	40	Numbers, Deuteronomy
	Conquest of the land	7	Joshua
<u>Theocratic Development</u>			
1043	The United Kingdom		
	Saul	32	1Sa
	David	40	1-2Sa, 1Ch
	- covenant (one-way, unconditional)		
	Solomon	40	1Kings 1-11, 2Ch
<u>Theocratic Decline</u>			
931	The Divided Kingdom	209	1Kings 12-22, 2Kings
722	Northern Kingdom falls to Assyria		Jonah, Amos, Micah, Hosea
	Judah Alone	136	Joel, Zephaniah
612	Babylon overthrows Assyria		Isaiah
606	- first deportation of Judah		Habakkuk
586	Southern Kingdom falls		Jeremiah
<u>Theocratic Transition</u>			
	- captivity in Babylon	50	Ezekiel, Daniel
536	Return of the Remnant	20	Ezra, Nehemiah
516	Zerubbabel returns, rebuilds the Temple		Haggai, Zechariah
458	Ezra returns, restores the priesthood		Ezra, Esther
445	Nehemiah returns, rebuilds the wall		Nehemiah
~400	Malachi		Malachi

Study Questions Lesson 1

Introduction

First, please read Lesson 1. Please answer the questions below from the information in the reading. Please read slowly enough so you understand what you read. Please also pray before each lesson asking the LORD for wisdom to apply what you learn to your life, and to enable you to love Him with all your mind, heart, soul, and strength, for this is the greatest commandment (Mar 12:30).

Very Important Note: We ask you to always use your own words in your answers. The answers to most questions are found in the reading text, but please do not merely quote the text for your answer. Rather, read what the text says, think about the meaning of what it says, and summarize its meaning in your own words for your answer. In this way, you will learn much more than simply a “search, find, quote” method for answering the questions.

The Old Testament is God’s Word (1)

From God (A)

1. What is the meaning of each of the following Scriptures?
Use your own words to express the meaning; do not just quote.
 - a. Romans 15:4
 - b. 1 Corinthians 10:11
 - c. 2 Peter 1:21
2. What is the most basic fact about the Old Testament?

Inspired (B)

3.
 - a. What is “inspiration”?
 - b. How did God inspire the biblical writers?
4. Why is faith (i.e., believing) important in the study of the Bible?

Infallible (C)

5.
 - a. What do we mean when we say that the Bible is “infallible”?
 - b. How did this come to pass?
 - c. Why is this important?
6.
 - a. How does archaeology support the Bible?
 - b. Is it possible for science to prove that the Bible is infallible? Why or why not?
 - c. *Making It Personal* If the Bible were to be proven wrong about history, could we still trust it as a guide to spiritual truth? Why or why not?

7. a. What is “predictive prophecy”?
- b. Why is it important in the Bible?
- c. *Making It Personal* “The Bible is unique among the holy books of the world in its focus on predictive prophecy.” Are you surprised by this fact? What influence does this have upon your belief in the Bible? Why?

The relevance of the Old Testament (2)

Purpose (A)

8. What is the purpose of the Old Testament?
9. Why should New Testament believers study the Old Testament?

Importance (B)

10. Why is the Old Testament important?
11. a. What is necessary for a proper understanding of God’s Word?
Use the numbers 1 through 3 to mark the parts of your answer.
- b. How should you pray and study during this course?

The composition of the Old Testament (3)

Authors (A)

12. a. Describe the diversity among the authors of the Old Testament.
- b. Describe the unity of what they wrote.
- c. How is unity out of diversity possible?
- d. Why can we conclude that the Bible is divinely inspired?

The collection of the books (B)

13. Why were these books chosen for inclusion in the Old Testament?

Typology (C)

14. a. What is a type?
- b. Describe how symbols and types work together.

Theme (D)

15. a. What is a theme?
- b. What is the theme of our study?

The structure of the Old Testament (4)

Divisions (A)

The Hebrews’ sacred books (A.1)

16. a. Into what three parts did the Hebrews divide the Old Testament?
- b. Summarize what each part contains.
17. What is the difference between the major and the minor prophets?
18. a. What distinguishes the Writings?
- b. What are the names of the five books of the Megilloth and how are they used?

The English Bible's Old Testament (A.2)

19. What is the scope of the Old Testament history in years?
20. Write an outline of the Old Testament division headings (without the names of the books in each division), and note how many books are in each division.

Outline (B)

21. How does the Kingdom of God develop?
22. Write the five point outline of the Old Testament from memory.
23. What is the meaning of "theocratic"?

Dates (C)

24. Write the key people/events and their dates in the Old Testament from memory.

Lesson 2

Five Books of Moses

1. Names

"Pentateuch" is not a biblical name. It is derived from the Greek and means simply "five books." It has been applied for a long time to the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Jews themselves referred to these books as the "Torah," that is, the Law. Either of these titles can be used to designate the five books written by Moses.

The Bible refers to the Pentateuch by a variety of terms. Some of these are: the Law of Moses; the book of the Law; the Law of God. These terms are composed of various combinations of four words: law, book, Moses, and God. These words express well the major points to remember about the Pentateuch.

"Law" expresses the legal character of the Pentateuch, which contains many of God's laws to men.

"Book" shows that the Pentateuch is intended to be permanent.

"Moses" identifies the human author of the books.

"God" points to the divine author, by whose inspiration Moses wrote.

If we keep these terms in mind, we will always have a proper approach to our study of the Pentateuch.

2. Purpose

In the Pentateuch, God gives us a picture of the earliest historical development of the theocracy. The five books, taken together, enable us to understand how God laid the foundations of His kingdom. God designed everything in the Pentateuch to accomplish this end. The Pentateuch is not simply history. It does not attempt to present or explain everything that happened; there are places where it passes over large periods of time in silence. For example, the four hundred and thirty years in Egypt are scarcely mentioned. The thirty-eight years of wilderness wandering are summarized briefly. These omissions are explained by the fact that, during these periods, nothing happened that advanced the development of God's kingdom. God inspired Moses to write with a purpose in mind: to trace the beginnings of the Kingdom of God. God chose the material carefully so that this account would stand out clearly, and not be lost amidst the clutter of unnecessary information.

These five books could be as one, for they flow together as one story. The Genesis/Exodus, Exodus/Leviticus, and Leviticus/Numbers transitions could have been simply the next chapter in the same book. There is one subject, not five; we have five books because of the physical limitations of the papyrus scrolls! It is best to consider these five books as one continuous historical account.

3. Author

A. What the Bible Says

For centuries Christians and Jews have agreed unanimously that Moses was the human author of these books. This belief has a solid basis in the testimony of God's Word. There is not a part of the Bible that questions the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. On the contrary, every part of the Bible affirms that Moses wrote these books. The Pentateuch contains at least six places where Moses is said to write certain events or revelations from God (Exo 17:14; 24:4-8; 34:27; Num 33:1-2; Deu 31:9, 22). One of them, Deuteronomy 31:9, is especially significant. It tells that Moses not only wrote the Law of God, but delivered it to the Levites for safekeeping.

The rest of the Old Testament also assumes that the Pentateuch is the work of Moses. Already in Joshua we have a reference to "the book of the law of Moses" (Jos 8:31). From the time of Joshua to the time of Ezra, the repeated, unanimous testimony of the Old Testament presents Moses as the author of the Pentateuch. In the New Testament, Christ names Moses as the author of certain statements that are found only in the Pentateuch (Mat 19:8; Mar 10:5). And He speaks of the "law of Moses" (Luk 24:44). In fact, throughout the Bible, wherever the author of the Pentateuch is named, it is Moses. This does not mean that Moses wrote every word of the Pentateuch.

For instance, Deuteronomy 34 deals with his death and the mourning that followed it. This was surely added by another inspired writer. But, in the main, the Pentateuch comes from God through Moses.

B. What Men Say

With such a weight of evidence in favor of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, one would expect to find unanimous agreement on this matter. But such agreement is sadly lacking. Many deny that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. Why do they deny what the Bible so clearly teaches? First of all, they do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God. While some may state this more openly than others, basically it is true of all the Higher Critics,¹³ as they are called. They think that the Old Testament must be studied as a piece of human literature. They do not hesitate to declare that it can be, and is, wrong at many places. They are sure that it is wrong when it presents Moses as the author of the Pentateuch. They believe that it was written much later, and that the author used Moses' name to gain recognition for his work.

By taking this view, the Critics can explain away some features about the Pentateuch that they do not like. For instance, the Pentateuch contains some prophecies that later were fulfilled. These the Higher Critics explain by claiming that the book was written *after* the fulfillment, and that the prophecy was included in the book to impress the readers. In a similar manner, the miracles of the Pentateuch are explained as mere legends of an early age, which did not actually happen.

