

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

“The Pentateuch”

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OT

The word Testament is derived from the Latin word “Testamentum” which means “covenant or agreement.”
“Why is it important to study the OT?”

- 1. Because the OT comprises 75% of the scripture**
- 2. God has not changed.**
- 3. The OT is the seed and plant from which the fruit of the NT grew.**

The word Pentateuch means “five books” and refers to Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy and was written by Moses.

1. GENESIS

The theme of the book of Genesis is Beginnings...the beginning of the world, man, sin and Israel. The English word for Genesis is “beginnings.” It can be outlined the following way...The Creation, The Fall, The Flood, and The Patriarchs.

1. The Creation (1-2). Genesis begins with the creation account. Here’s what’s important to know. It was written for a theological not a scientific purpose.

Two names for God appear in the creation story. The first is Elohim which shows his relationship to the world and means “creator and judge.” The second is Yahweh which is God’s personal name and refers to his relationship with individuals

2. The Fall (3-5). The thing that I want you to see is that God doesn’t immediately cast Adam and Eve aside for their disobedience. Although justice required he punish them, he gives them hope for the future. Gen. 3:15 is the first prophesy of the Messiah.

3. The Flood (6:1-8:17). By the time we reach Genesis 6 the wickedness of the world has become intolerable. And so God decides to destroy the world. The takeaway from this story is that your life can make a difference in the place God has planted you.

This section of Genesis ends with the rise of human arrogance and pride leading to the building of the Tower of Babel. Because of the power of their unity God has to confuse their languages so they can’t communicate. The takeaway from this story is that “anything is possible when there is unity among a group of people!”

4. The Patriarchs (12-50). The rest of Genesis deals with the Patriarchs. When God speaks to Abraham he is living in Ur of the Chaldees, which was in the area known as the Fertile Crescent along the Tigris-Euphrates River. It was the best and most lush land in the region and was a great center of culture, learning and trade. To follow the call of God Abraham was choosing to walk away from wealth, privilege, status and comfort and put his trust in a God he didn’t know.

The second thing it’s important to know about Abraham is that his faith was not always strong. But here’s the encouraging news, despite Abraham’s sin and lack of faith at times, God still honored, used and fulfilled His promises to Abraham.

Isaac is the second Patriarch. The story of how he finds Rebekah reveals several key truths. First it demonstrates the power of prayer. Second, it reveals the importance of waiting on God to lead you. Third it shows us that God can be trusted to bring us what we really need.

Jacob is the third and most interesting Patriarch. What we learn from Jacob’s life is what happens when we try to help God out with the plan for our lives by scheming and manipulating.

The rest of Genesis (37-50) deals with the life of Joseph and tells how the Jewish people made their way to Egypt.

2. EXODUS

The theme of Exodus is Redemption. There are three parts to Exodus. In part 1 we see God saving Israel. In part 2 we see God separating Israel by taking her out of Egypt. And in part 3 God sanctifies Israel by giving her the law and setting up a code of conduct for their walk and worship.

The first highlight of Exodus was the supernatural showdown between Moses and Pharaoh. The second highlight was the Passover. The “sacrificial lamb” became the biblical model of redemption...Innocent blood being shed so that human life might be saved. The third highlight was the Red Sea crossing. The fourth highlight was the Entering of Covenant and the Giving of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were the constitution of the covenant community and their purpose was to prevent injustice and unfair treatment of others.

The final highlight in Exodus is the instructions for the creation of the portable Tabernacle which would become the place where the priests would meet with God daily.

3. LEVITICUS

Leviticus establishes the rituals that were to characterize how Israel was to worship God. It was a prescription for living.

The first theme was The Way to God (1-7) depicted by the 5 offerings. The burnt offering atoned for unintentional sins committed. The grain offering was done in conjunction with a burnt or fellowship offering to express thanks to God. The fellowship offering was to demonstrate relationship between God and the person. The sin offering was for cleansing of sins committed. And the guilt offering was required to restore relationship when you had committed a sin against another. It required restitution and a fine of 20%.

The second theme was The Walk with God (8-10). This outlined detailed laws regarding how the priests and people to walk out their relationship with God.

The third theme was The Worship of God (23-25). This describes the Feasts and Holy Days to be used to worship and remind the people that they were God’s people. The feasts were the Sabbath a day of rest, Sabbath year to give the land a rest, Year of Jubilee designed to help the poor by cancellation of all debts and freeing of all slaves, Passover to recall God’s deliverance from bondage, Feast of Unleavened Bread to recall that God brought Israel out of Egypt with great haste, Firstfruits to recognize the Lord’s blessing in the land, Harvest (Pentecost) to give thanks for the harvest, Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah/New Year) to ask for God’s favor, Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) for the cleansing of sin, Tabernacles (Booths) to recall journey from Egypt to Canaan, Sacred Assembly, a time of rest.

The fourth theme was about The Witness of God. Here we see that God insists on holiness in the smallest details of life.

4. NUMBERS

The theme of this book is the prescription for traveling in the wilderness and records the two numberings of Israel. The first count is done after leaving Egypt as they start their journey. The second is done as they are about to enter the promised land with a new generation. This book chronicles their nomadic journey with special attention given to the rebellion at Kadesh-Barnea and the lack of faith of the people.

5. DEUTERONOMY

The theme of Deuteronomy is “Beware Lest Ye Forget.” Moses gives a series of 10 addresses that offer four perspectives.

The Four perspectives are...the **Backward Look**, reminding them of all that God had brought them through and past victories. The **Inward Look** reminding them that blessing depended on obedience rooted in love. The **Forward Look** which told them how to act in a new land. Israel will only succeed if she is faithful to keep the covenant. And the **Upward Look**, recounting Moses farewell, death and burial. It is here that Moses commissions Joshua as the new leader of Israel.