

# CHAPTER 1

## The Old Testament Books

The Bible is a whole library bound up in one volume. The word "BIBLE" means "BOOKS," and altogether there are 66 books in the Bible:

<b>THE OLD TESTAMENT</b> <i>(Genesis to Malachi)</i>	<b>39 BOOKS</b>
<b>THE NEW TESTAMENT</b> <i>(Matthew to Revelation)</i>	<b>27 BOOKS</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>66 BOOKS</b> <b>IN THE BIBLE</b>

This set of lessons introduces the 39 books that are found in the Old Testament.

### The Four Groups of Old Testament Books

All of the 39 Old Testament books can be put into four groups:

<b>GROUP 1</b>
<b>The Books of Moses (the Books of the Law)</b>
Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

<b>GROUP 2</b>
<b>The Historical Books</b> (The History of God's People Israel)
Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

<b>GROUP 3</b>
<b>The Poetical Books</b>
<b>Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon</b>

<b>GROUP 4</b>
<b>The Prophets</b>
<b>The Major Prophets (the Longer Books)</b> Isaiah, Jeremiah, (Lamentations), Ezekiel, Daniel
<b>The Minor Prophets (the Shorter Books)</b> Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Learning the names of the 39 Old Testament books so you can say them and write them in their correct order would be a very helpful project. Then, when your Pastor tells you to turn to the book of Daniel, you would know that this book is located after the book of \_\_\_\_\_ and before the book of \_\_\_\_\_.

### Who Wrote These Books?

The Bible, God's Word, was written by many different men. Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. Other men wrote the remaining books. The Bible writers lived at different times. Malachi wrote his book about 1000 years after Moses wrote his books. The Bible writers were men who had different occupations. David and Amos were shepherds. Joshua was a soldier. Solomon and David were kings. Samuel (who may have written Judges and Ruth) was a priest. Ezra was a scribe (Bible teacher). Daniel was an important government official. God used all of these different men in a very special way.

Even though the Bible was written by men, we must never forget that it was also written by God. We learn in 2 Peter 1:21 that "holy \_\_\_\_\_ of God (such as Moses, David, Isaiah and Daniel) spake (spoke) as they were moved by the \_\_\_\_\_." God moved these men in a very special way so that what they wrote was exactly what God wanted them to write. God made sure that these men did not write down anything that was false or incorrect. We must never forget that the Bible is God's Word. Even though He *used* many men to write the Bible, God is the one true Author.

## Most of the Bible is Made Up of the Old Testament

***The Old Testament has 39 Books; the New Testament only has 27.***

***There are 929 chapters in the Old Testament; the New Testament only has 260 chapters.***

***The Old Testament makes up about three-fourths of the Bible, and the New Testament makes up about one-fourth of the Bible.***

To see how big the Old Testament is compared with the New Testament, try this experiment. Take your Bible and with one hand hold together all the Old Testament books (from Genesis to Malachi). With the other hand hold together all the New Testament books (from Matthew to Revelation). Then compare how many pages each hand is holding.

### Some Dates To Remember

The events that we read about on the pages of the Old Testament happened **before Christ** was born in Bethlehem. If we say that Solomon became king in 971 B.C. this means that he became king 971 years **BEFORE CHRIST** was born in Bethlehem. Here are four dates that might be helpful to remember:

1. Abraham lived about 2000 B.C.
2. Moses lived about 1500 B.C.
3. David lived about 1000 B.C.
4. The Jewish temple which Solomon built was destroyed by the Babylonians about 500 B.C. (the exact date was 586 B.C.)

### His Story

The Bible is God's **HISTORY** book. It tells us all about the history of the world from the very beginning (Genesis 1:1) to the very end (Revelation 21-22).

As we read the Bible we learn that **HISTORY** is really **HIS STORY**. History is God's story! Many people do not really understand history because they leave God out and somehow they think that God had nothing to do with history. As we read the Bible we discover that God has everything to do with history. God has a wonderful plan which He is working out through the centuries. In the Bible we clearly see God working out His plan as He tells us **HIS STORY!**

What is **His Story** about?

## His Story is About One Nation

Most of the Old Testament is about one nation, the nation Israel. This nation began with Abraham, whom we first learn about in Genesis chapter 12. This means that from Genesis chapter 12 all the way through the Old Testament to the book of Malachi, the Old Testament tells the story of this one nation. All of the Old Testament is about the nation Israel (except the first 11 chapters of Genesis)!

## His Story is About the Saviour

The Old Testament is a Christ-centered book. Even though the Old Testament was written *before* Christ was born in Bethlehem, it has much to say about the Saviour.