You may wonder why these men work so hard to explain away these things. The answer is really quite simple. If these men admit that Moses wrote these books, if these prophecies are real prophecies and these miracles are true miracles, then the God presented in the Pentateuch must also be real. If He is real, they should love Him and obey Him. But they do not do so, and they do not want to do so. This makes them sinners—but they do not want to admit that they are sinners before God. They do not want to face the demands of a sovereign¹⁴ God, so they simply deny that the Pentateuch

¹³ **Higher Criticism** – modern method of re-evaluating the biblical texts to determine if men believe they are genuine. Its basic principles are as follows: 1) the external evidence of the manuscripts (the remaining Hebrew and Greek scrolls from antiquity) is to be “weighed” (i.e., according to presumed age and text-type) and not evaluated based on their number and use; 2) the shorter reading is to be preferred (assuming longer readings have scribal additions); 3) the more difficult reading is to be preferred (assuming others were simplified by scribes); 4) the reading which “best explains” the other readings (in the opinion of the scholar) is to be preferred; 5) the reading which is most characteristic of the author is to be preferred (not allowing for assistants to the authors). These principles are highly subjective in nature, a matter of personal opinion of men rather than objective truth.

¹⁴ **sovereign** – kingly; absolutely authoritative; with highest authority. If a sovereign ruler also has almighty power, then his decrees will always come to pass (Dan 4:35; Eph 1:11).

presents an accurate picture of God. And therefore, in order to deny the God of the Pentateuch, they must deny that Moses wrote the Pentateuch.

If Moses did not write the Pentateuch, who did? And when? These are fair questions to put to the Higher Critics. And if we did so, each one would give a different answer. And each one would be sure that the others were wrong and that he was right. They can only agree on one point: that Moses did not write the Pentateuch. They cannot agree at all about how it did come into existence. This disagreement is an indication that they do not speak the truth.

As we study the Old Testament, we cannot afford to ignore such men. We must never forget that they exist, for some day we may meet them. Many people teach the views of higher criticism as if they were the truth. We must know about this false position, but we must always remember that these men speak as they do because they deny that the Bible is God's Word. They do not have the light of the Holy Spirit, which is necessary for understanding Scripture—and we do not want to be led by those who themselves walk in darkness.

Study Questions Lesson 2

The Five Books of Moses

Please read Lesson 2 before answering these questions. Always get your answers from the reading, but put them into your own words, in order to indicate your understanding of what you have read.

Names (1)

1.
 - a. What does "Pentateuch" mean?
 - b. What does "Torah" mean?
 - c. List the books of the Bible to which these terms refer.
2.
 - a. What words does the Bible use to describe the Pentateuch?
 - b. For each of the four words used, write the word and what it is used to emphasize.

Purpose (2)

3. What is God's main purpose in the Pentateuch?

Author (3)

What the Bible says (A)

4.
 - a. Who is the human author of the Pentateuch?
 - b. Why can we be sure of this biblically?

What men say (B)

5. What is the motive of the Higher Critics for denying the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch?

6. a. On what important question do Higher Critics differ?
b. Why is this significant?
7. What do the Higher Critics lack that is necessary for understanding the Bible?

Lesson 3

First Theocracy

Genesis: Creation, Fall, Flood

Beginning in this lesson, we will ask you to read some portions of each book in the Old Testament, so that you are confronted continually with the living Word of God. This will be the greatest blessing in the course.

Please memorize the outline of Genesis and Genesis 6:5. We will ask you to write these from memory at the end of the study questions.

1. Purpose

The Old Testament deals with the nation of Israel. Israel's history is presented, her poetry is preserved, and the words of her prophets are recorded. Why is the Word of God so interested in this one nation? The Old Testament itself answers that question. Israel is God's covenant nation. It is in Israel that God established His theocracy in Old Testament times. But this answer raises other questions. Why did man need a covenant with God that provided for salvation from sin? Why is there sin, evil, and suffering in the world? Who is God? What is He like? How does God relate to man? How may man come to God? Why did God have a covenant nation? And how did Israel become that nation?

These questions are answered in Genesis. The first book of the Bible thus provides a foundation for the rest of the Old Testament and the New. It shows who God is, man's dramatic problem, and how he may come to God. It also shows why God separated a people for Himself and how Israel became that people. Genesis provides an introduction to the account of the theocracy that God founded in Israel.

When God sent Moses to deliver the Hebrew slaves from their Egyptian task-masters, the Hebrews had little idea of who God is. The stories passed down verbally for over 400 years had grown dim. God seemed remote and unknowable to them; they felt abandoned and hopeless. God inspired Moses to write Genesis so that the people could know God and His dealings with

their family. They learned what God had said to their father, Abraham, “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen 12:3)—and in Genesis 12-50, they learned all about Abraham and the family God chose to be His covenant people.

But why did all the families of the earth *need* to be blessed? The answer is clearly told in Genesis 1-11, where we learn about God, man, and the nature of sin. The Hebrews, and we ourselves, must be prepared to trust God and to walk with Him by faith. The two parts can be outlined as follows.

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------------|---------------|
| I. | The destruction of the first theocracy | Genesis 1-11 |
| | A. Creation | 1-2 |
| | B. Fall | 3-5 |
| | C. Flood | 6-11 |
| II. | The promise of the new theocracy | Genesis 12-50 |
| | A. Abraham | 12-24 |
| | B. Isaac | 25-27 |
| | C. Jacob | 28-36 |
| | D. Joseph | 37-50 |

2. The Creation

*Please read Genesis 1-2.*¹⁵

A. Importance

The first chapter of Genesis presents the creation of the heavens and the earth, and emphasizes the sovereignty of God. It shows clearly that God, and God alone, is the Creator of the universe. Thirty-four times we are told that God acts: God created, God saw, God said, God divided, God made, etc. Genesis 1 pictures the sovereign God bringing to pass by His almighty word that which is good in His sight.

Why is the doctrine of creation important?¹⁶ Because it teaches that everything belongs to God because He created it. Therefore He has the sovereign right to dispose of all His creatures as He wills. He Who is the source of all things is therefore also the ruler of all things. This is set forth beautifully in Psalm 24:1-2:

*The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof;
the world, and they that dwell therein.
For he hath founded it upon the seas,
and established it upon the floods.*

Creation is also important because it shows us clearly that we have a Creator. God formed each one of us in the womb (Psa 139:13-16). Because

¹⁵ Genesis 1-2 – from beginning of Genesis chapter 1 through end of Genesis chapter 2.

¹⁶ See *Understanding the Times* by Ken Ham of Answers in Genesis; available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

God created each one of us, we are accountable to Him. In a very real sense, He owns us (1Co 6:19-20; Rom 9:21). We have a moral obligation to seek and to know our Creator.

B. Who God Is

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.—Genesis 1:1-3

“In the beginning, God...” As the Scriptures open, God tells us a number of fundamental things we must know about Him. Through Creation, God reveals to us *His majesty and glory*. This is the first of five major principles that God reveals to us in the Old Testament. If people do not know God, this is always the place to start, because here we learn about who God is. The most important thing about you as a person is what you think about God. This shapes our entire thinking as human beings. What, then, are the things God first revealed to us about Himself?

1. One

God is uncreated; everything else is created by Him. Sometimes people start to think in terms of dualism, where there are two gods: God Who is good, and the devil who is evil. They think everything that happens is determined by which of these wins a particular battle. But the devil is not a god. Putting evil as a co-equal force against God is to deny God’s sovereign rule over all else. If the devil and every demon were to oppose you directly, and God was for you, then you would win (Rom 8:31)! The reason the devil seems so strong is only because God has delegated to him the earth as a realm of influence; it has nothing to do with his relative power. There is only one true God; He is the only one for us to know as God.

2. Personal

God is personal. While it is not true of animals, God made man personal so that He could fellowship with man. Personal nature, God’s and man’s, includes preferences, interests, desires, emotions, and decisions.

3. Powerful

“And God said...” God spoke, and it came into existence. There was no exertion or effort. Nothing was difficult or tiring.¹⁷

In this day, we should be more impressed by this than all mankind before us. We know much more about the vastness of creation than did prior

¹⁷ If God created without effort, why did God “rest” on the Sabbath, the seventh day? Jesus Christ said, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mar 2:27). The seventh day was man’s first day after God had made him. The reason God “rested” on the seventh day was in order to enter into fellowship with man, to give man the privilege to get to know Him! God’s work was completed not just when everything was created, but when it was functioning correctly (for fellowship) as He had designed it.

generations. When Aristotle investigated the universe, he reckoned there were about 10,000 stars, because that was all he could see. In the Middle Ages, men working together estimated there to be 20,000 stars. When telescopes were invented, these estimates grew considerably. In 1973, the estimate was 100 million galaxies, each with 100 billion stars! In 1991, the absolute limit to what science could imagine was one billion galaxies, each with 100 billion stars (you cannot count out loud to one billion in your lifetime). When the space-based Hubble Telescope was first used in 1995, the estimate increased to 100 billion galaxies, many with 200 billion stars or more. Today the furthest known galaxy is 13 *billion* light years from the earth!

After what you have just read, meditate on this truth: God spoke at one point in time, and all was in place. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament [i.e., the earth] sheweth his handywork” (Psa 19:1). Sooner or later, God will test your belief about His power. We must always remember how powerful He is.

4. *Good*

The biggest reason men reject God is because they do not think that God cares about them; they do not believe that God is “good.” But at each step in creation, “God saw that it was good.” The greatest truth in Genesis 1 and 2 is not His power or intelligence, but His goodness. There are several aspects of His goodness that are important for us to understand.

Perhaps the most important is His moral goodness. Everything in Him is pure, upright, and good.

God created everything in a moment, and it was all exactly correct the first time. There were no adjustments or fine-tuning, no trial and error to get it right. Nothing man ever does is exactly right the first time. But what God does is always good and right the very first time. God’s goodness functions perfectly in the lives of those who truly belong to Him as His children (Rom 8:28-29).

God’s goodness is flowing with blessing. When God does something, there is blessing in it on all sides. Even the stars are there for man’s benefit; God gives them to tell us about Himself: to display His power and vast magnificence. Adam was not focused on himself during this period of time; he was totally content in the goodness of the Garden.

5. *Intelligent*

God wants us to be amazed at creation—and we should be! Man is right in the middle of the orders of magnitude in all of creation. A spoonful of water contains about 10^{26} atoms (10 with 26 zeros after it). And science has discovered many orders of magnitude smaller than the atom. The smallest of these particles is proportionately as much smaller than man as the universe is larger than man! Every time science discovers the next larger thing, it also discovers the next smaller! Man is just in the middle of all the created

universe—and this is not coincidence. Everything in nature shows evidence of the most intelligent design.¹⁸

6. *True*

God is *true*: what He says, happens. This is an important ingredient of trustworthiness. When God said, “Let there be light” (Gen 1:3), then there *was* light. And the same thing happened with everything God said during the act of creation. Based on creation, therefore, we never have cause to doubt what God says.

7. *Sovereign*

God is in complete command of everything: He created all things from nothing¹⁹ and orders all the events that happen thereafter—right up through this very moment.

C. *Man’s Place in Creation*

1. *The Highest of God’s Creatures*

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion... over all the earth.—Genesis 1:26

Man is the highest of God’s creatures. He is the crowning work of creation. This is communicated to us in five ways.

1. Man was made last. In Genesis 1, we notice that the simpler creatures were made first. Each step in creation prepares for the following steps. Man comes last, and this points to his high position.

2. Before man was created we read these words, “Let *us* make man...” This might be called a conference among the three persons of the Godhead.²⁰ Nowhere else in the creation narrative do we find such a conference. Man must be the crown of creation to receive this special concern by God.

3. Man was given dominion over the other creatures. In Genesis 2, this is expressed by the fact that man is given the task of naming the animals.

4. God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (Gen 2:7). In the other acts of creation, God spoke and it came into being. This tells us of the special place God has for man. He is not just another of many animals.

5. Man is the only creature that is made in the image of God: “Let us make man *in our image*...” Surely this likeness to the Creator indicates that man is the highest creature. But how is man in God’s “image”?

¹⁸ See *Evolution or Creation?*, a summary of many scientific facts comparing the two theories of origins; available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

¹⁹ This is known as *creatio ex nihilo* or “creation out of nothing.” This understanding of creation makes a clear distinction between God and His created order, and maintains that God, not matter, is eternal.

²⁰ See *The Trinity* by Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758); available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

2. *In God's Image*

a. *How*

Man is unique in all creation because he is created in God's image and likeness. In some wonderful ways, God made man like Himself. Exactly how can this be seen?

1) *Our mental capacity* is the ability to think, to reason things through, to consider conceptual thoughts, and to associate abstract ideas—like loyalty, love, compassion, patriotism, etc. Man has the unique capability, like God, to enter into the thoughts and emotions of another, even though he has not actually lived that person's experience. He can be loyal, for example, to someone he has never even met. Animals absolutely cannot do this.

2) *We are like God socially*: we have a strong desire to fellowship with others. You can actually enter into another's experience of painful grief or blessed rejoicing in close, personal intimacy. You can enter into the emotions of a fictional person who does not even exist. This identification can exist even at a distance, across hundreds of miles or years. Animals flock together for procreation and for protection, but this is all by instinct.

3) *We are like God in dominion*: He has commanded mankind to rule in the world as His earthly representative (Gen 1:26; Rev 19:6)).

4) *We are like God in moral capacity*, and in this we are distinctly different from animals. This moral likeness has three components:

a) Mind: to grasp an abstract moral standard, what is right and wrong.

b) Will: to make choices, to come to decisions about alternative actions.

c) Conscience: to tell us if we have acted rightly or wrongly. The conscience innately compares the choice we make to the moral standard. If you are told, "Don't walk on the grass," and you walk on the grass, you will get a message about it from your conscience. The conscience is formed by the mind choosing what to believe as true. (Emotions only disrupt the conscience; they cloud its objectivity and make a black-and-white situation into a complicated "gray area.") Animals have none of this.

5) *God's people are like God in certain moral perfections*: He has imputed Christ's *righteousness* to them (Rom 4); He makes them *holy* over time (1Pe 1:15); and He produces *goodness* in them as a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22).

b. *Why*

Why did God give these capacities to man as part of being made in His image? There is only one reason: to give us the capacity to know Him. Let that sink in for a moment. God made us in His image in order to give us the unique ability to know, love, fellowship with, and share the thoughts and emotions of the living God! Augustine (A.D. 354-430) said, "God has made us for Himself; we are restless until we find our rest in Him." Another said, "There is a vacuum in the heart of man, which was made for God and which

only God can fill.”²¹ The reason we were made differently from the animals is so that each of us *personally* can enter into fellowship with God.

Why did God make us moral beings? The only way we could enter into the love of God is by having the capacity to love. Why did God give us social capacity whereby we can enter into the heart of another? Only so that we could enter into God’s own heart. Jesus Christ died, “the just for the unjust, that he might *bring us to God*” (1Pe 3:18).

The great waste of human capability is to use these capacities to serve ourselves. We take the capacity to love and waste it on wondering whether others will love us! The capacity to love is not given to help us become popular with others. Relationship to other people is important, but it is designed to be secondary. Relationship to God is designed by God Himself to be primary in our lives. That is why we are created in His image.

D. Summary

This picture of man, the highest creature, standing between God and the rest of creation, presents the first theocracy. God is the sovereign ruler by virtue of creation. He has made man in the image of God, placed him in the world, and has delegated to him to exercise dominion as God’s vice-ruler. In this we have all the elements of a divine kingdom. Man manages the world as a steward.²² He does not govern for himself. He governs on behalf of God, and willingly acknowledges God as his own king, submitting himself to God’s rule.

3. The Fall

Please read Genesis 3.

A. Before the Fall

Man’s life with God before the Fall is a picture of believers’ future eternal life with God after physical death here on earth. The purpose of Christ’s redemption of His people from their sins is to glorify God by 1) restoring to the saints the intimate fellowship that Adam had with God before the Fall, and 2) forming the Church, the Bride of Christ. What was life like before the Fall?

1. *Enormous intelligence.* We know Adam had enormous intelligence because He named all the animals. And he did not need to be reminded of those thousands of names, even after just one time through! This is notable.

2. *No death or aging.* Adam was never sick; there was no disease in the Garden at all. He was perpetually young and strong. Today people reach their peak physically around the age of 20, and after that it is all a fading

²¹ **Blaise Pascal** (1623-1662) – French mathematician, physicist, inventor, writer, and Christian philosopher.

²² **steward** – one who is responsible to manage the property of another.

away: “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth...surely the people is grass” (Isa 40:7).

3. *Dominion*. The whole earth was Adam’s to rule. And it was a friendly earth. There was little or no toil for food, mainly just to pick fruit when desired. The mosquitoes didn’t bite, the sun didn’t burn, and the lions didn’t attack.

4. *Fellowship with God*. We need to notice the free and easy manner of Adam’s fellowship with God. It was within that blessed balance between cold formality and treating God too casually. Reverence for God’s holiness, and family love, mark the fellowship God has for us.

5. *Vast freedom*. Adam before the Fall had only the one restriction: avoid eating the fruit of one particular tree. That is the entirety of the restrictions upon him. Adam had virtually unlimited freedom over all the earth, a simple life with one purpose: walking with God. God is not interested in putting us in bondage. But He knows our hearts, so He *has* to put restrictions on us—to protect us from ourselves. With our sin nature, the devil on our back, and the world pressing in upon us, what would we do with virtually unlimited freedom? It would be terrible: the planet would be a vigilante zone with suffering at the hands of others on every side.

6. *Responsibility*. “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion...over every living thing” (Gen 1:28). It is important to realize that all privileges carry with them responsibilities. A responsibility is a choice that has consequences. It is quite different from a restriction, which is something we should not do. While God placed on Adam only one restriction, He gave Adam many responsibilities in the Garden: to rule over the earth and bring it into subjection, so that the earth might prosper. The text implies that Adam fulfilled these responsibilities with joy and pleasure by the grace of God. It was only when he violated the one restriction that everything changed.

Notice also in Genesis 2:22-24 that it is God Himself Who instituted marriage: “the *LORD God*...brought her unto the man,” and commanded that marriage be between one man and one woman for life: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

7. *Fulfillment*. Think about this: Adam had no wants and no needs! He had extraordinary fellowship with God and wonderful, continuous harmony in marriage. He was truly “free” because sin had no power over him. Freedom is *not* “not having to obey someone else’s rule book.” Freedom is finding fulfillment in God Himself. Adam was *secure*: he was safe in God at all times. Adam was *satisfied*: he had no sense of wants or needs. And Adam had *sufficiency*: all of God’s resources were available to him so that he never felt incapable or frustrated.

To summarize, before the Fall man had enormous intelligence, dominion over the entire earth, fellowship with God, virtually unlimited freedom to go where and do what he believed best, complete fulfillment, and only one small restriction to observe. There was no death or aging, no sickness or accidents, and no long list of rules to follow. He lived in a perfect world.

B. The Fall Itself

This first theocracy was perfect; there was no flaw in it. But it was not necessarily permanent. God set before man a choice. He gave to man the one and only command: to abstain from eating the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. If he obeyed, God would continue to bless him; but God warned man that if he disobeyed, then he would die. This warning refers not only to physical death, the separation of body (which decays) and soul (which lives eternally). It also includes spiritual death, which is separation from God.

When God said that disobedience would mean death, He implied that obedience would bring continuance of life eternally. This was a covenant between God and man. God told man precisely what to do. He told him what would happen if he obeyed or disobeyed. Man's actions would decide his future. We call this the "covenant of works,"²³ because under this arrangement man could earn eternal life by obeying God's law.

1. The Condition: Obey God

We must realize that it was Adam, not Eve, who had the responsibility of the race on his shoulders. It was Adam who had been given the authority over the earth and the responsibility to submit himself to God by observing the one restriction. Biblically, God made the man and gave him the authority. He made Eve from the man and gave her to him to help him in his responsibility. To be clear, Eve was not inferior to Adam; she simply was created by God for a different role from Adam. Temptation came by Eve; the Fall came by Adam.

Even though Adam had all the authority, it was given upon the condition of his keeping the one restriction—and we must keep this one restriction in perspective. It was not as if there were only a few trees from which Adam could choose to eat. No, the Garden of Eden was great in size and filled with abundant trees. In addition, although the Garden was a special place, the whole earth was given to him for dominion. In this abundance, God set one tree in one place to put this one restriction on Adam—*just one!* He could not eat the fruit of that one tree.

God gave this one restriction for one purpose: that Adam might know that *God was God*. As God's special creation, Adam had to be able to demon-

²³ **covenant of works** – agreement God established with Adam in the Garden of Eden before his fall into sin. It established man's obligation to obey God with the penalty of death for disobedience (Gen 2:16-17). See *The Covenants—of Works and of Grace* by Walter Chantry; available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

strate submission to God through moral choices. The tree was that daily opportunity to show his submission to God, to learn to carry responsibility. Adam was still the creature, not the Creator.

2. *The Devil*

In Genesis 3 we are introduced to the third main character of the Bible. We have seen God, and then man, and now the devil makes his first appearance. He is not named here specifically, but is displayed as the “serpent.”

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.—John 10:10

The devil may have been the highest of created spiritual beings at one time, but he rebelled against God and has been set on exalting himself above God ever since by any means (Isa 14:12-15). Today he is capable of nothing but destruction: his goals are to steal from us God’s blessings, kill us, and destroy our fellowship with God. When God asks something of you, it is for your *life* (“I am come that they might have life...more abundantly”). When sin is tempting you, it is for the purpose of your own *destruction* (“The thief cometh...to destroy”).

The devil’s goal in the Garden was simple: to get for himself the authority over the earth that God had given to man. How would Adam give his authority away to the devil? There was only one way: to disobey the one command God had given. But how do you get a man who has *everything* to give it up in exchange for *nothing*? The devil’s strategy was to go after Eve, and through her to get to Adam. This is a common strategy of his. In order to get to us, he often attacks someone or something we love or care about.

3. *Temptation*

But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it...lest ye die.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.—Genesis 3:3-6

Eve was as blessed with abundant life as was Adam. How did the devil manage to get to her? It was by the same way he attacks us today.

a. *He lies*

The devil has nothing to offer, so he has to convince man that what he does have to offer is something, when it is actually nothing. The devil approaches each one of us just as he did Eve, using *doubt* and *dissatisfaction*.

- 1) He creates doubt that God is telling the truth in His commands to you: “Ye shall not surely die.”
- 2) The devil also creates dissatisfaction with what God has provided for you: “For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof...ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”

When a fisherman puts a little minnow on a hook, it looks like he is offering a free meal to the big fish. But when the fish bites, the fisherman’s whole attitude changes: his whole focus becomes catching, killing, and eating that fish! It is just so with the devil.

The key in deception is that it looks good on the surface, but the reality is *very* different. God has given the devil the possibility to influence the world system. The devil has used this influence to make the world system *totally destructive* to our eternal souls. The devil’s deception is twofold:

- 1) to make the lie look as attractive as possible, and
- 2) to use the lie for the sole purpose of destruction.

b. He offers “life”

What did the devil offer Eve that she didn’t already have? There was nothing new to offer her, so he offered her “life.” Real “life” is what men seek today: fulfillment, satisfaction, completeness, self-actualization, recognition, achievement. Please realize: this was what Eve already had in her abundant life with God.

Now, the “life” the devil offers *does not exist*. In television, movies, and our thoughts, there is selfishness without consequences, destruction without pain or suffering, and compromise without guilt. It is not “harmless entertainment”; it creates an attitude of mind that thinks the world actually works that way. The “life” the world offers is a *deception designed to destroy* the abundant life with God of true believers on this earth.

How does the devil offer “life”?

1) He points to the *world* around you, rather than to *God*. He says “life” is in first experiencing the pleasures of the world, rather than of God.

2) The devil’s offer of “life” is *always later*. It always requires just one more step beyond what we already have at that time.

3) The devil’s offer is *always just outside God’s boundary*, which is His moral law. The devil offers “life” just on the other side of what God has said is good for us, just across the line that God has drawn. If there were something needful outside His boundaries that is also good for us now, He would have already brought it in. God’s boundaries have nothing to do with cutting us off from anything we really need.

The solution to temptation is to keep well within the boundaries that God has set (Rom 13:14), especially in areas to which we are susceptible. Instead, Adam and Eve were within sight of the tree, able to gaze upon its fruit. In this, they were setting themselves up for the Fall.

4. *Man's Sin*

Now we are introduced to the second major principle in the Old Testament: the reality and nature of sin.

Man sins when he disobeys God's laws (1Jo 3:4). For Adam, this meant

- a) ignoring all the freedom he enjoyed with God, and
- b) choosing to violate the one restriction God had given him, given to help him remember that he was just a creature and not a god.

This is the nature of sin, and this is the way we sin too. The way of life is to obey God; the way of wickedness is to follow our own hearts instead. Our hearts are "deceitfully wicked," driven by selfish desires. We therefore break God's Law, which is sin (1Jo 3:4).

C. *Consequences of the Fall*

Man's testing in the covenant of works ended in failure. He sinned: he ate the forbidden fruit. The sentence of spiritual death was immediately imposed: Adam and Eve's sin separated them from God. This brings misery as well as death. Envy and hatred fill the earth, sickness and suffering abound, and anxiety is at an all-time high. From the moment of the Fall to this day, men are fallen in their flesh.

Men are *deceived*. We believe the lies of the devil. We listen to others and to our own hearts, and not to God. We make far more of what the devil offers than what it actually is.

Men are *discontent*. Even though God gives us what we need, we think we need just one thing more in order to be happy. We make less of what God gives to us than what it actually is.

Men are *selfish*. We put our own interests in the world ahead of our relationship with God.

Men feel *self-conscious*. Today, most people spend most of their time thinking about themselves. Adam felt *guilt* and *self-consciousness* for the first time. Adam had a conscience before the Fall, but after the Fall it was a *guilty* conscience for the first time.

Men feel *inadequate*. This varies by person. Some may be very self-confident, but everyone comes to a place where he feels overwhelmed in his own resources, whether it be in finances, a job, a relationship, or a storm.

In addition, men have

- 1) a slavish fear of God (demonstrated by Adam when he hid himself). They experience
- 2) spiritual and physical death,
- 3) God's anger toward their sin,
- 4) contention between men (demonstrated immediately by Adam when he blamed his fall upon Eve),
- 5) decay and sickness, and
- 6) God's curse upon the world: it no longer naturally yields up its fruit to

men, but all must come with toil and trouble.

Sin is terrible! We must understand these things in order to learn to hate sin the way God does.

D. Redemption

But God did not curse only man. He also cursed the serpent. And His curse upon the serpent contained a promise of redemption for men, which would bring salvation from sin and the effects of sin. God said, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen 3:15). Theologians call this the *proto-evangelium*,²⁴ the first promise of the gospel. Notice what is included in this promise.

1. God promises salvation by declaring that He will put enmity between the seed of the woman and that of the serpent, “I will put enmity” shows that God will undo the results of the Fall. By sinning, man had become Satan’s friend and God’s enemy. God is going to save man by restoring man to fellowship with Him. This will make man the enemy of Satan, as he was before he sinned.

2. This salvation will be certain, because it is based on God’s action alone. He says “I will put enmity.” It is to be a sovereign salvation, because only God’s sovereign work could guarantee man’s salvation.

3. God promises a Savior, the Seed of the woman, Who will destroy Satan. “It shall bruise thy head” is a promise of Christ. There can be no salvation apart from Him. The first promise of redemption includes a promise of Christ, and the rest of the Old Testament prepares for His coming.

4. This Savior will suffer at the hands of Satan: “thou shalt bruise his heel.” This suffering will be part of the Savior’s redemptive work, when as men’s substitute He bears the penalty for their sins.

In this promise we have the seed of the new Kingdom of God. The first theocracy was destroyed, and immediately God set into operation the forces that would produce the second theocracy, which will continue forever. From this seed the plant of God’s redemptive kingdom will grow. The rest of the Bible is dedicated to tracing the growth of that plant.

E. The Growing Effects of Sin

Please read Genesis 4:1 – 6:5.

Before continuing that account, however, Genesis presents to us just how awful sin really is. The sin of Adam did not affect only him; by his first sin he infected all his descendants as well. Since that time, man is born in sin and has a sinful nature. The effects of this sinful nature are now set forth. It has been suggested by some writers that the period between the Fall

²⁴ *proto-evangelium* – Greek: *protos*, “first”; *evangelion*, “gospel” or “good news.”

and the Flood was one in which God withheld His grace to a large degree, so that men might see how awful sin really is and what misery it brings. Sin erupted in the first murder, when Cain killed Abel (Gen 4:5-8). But Cain at least tried to hide his sin. The second murderer mentioned shows a greater hardness of heart. Lamech admits his act, and composes a song about it (Gen 4:23). Thus we see the growing effects of sin.

Not all Adam's children are of Cain's evil line. There is another line, descending from Seth. This line retains at least some knowledge of Jehovah. But sin also affects the Sethites. Genesis 5 shows that death, the result of sin, did not bypass them. The fact that Enoch escaped death only spotlights the fact that everyone else experiences death. His experience was unique. Sin was everywhere, and everywhere it brought forth death.

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God [the children of Seth] saw the daughters of men [the children of Cain] that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My Spirit will not always strive with man.—Genesis 6:1-3

Just before the Flood, sin reached its peak. Notice the cause: the line of Seth, among whom were many men of faith, intermarried with the line of Cain, who had rejected God. Here is a lesson that every Christian should take to heart. Marriage with unbelievers is disastrous for the Christian, for the Church, and for the world. Christian homes are one of the main barriers against the spread of sin. Intermarriage breaks down this barrier. It was in this way that open sinfulness spread throughout the entire world just before the Flood.

Notice what is said of man in Genesis 6:5. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." This exposes the sinfulness of man's heart, but in this case, that sinfulness was turned loose in the world. Notice how great man's sin is.

1. It begins at the very center of his personality—the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart. It is not simply on the surface, limited to a few evil deeds.

2. It includes everything that comes from his heart. His thoughts are "only evil continually." His sin is so great that it excludes all good.

3. It extends to everything that he does—"the wickedness of man was great in the earth."

By putting these statements together, it becomes clear that there is no good in man. Swelling from the very core of his being, his sins extend wherever the influence of man is felt. And the corruption that fills the earth as a result of this sin calls for divine punishment. That punishment was soon inflicted.

4. The Flood

Please read Genesis 6-11.

The purpose of the Flood was for God's justice to destroy sinful man and the results of his sin from the earth. "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth" (Gen 6:13). This end was achieved. The Flood destroyed man and beast from the face of the earth. Of course, not all life was destroyed. God called Noah to build the ark to save himself, his family, and a pair of each type of animal. This was a representative group through whom God would again populate the earth. By thus saving a remnant from the physical punishment of sin, God pictures the fact that He will save His Church from the eternal punishment of sin. Most importantly, God preserved the promised seed of the woman so that the Redeemer could come at the appointed time.

The Flood fulfilled its purpose, and when that was done God brought the remnant forth from the ark. Then God made a covenant with Noah, which we call the Noahic Covenant or the "covenant of nature" (Gen 9:8-17). In this covenant, God promised that never again would the course of nature be interrupted by a world-wide flood, nor would mankind again be destroyed, until God's plan of history is completed. This covenant is important for the development of the theocracy. It guarantees stability in the world. It assures us that there will be a stage on which the drama of redemption can be played without interruption, until the last act is completed.

Noah himself became living proof that redemption was still needed. The Flood could not erase the sin from the human heart, and Noah soon became the one through whom sin first manifested its ugly presence in the regenerated world.

And Noah's descendants quickly turned away from God. They planned the Tower of Babel, by which they intended to avoid being scattered. To prevent them from fulfilling their purpose, God changed their languages so they could not understand each other, and scattered them abroad. This prepared the way for the next step in God's plan. Mankind as a whole had failed. Now God was ready to separate a people for Himself, that through them He might redeem His people.

Study Questions Lesson 3

First Theocracy—Genesis: Creation, Fall, Flood

Please read Lesson 3 before answering these questions. Always get your answers from the reading, but put them into your own words, in order to indicate your understanding of what you have read.

Purpose (1)

1. What is the purpose of Genesis?

The Creation (2)

Importance (A)

2. Why is the doctrine of creation important?

Who God is (B)

3. What is the first major principle in the Old Testament?
4. What is the most important thing about a person? Why?
5. a. We learn much about God in Genesis 1. Briefly describe each of the seven attributes of God mentioned.
b. *Making It Personal* Will you believe that God is powerful enough to overcome the particular problems you are facing? Why or why not?

Man's place in creation (C)

The highest of God's creatures (1)

6. How do we know that man is the highest of God's creatures?

In God's image (2)

7. In what ways are we created like God, in His image? Briefly describe each.
8. a. Why did God make us in His image?
b. *Making It Personal* What does this motivate you personally to do? Will you do it?

Summary (4)

9. Describe man's position in the first theocracy.

The Fall (3)

Before the Fall (A)

10. Briefly describe seven aspects of man's life with God before the Fall.
11. *Making It Personal* God is very good. Why do we not trust Him more?

The Fall itself (B)

12. a. Write out the key phrase in Genesis 2 that tells what was required of man in the covenant of works.
b. *Making It Personal* Why is it significant that there was only one restriction?
13. a. Who is the devil?
b. What are his goals today?
c. What was his goal in the Garden of Eden?
d. In the Garden, what was his strategy to achieve this goal?
14. How did the devil tempt Eve (and us today)?
15. a. What is the second major principle in the Old Testament?
b. Describe the nature of sin.

Consequences of the Fall (C)

16. a. Describe the consequences of the Fall in Adam.
Making It Personal
b. Do you agree that these same consequences are upon you today? Explain your answer.
c. Which of these consequences are big struggles for you personally?

Redemption (D)

17. What are the parts of the first promise of redemption (Gen 3:15)?

The growing effects of sin (E)

18. List the evidences of the growth of sin in Genesis 4-6, giving references.
19. Show from Genesis 6:5 how great man's sinfulness is.

The Flood (4)

20. What was the purpose of the Flood?
21. Why did God save Noah and his family?
22. Why is the covenant God made with Noah important?
23. What was wrong with the building of the Tower of Babel?
Use Scripture in your answer.

Thought questions

The answers to Thought questions are not in the study guide text. Please think through each question, and give your own answer.

24. What does the Bible mean when it says that God "rested"? Gen 2:2
25. Read Genesis 6:5 and Jeremiah 17:9. Do you believe that man is totally depraved? Why or why not?

Memory

26. Write the outline of Genesis from memory.
27. Write Genesis 6:5 from memory.

Lesson 4

Promise of the New Theocracy

Genesis: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Please review your memorized outline of Genesis and memorize Genesis 15:6. We will ask you to write these from memory at the end of the study questions.

1. Purpose

Please read Genesis 12-17.

The second part of Genesis is different from the first in many ways. Here we see God narrowing the limits of His work. Instead of dealing with the whole human race, God now works with one man and his descendants. But there is a close connection between the two sections. The first part (Gen 1-11) served to show us *why* God limited His Old Testament kingdom to a single nation. The human race as a whole had fallen into sin and was separated from God. The second part of Genesis (Gen 12-50) tells us *how* God begins to separate His chosen nation from others. This nation will be the line of the Redeemer to come and His instrument in purifying men.

2. God's Kingdom and the Covenant of Grace

A. Covenants

The new stage in God's redemptive work begins with Abraham. Abraham receives the promise that God will establish a new theocracy with him and with his family. This promise comes in the form of a covenant. A covenant is an arrangement or an agreement in which two parties understand completely what is expected of each: blessings are attached to fulfillment, and sanctions are attached to non-fulfillment. God is a covenant God. He does not leave His people ignorant of what He expects of them. Nor does He leave them in ignorance of what He will do for them.

We have already seen that God makes covenants with men. First, He entered into the covenant of works with Adam. Next, He made the covenant of nature with Noah. Now, He establishes His covenant of grace with Abraham.

B. The Covenant of Grace

This covenant is the beginning of the nation of Israel. The rest of the Old Testament is the account of the working out of this covenant. God also made a second major covenant, the Mosaic or National Covenant of Law at Mount Sinai, which also is worked out in the nation's history. But Israel failed in the

National Covenant, and when they did, the Abrahamic Covenant held things together. More importantly, it contains the promise of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of God's children from the penalty of sin and death. That is why this covenant is so important.

It is given in three stages. The covenant is promised in Genesis 12:2-3 at the time of Abraham's call: to make of him a great nation and to bless all the earth through him. The covenant is formally enacted in Genesis 15. And in Genesis 17, God explains and establishes His covenant with Abraham.

I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee...and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.—Genesis 12:2-3

Look now toward heaven, and tell [i.e., count] the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.—Genesis 15:5

Thou shalt be a father of many nations...And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.—Genesis 17:4-7

Let us examine Genesis 15, for it contains the great statement of faith. When God took Abraham out under the stars, He did not say that Abraham would have as many descendants as there are stars, but "so shall thy seed be," meaning that they would both be beyond counting. Abraham then asked how he should know this. His asking was not unbelief, but only seeking some encouragement, because from a human perspective the promise was by now impossible to come to pass due to old age. That same evening, God told Abraham to prepare animals for a covenant. In the ancient Middle East, covenants came with the pain of sacrifice: men would slay an animal, divide it into halves, and walk between the halves to ratify the covenant. Abraham did this, and the next evening God appeared in a fiery presence. "Behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram" (Gen 15:17-18).

Please notice that only God went through the pieces. God made the covenant with Abraham. It is one-way and unconditional; Abraham had nothing to do with it. This is extremely important and marvelous, because you cannot break a covenant that you did not make! Because it is one-way and unconditional, it cannot be broken: not by Abraham and not by any other man—and not by God, for He does not change.

The Old Testament revolves around three major covenants. This is the first, the National Covenant at Mount Sinai is the second, and the Davidic Covenant is the third. The National Covenant is conditional: in it God said He would bless them *if* they obeyed Him, and chastise them if they would not. Like the first, the third covenant is unconditional: God promised David that He would keep his descendants on the throne forever. This was wonderfully fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

All three covenants move along together and act as a guide to explain why God acts. Whenever He says He will do something for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's sake, He is acting to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant. God chastens the nation because He loves them, even taking them into the Babylonian captivity. But He brings them back to the land, not because the remnant deserved it, but because He was fulfilling His covenant with Abraham: through Abraham there will be a Redeemer to pay the penalty for man's sins—and all nations will be blessed.

It is by means of this covenant of grace with Abraham that the way is paved for the establishment of the new theocracy. But Genesis does not record the actual establishment of this theocracy. Abraham did not see the fulfillment of the promises God gave to him. Nor did his immediate descendants see the promises fulfilled. That fulfillment was reserved for a later time. They received the promises, and they lived in complete faith in those promises of God. God was their God and they were His people. This was enough to satisfy them. And so they lived with God, waiting for Him to do what He had promised. As they waited, God guided their lives and pictured in them some of the important truths about His kingdom.

3. God's Blessings and Abraham's Life

A. Real Blessing

The life of Abraham teaches us two important lessons. The first is that God gives real blessings to His people. Some men think that the only benefit of religion is the ability it gives us to have proper attitudes toward life, where the value is all in our minds. But that is simply not true. God's kingdom contains many blessings for His people. And these are real blessings. Some of them we receive in this life and others we will receive in the life to come. God displayed this fact in Abraham's life: He gave Abraham many blessings. As you read about his life, look for these blessings. They show us that God's kingdom is the source of much good for God's people.

B. The Life of Faith

The life of Abraham also teaches us what our response to the theocracy must be. Abraham is called the father of those who *believe*. His whole life was a life of faith. A careful reading of the story of his life will reveal instance after instance in which his faith is displayed (Heb 11:8-10). As you look for evidences of faith, remember that faith in God is revealed by obedience to God. This is the *third major principle* in the Old Testament: the life of faith, walking with God in a lifestyle of obedience. It is demonstrated in Abraham's life: God's blessings are to be received by faith.

The New Testament makes an important point of highlighting that this principle of faith comes early in the Old Testament account (Rom 4). Abraham "believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness"

(Gen 15:6). This is the great testimony of faith as the basis of our salvation. Obedience to God's laws and good works both flow from faith. Abraham was exemplary in obedience to the laws of God he had even though the Law had not yet been given through Moses (Gen 26:5). The Pharisees of Jesus' day wanted to seek after God in their own way: they started with the Law, not with faith. But Abraham's life of faith comes approximately 400 years before the Law for a specific purpose: that we should start there in understanding how we are to come to God. It is vitally important that we start with faith and not with the Law.

Faith is not a commodity to be stored up, but a *way of living!* When you walk by faith through difficult situations, your faith grows. Faith is a way of life. There are three steps in the life of faith as revealed in Abraham's experience: 1) the call to the life of faith (salvation), 2) how a man grows in the life of faith (sanctification), and 3) the reward of the life of faith (fellowship).

1. The Call to the Life of Faith

To grow in the life of faith, you must begin the life of faith. It starts when God speaks to you. On a given day, God spoke to Abraham. Your faith also begins on a given day—it was not always in you, and it did not just “evolve.” You may not know it at first, but at a point in time, God begins a work, an awakening, a new birth. It is certainly noticeable: you see it clearly when you begin to repent from your sin because you hate the sin itself, not just its punishment.

Genesis 12:1-3 is the original calling of Abraham. “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee” (Gen 12:1). God says to Abraham to do two things: leave your country and leave your family. The whole burden of fulfilling God's calling rests on God. God told Abraham his part was only to leave; God's part was to bless. If you are to live the life of faith, God says essentially the same thing to you. Your part at the beginning is small: to repent and believe (Mar 1:15). And your life of faith does not begin until you do it!



First Journeys of Abraham

Abraham did leave Ur, but not his family—they all went to Haran. But half-following God is not following God. Therefore, nothing happened at Haran. The years there were years of delay—lost years, unused years. Nothing happens until he left his family as well. We know that “leaving” family does not necessarily require moving to a different city. God gave the fifth commandment so that boys and girls, men and women, will always honor their parents (Exo 20:12). To “leave” is to move your love for them to second place behind God: He must be first, all else is secondary.

What is it to make God first, to live by faith? It is to find your security, satisfaction, and sufficiency in God alone. Everything you do on this earth is related to trying to find answers in these three areas. If you live by faith, you will be *secure* because God is your King and Protector. You will come to lasting *satisfaction* because you know God as your Provider and Shepherd. You will feel *sufficient* because the Almighty Omnipotent God is your strength. You will have true peace, because Jesus said, “My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (Joh 14:27). It does not depend on you alone anymore to make it all work.

Your source for security, satisfaction, and sufficiency are all embodied in your national culture. Your culture determines what language you speak, what food you eat, how you dress, what music you listen to, what your house is like, what heroes you have, and what success is. God comes to Abraham and says to him in effect, “If I am going to make you a man of faith, you must leave it all!” God tells us to put the whole culture behind us, and our

whole family behind God. If you are going to learn the life of faith, you must stop being governed by the culture in the choices you make.

2. *Growing in the Life of Faith*

When you commit yourself to the life of faith, you place yourself in God's hands. He has a plan; He knows what He wants to make of you. Your part is to follow Him in the path in which He leads you, to obey Him. You commit to Him, and He teaches you to grow in godliness.

How does God teach you in the life of faith? He does it in two ways:

- 1) God teaches you through His Word to know His character and His ways (you will trust only someone you know).
- 2) God also puts you into certain pre-designed experiences so that you can practically apply what you know of Him into your life. Christianity is not merely *intellectual*; it is *experiential*. He speaks truth to you, and then He gives you the opportunity to experience the truth in practice.

How does God train you? In a word: *suffering*. It is not necessarily suffering in the sense of physical pain, sickness, or injury. When God trains you in the life of faith, He keeps putting you in places where you are not in control. He must bring you out of your familiar habit of *self*-sufficiency, into *God*-sufficiency. Your trust in yourself and your resistance to trusting in God are so great, that changing from it is very painful. The Bible describes it as denying yourself and trusting God (Mat 16:24-26).

But please realize this: you will not see a difficult trial through if you have not committed yourself to God. If you are still the final authority in your life, you will resort to your own efforts when the going gets tough.

When Abraham trusted God, the first thing God did was to take him to a *barren* place. Abraham had lived for 75 years in Ur of the Chaldees. Ur was the center of culture and civilization; it was where the art, music, and entertainment were. God takes Abraham out of Ur and into Canaan—the backwoods of the world. There were some small towns there, but he was out in the fields as a shepherd of sheep. Shepherds were the lowest class in the world, despised by almost everyone.

God took Abraham from all the richest possibilities for his future, to the remotest area of no possibilities (only smelly sheep!). He did this so that Abraham could learn that his walk of faith must be centered in God.

3. *The Reward of the Life of Faith*

Please read Genesis 21-28.

Remember the promises God made to Abraham: to make him a great nation, and to abundantly bless him with descendants too numerous to count. At the end of his life, what were the rewards of his faith?

When he died, Abraham effectively had one son, Isaac; the other, Ishmael, had been banished away from home. Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. Esau was totally unspiritual, as worldly as a man could be. Jacob was

willful and conniving. The only property Abraham owns is the burial plot of his wife Sarah! He had nothing permanent in this world. What had become of the promise?

When Isaac was in his late teenage years, God again spoke to Abraham (Gen 22:2). The Hebrew word used for Isaac here refers to a teenager, a male who is past puberty but not yet a full grown adult. He probably was somewhere between 15 and 20 years old.

God gave Abraham one of the most difficult commands that anyone could ever hear: he must sacrifice his only son Isaac. It seems overwhelming to us, beyond anything we could ever conceive of doing. Because God had promised him millions of descendants, Abraham concluded by faith that God planned to raise Isaac from the dead (Heb 11:19). But he still had to build an altar, to bind his son, and to plunge the knife into his body! Anyone with a son or daughter knows that Abraham had to deny himself completely in order to trust God completely in this. It was an agonizing mission from the start.

God told Abraham to take Isaac to Mount Moriah, three days journey away. When Isaac asked where the offering was, Abraham said, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb" (Gen 22:8). From that day, they called the place Jehovah-Jireh, "God will provide."

In this God gave Abraham one of the clearest pictures of God's provision of the atoning sacrifice of His Son. To one side of Mount Moriah is Mount Zion, the site of the Temple, to the other side is Mount Calvary. In the same place 2,000 years later, God Himself sacrificed His only Son Jesus Christ on the cross, to pay for all the sins of all His children, that they might live and not die. Others knew not even the meaning of the prophecy that "God would provide," but Abraham experienced it first hand with God. He experienced God's agony at the cross when he raised the knife. He knew God's joy of salvation when God accepted the substitute. And he experienced all of this at the same place!

The reward of the man who truly walks with God by faith is that he comes to know God intimately. If we hesitate in learning the lessons of faith, we will miss the deep knowledge of God (Jam 1:2-8).

4. God's Choices and Abraham's Seed

The life of Isaac is much different from that of his father Abraham. Here our attention is directed to the supernatural way in which God works in His kingdom. Isaac's birth illustrates this fact. Abraham and Sarah thought that they had the only answer to a great problem. Abraham needed a son so that the promise could be fulfilled. So they used a device that was an accepted custom in those times. Abraham had a son who was born of Hagar, Sarah's maid. This was the natural answer, since Sarah was too old to have any children. But God would not accept the natural answer. He provided a super-

natural answer: Isaac was born of Sarah in her old age. This and other incidents in the life of Isaac illustrate the fact that the theocracy is brought about by supernatural action.

Isaac's son Jacob teaches us that membership in God's kingdom is based upon election. It is not because of what we are, but because of God's choosing us that we become members of the theocracy. In the birth of Isaac, God displayed His supernatural method of working. But in the birth of Jacob, His election is displayed. In the case of Isaac, we could find a reason why God might choose Isaac and not Ishmael. But in the case of Jacob, there is no such reason. In fact, everything points in the other direction. The culture demanded that Esau, the older son, would be heir. But Jacob is chosen, and this is the result of God's electing love. That it was not due to Jacob's character is clear from the story of his early life. At first he was a despicable character. But later in his life he becomes a true saint of God. This shows us a second truth about God's election: God does not choose us because we are good, but in order that He might make us good.

5. God's Guidance and Israel's Early History

Please read Genesis 39-50.

The early history of Israel is the story of the lives of the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. After this the family begins to enlarge. Jacob has twelve sons, who are to become the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel. Of these the most prominent is Joseph. God is preparing the way for the next step in the biblical narrative, the Exodus. But we should also notice that Joseph is one of the Old Testament characters who may be called a type of Christ. By that we mean that the events which occur in his life have a striking resemblance to and teach us about the events in the life of our Lord. As an example, compare the treatment Joseph received from his brothers with the words of John 1:11, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

The book of Genesis ends with the blessings that Jacob bestows upon his sons. These blessings are prophetic and foretell the fortunes of the various tribes of Israel. Of special importance is part of the blessing upon Judah.

*The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from
between his feet, Until Shiloh come; And unto him shall
the gathering of the people be.—Genesis 49:10*

This asserts that Judah will be the ruler of Israel, and out of Judah shall come a special ruler. This is a prophecy of Christ.

6. Conclusion

The book of Genesis brings us to the end of the period of promise. In it we see the first theocracy established by creation and destroyed by sin. We

see the wrath of God upon a sinful world expressed in the Flood. And then we see the beginning of a new theocracy, given in the form of a covenantal promise to Abraham and his children. This new theocracy is the subject of the rest of the Bible. God is still perfecting His kingdom. It will come to its perfection only when Christ returns from heaven to judge the living and the dead. So Genesis is truly the foundation of the Bible. It provides the basis on which the entire redemptive plan of God rests. One could not write “The End” after Genesis. It is like an introductory chapter. There is much more to follow.

Study Questions Lesson 4

First Theocracy—Genesis: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob

Please read Lesson 4 before answering these questions. Always get your answers from the reading, but put them into your own words, in order to indicate your understanding of what you have read.

Purpose (1)

1. What is the purpose of the second part of Genesis?

God’s Kingdom and the Covenant of Grace (2)

Covenants (A)

2. What is a covenant?

The Covenant of Grace (B)

3. a. What blessings did God promise Abraham in each of Genesis 12, 15, and 17?
b. What requirements did God set before Abraham in order to maintain the covenant?
4. a. Why did only God walk through the animal pieces in Genesis 15?
b. Why is this significant?
5. For what purpose does God maintain the people of Israel throughout the Old Testament?

God’s blessings and Abraham’s life (3)

Real Blessing (A)

6. As you read Genesis 12-17, list some of the blessings God gave Abraham.

The life of faith (B)

7. a. What is the third major principle in the Old Testament?
b. How does Abraham’s life illustrate this principle?
8. a. What is the significance of Genesis 15:6?
b. Why is it placed early in the Old Testament?
9. What are the three steps in the life of faith?

The call to the life of faith (B.1)

10. a. Why were the years at Haran lost years?
b. What does it mean to “leave” your family?
11. Explain the three components of the life of faith.
 - a. Sufficiency
 - b. Satisfaction
 - c. Security
 - d. *Making It Personal* Which of these three is a challenge to you personally? Why?
12. Why did God command Abraham to leave his country?

Growing in the life of faith (B.2)

13. a. How does God teach you in the life of faith?
b. How does suffering teach you that God is sufficient?

The reward of the life of faith (B.3)

14. What permanent property did Abraham own at the end of his life?
15. a. In what way did Abraham learn of God in Genesis 22?
b. Why is this significant?
16. a. What is the reward of the life of faith?
b. *Making It Personal* Have you known this reward? How?

God’s choices and Abraham’s seed (4)

17. How is God’s sovereignty displayed in Isaac’s birth?
18. a. How is God’s sovereignty displayed in the choice of Jacob instead of Esau?
b. Why is this significant?

God’s guidance and Israel’s early history (5)

19. What do we mean when we say that Joseph is a type of Christ?
20. What is the meaning of Genesis 49:10?

Conclusion (6)

21. How does Genesis provide the basis on which the entire redemptive plan of God rests?

Read the Scriptures

For each question, read the passage in the Bible, and then answer the question from what you have read.

22. In what ways did Abraham express his faith in
 - a. Genesis 12?
 - b. Genesis 13:7ff.? (*The “ff.” means “and the following verses also.”*)
 - c. Genesis 18:22ff.?

23. What events in Jacob's early life show that God did not choose him because he was good:
- Genesis 25:27ff.?
 - Genesis 27?
 - Genesis 30:31ff.?
24. What events in Joseph's life remind you of the life of Christ:
- Genesis 37:18ff.?
 - Genesis 39:7ff.?
 - Genesis 45?

Thought questions

The answers to Thought questions are not in the study guide text. Please think through each question, and give your own answer.

25. Is there an element of "poetic justice" in the way Laban treated Jacob?
26. Why did God wrestle with Jacob? What does the change of name mean? (See Genesis 32:22ff.)
27. What principle does God give in Genesis 50:20?

Map work

28. Using the map of the Middle East in this lesson,
- Trace the journeys of Abraham in Genesis 12-14 and 20-22.
Note on your answer sheet when you have done this.
 - Write the following in the sequence that Abraham visited them: Gerar, Haran, Beersheba, Bethel, Ur of the Chaldees, Hebron, Damascus, Shechem.
29. Compare the map in this lesson with a modern map, and list the modern countries through which Abraham passed.

Memory

30. Write the outline of Genesis from memory.
31. Write Genesis 15:6 from memory.

32. Making It Personal

- What are the main lessons you have learned during this course?
- How valuable has this course been to you?

*Thank you for taking this course.
Please write now for your next course OT2
to continue your studies of God's Word.*

Course OT1a Memory Verses

*Please review all the verses you have memorized on a regular basis: daily for the first weeks after memorization, and weekly for the next few months, and monthly thereafter. If you do not review, they will be forgotten.
God will bless His Word hidden in our hearts.*

- Genesis 6:5 “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”
- Genesis 15:6 “And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”

Overview of Courses OT1a – OT9

In this course series, the books of the Old Testament are covered in the sequence in which they were written, not necessarily in the sequence found in our Bibles.

Course/Lesson

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| OT1a | Part One | Theocratic Beginnings |
| 1. | Introduction | |
| | Books of the Old Testament chart | |
| | Old Testament Time Line chart | |
| 2. | Five Books of Moses | |
| 3. | First Theocracy | <i>Genesis: Creation, Fall, Flood</i> |
| 4. | Promise of the New Theocracy | <i>Genesis: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob</i> |
| | First Journeys of Abraham map | |
| OT2 | Part Two | Theocratic Establishment |
| 5. | Covenant People Delivered | <i>Exodus: Redemption from Egypt</i> |
| | From Egypt to Mount Sinai map | |
| 6. | Covenant Nation Organized | <i>Exodus: At Sinai</i> |
| | The Tabernacle chart | |
| 7. | Covenant Nation's Laws | <i>Leviticus</i> |
| OT3 | | |
| 8. | Covenant Nation Disciplined | <i>Numbers</i> |
| | From Mount Sinai to the Promised Land map | |
| 9. | Covenant Nation Consecrated | <i>Deuteronomy</i> |
| 10. | Covenant Nation's Land | <i>Joshua</i> |
| | Conquest of Canaan: Southern Campaign map | |
| | Conquest of Canaan: Northern Campaign map | |
| | Allotment of the Land map | |
| OT4 | Part Three | Theocratic Development |
| 11. | Covenant Nation Forsakes Jehovah | <i>Judges</i> |
| | The Period of the Judges map | |
| 12. | Covenant Nation's Faithful Minority | <i>Ruth</i> |
| 13. | Covenant Nation's Demands | <i>1 Samuel: The Prophet</i> |
| 14. | Covenant Nation's Selfish King | <i>1 Samuel: King Saul</i> |
| 15. | Covenant Nation's Theocratic King | <i>2 Samuel: King David</i> |
| | Expansion of the Kingdom map | |

OT5

16. Covenant Nation's Songbook *Introduction and Psalms*
 17. Covenant Nation's Wisdom *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song*
 18. Covenant Nation Examines Suffering *Job*

OT6**Part Four Theocratic Decline**

19. Covenant Nation's Time of Decision *Kings: Solomon*
 20. Covenant Nation's Time of Division *Kings: to Israel's Captivity*
 The Divided Kingdom map
 21. Covenant Nation's Time of Disintegration *Kings: to Judah's Captivity*
 22. Covenant Nation's Lesson from Its History *Chronicles*

OT7

23. God's Voice to His Covenant Nation *The Prophets*
 24. God's Prediction of His People's Future *Joel*
 25. God's Denunciation of Israel's Sins *Amos*
 26. God's Indictment of His Unfaithful People *Hosea*
 27. God's Promise of Judah's Deliverance *Isaiah: Prophecies to Judah*
 28. God's Promise of Messianic Salvation *Isaiah: Prophecies of Messiah*
 29. God's Promise of Mercy after Judgment *Micah*

OT8

30. God's Picture of the Universal Savior *Jonah*
 31. God's Guarantee of Covenant Faithfulness *Obadiah*
 32. God's Warning from Nineveh's Destruction *Nahum*
 33. God's Warning of Coming Wrath *Zephaniah*
 34. God's Explanation of Coming Punishment *Habakkuk*
 35. God's Punishment of Sinful Judah *Jeremiah*
 36. Covenant Nation Mourns Its Destruction *Lamentations*
 37. God's Assurance of Blessing after Punishment *Ezekiel*

OT9**Part Five Theocratic Transition**

38. Covenant People under Gentile Dominion *Daniel*
 39. Covenant People under Divine Protection *Esther*
 40. Covenant People Return to Their Land *Ezra–Nehemiah*
 41. God's Call to Faithful Service *Haggai*
 42. God's Promise of Future Glory *Zechariah*
 43. God's Demand for Full Repentance *Malachi*

References

This list of references includes the volumes that were consulted in the original preparation of this survey and additional sources used in the development of the courses.

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Detailed Course Instructions

1. Procedure for Taking the Course

- a. The reading material for this course consists of the reading text printed at the beginning of each lesson of this study guide.
- b. Before beginning to read, please pray for God's enabling to learn spiritually.
- c. Before you begin a lesson, please read the reading text completely.
- d. After reading the text, answer the related questions in this study guide. The lessons in this course are "open book," which often enhances learning by removing unnecessary pressure. In addition, some questions ask for a personal response, where the answer will not be found in the reading material. In this case, we ask only for your honesty and best effort.
- e. The questions are designed to be thought through carefully. Several of the questions are sensitive; they have to do with your heart attitudes. So please do not rush, or you will be defeating the purpose of the course! Answer all of the questions as honestly as you can. The answers are confidential.
- f. Do not go to the next question until you have answered the previous one.

2. Answer Pages

Please write short and clear answers. Please write or type your answers on regular 8.5 x 11 inch (A4 metric) paper, or on the preprinted answer sheets if provided. Please write clearly and neatly, and if possible print. Note each page with Lesson number, each answer with Question number, and skip a line between questions.

3. Supplies

Paper, pen, and Bible are needed to complete your assignments. The King James Version is quoted, but you may use another version if you do not have a KJV.

4. Completion of Assignments

- a. If taking this course with a local coordinator, please follow their instructions.
- b. If you are taking this course as individual independent study (non-graded), save your answer sheets for future reference. (Skip instructions 5 & 6 below).

5. Only if Correspondent Study

- a. Two months are allotted for the completion of this course. You may be granted an extension by contacting your course coordinator.
- b. Mail your answer sheets to your course coordinator after completing all Lessons 1 to 4. Only mail your answer sheets, not this Study Guide. They will be returned to you by regular mail after grading. Please ensure to write your name, student ID, course title, and lesson number on each answer sheet. Please see the sample after the Table of Contents at front. Headings should be in the following format.

Your name student ID course OT1a lesson number

6. Written Feedback (only if correspondent study)

Spiritual success is not measured by high grades, but by growth in Christ-likeness to God's glory. Therefore, the motivation in taking the course is to see God change your life. There are no letter or number grades such as "A" or "100" to be earned. The grader will offer comments or suggestions from Scripture in response to your answers. Some answers have no comments because they are correct or personal.

Advanced Courses from Mount Zion

Practical Walk

Holiness – A,B [⊕]	HO	21 lessons	Intermediate
What it is and its practical development in all true saints (J.C. Ryle 1879).			
The Minister's Self-Watch [⊕]	MSW	4 lessons	Advanced
Why ministers must be of great piety and holiness (C.H. Spurgeon 1856).			
Spiritual Foundations of Ministry [⊕]	SFM	5 lessons	Advanced
For pastors and church leaders: renewing spiritual zeal (Horatius Bonar 1866).			

General Studies

Fundamentals of the Faith ^{⊕*}	FOF	13 lessons	Intermediate
Essential discipleship lessons about faith and practice in the Christian life.			
New Testament Survey [⊕]	NT1	13 lessons	Intermediate
God reveals His Son, <i>Jesus Christ</i> , in 1 st century through the 27 NT books.			
The Church in History – A,B [⊕]	GS	20 lessons	Intermediate
Growth, sufferings, heresies, reformation, missions (AD33-1517) (1517-1900s).			
Methods for Bible Study – A,B [⊕]	MB	8 lessons	Advanced
Interpretation, observation, outlines, word studies and grammar, application.			
Biblical Eldership [⊕]	BEL	6 lessons	Advanced
The biblical basis for church leadership: pastoral, shared, equal, serving.			

Doctrine

Divinely Inspired Word – A,B [⊕]	DW	12 lessons	Intermediate
30 biblical arguments showing the Scriptures are from God (A.W. Pink 1947).			
Attributes of God [⊕]	ATR	12 lessons	Intermediate
18 characteristics of God are described from Scripture (A.W. Pink 1930).			
The Holy Spirit – A,B [⊕]	HS	26 lessons	Advanced
In-depth study of the person and work of the Holy Spirit (A.W. Pink 1935).			
Sovereignty of God [⊕]	SG	22 lessons	Advanced
Biblical study of God's rule, election, reprobation, free will (A.W. Pink 1929).			
The Gospel (Foundational Doctrine St.) [⊕]	FDG	10 lessons	Advanced
Biblical study of law, sin, love, righteousness, faith (authors from 1600s-1800s).			
Substitution (Foundational Doctrines St.) [⊕]	FDS	7 lessons	Advanced
The meaning of Christ's substitutionary atonement (authors from 1600s-1900s).			
Justification (Foundational Doctrines St.) [⊕]	FDJ	9 lessons	Advanced
Thorough biblical study of justification by faith alone (authors from 1600s-1900s).			
Imputed Righteousness (FD Studies) [⊕]	FDI	8 lessons	Advanced
Christ's righteousness: Law, imputation, consolations (authors from 1500s-1800s).			
Repentance (Foundational Doctrines St.) [⊕]	FDR	11 lessons	Advanced
Biblical parts, responsibility, continuity, motives, fruits (authors from 1600s-1900s).			
Conversion (Foundational Doctrines St.) [⊕]	FDC	8 lessons	Advanced
Its meaning, causes, subjects, counterfeits, and faith (authors from 1700s-1900s).			
Doctrine of Sanctification – A,B [⊕]	DR	16 lessons	Advanced
Biblical study of positional and practical sanctification (A.W. Pink 1937).			

* Available for prison inmates only. ⊕ Available after taking other courses at prior levels.

Additional courses are in development.