In Luke 24:27 we learn that the Old Testament has much to say about Jesus Christ: "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in \_\_\_\_\_ the Scriptures (in all of the Old Testament) the things concerning \_\_\_\_\_." The Old Testament concerns Jesus Christ. It is all about Him! Luke 24:44-45 and John 5:39 also teach this same truth.

Christ can be found in every book in the Old Testament. One writer has put it this way:

- In *Genesis* He is the Seed of the woman (3:15).
- In *Exodus* He is the Lamb of God for sinners slain (see chapter 12).
- In *Leviticus* He is our High Priest (the whole book).
- In *Numbers* He is the Star out of Jacob (24:17).
- In *Deuteronomy* He is the Prophet like unto Moses (18:15).
- In *Joshua* He is the Captain of the Lord's armies (5:13-15).
- In *Judges* He is the Angel of the LORD or the messenger of Jehovah (chapter 13).
- In *Ruth* He is our Kinsman-Redeemer (Chapter 3).
- In *Samuel, Kings and Chronicles* He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (1 Samuel 8:1-9).
- In *Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther* He is the sovereign Lord over all the kingdoms of the earth (entire books).
- In *Job* He is our risen and returning Redeemer (Job 19:25).
- In *Psalms* He is the Blessed Man (Psalm 1), the Son of Man (Psalm 2), the Crucified One (Psalm 22), the Coming One (Psalm 24), the Reigning One (Psalm 72).
- In *Proverbs* He is our Wisdom (chapter 14).
- In *Ecclesiastes* He is the forgotten Wise Man (9:14-15).
- In *Song of Solomon* He is my Beloved (2:16).
- In *Isaiah* He is our suffering Substitute (chapter 53).
- In *Jeremiah* He is the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (23:6).
- In *Lamentations* He is the Man of sorrows who weeps for His people (1:12-18).
- In *Ezekiel* He is the glory of God (1:28).
- In *Daniel* He is the Smiting Stone (2:34) and the Companion in the furnace of fire and the den of lions (3:24-25; 6:22).
- In *Hosea* He is David's Greater King (3:5).
- In *Joel* He is the Hope of His people (3:16).
- In *Amos* He is the Rescuer of Israel (3:12).
- In *Obadiah* He is the Deliverer upon Mount Zion (verse 17).
- In *Jonah* He is the buried and risen Saviour (compare Matthew 12:40).
- In *Micah* He is the Everlasting God born in Bethlehem (5:2).
- In *Nahum* He is our Stronghold in the day of wrath (1:7).
- In *Habakkuk* He is the Anchor of our faith (2:4).

- In *Zephaniah* He is in the midst for judgment and cleansing (3:5,15).
- In *Haggai* He is Lord of presence and power (1:13).
- In *Zechariah* He is the smitten Shepherd (13:7).
- In *Malachi* He is the Sun of Righteousness (4:2).

### Seeing (C-ing) Bible History (Old Testament)

It might help us to remember some of the important events in Old Testament history by remembering these words which all begin with the letter "C":

#### **CREATION**

Genesis

God created the universe and placed man on planet earth but man disobeyed His Creator and fell into sin.

#### **CAPTAIN NOAH**

Genesis

God judged sinful men by sending a worldwide flood. Only Noah and his family were spared in this terrible judgment.

#### **CONFUSION**

Genesis

God scattered sinful men at the tower of Babel by confusing them with different languages. As the people scattered and spread out on the earth they formed the different nations.

#### **CALL OF ABRAHAM**

Genesis

God called Abraham to leave his family and his country, and to come to the promised land. Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation Israel.

#### **CARRYING BURDENS**

Exodus

In the days of Joseph the children of Israel went down into Egypt. Later they became slaves in this country for about 400 years. But finally God delivered them and brought them out of Egypt through the Red Sea.

#### **CAMP**

Exodus through Deuteronomy

For forty years the children of Israel wandered and camped in the desert

wilderness. It was during this time that the Ten Commandments were given and the tabernacle was built.

### **CONQUEST**

Joshua

Under Joshua's leadership the children of Israel entered the promised land, conquered it and settled in it.

### **CORRUPTION**

Judges

Once they were settled in the promised land the children of Israel began to turn their hearts away from the Lord. They "did what was right in their own eyes." This was the period of the judges.

### **CROWN**

Samuel, Kings, Chronicles

After the period of the judges came the period of the kings. Saul, David and Solomon were the first kings of Israel. After Solomon the kingdom was divided into two parts: 1) the northern kingdom of Israel with its capital in Samaria; 2) the southern kingdom of Judah with its capital in Jerusalem. The northern kingdom and the southern kingdom each had their own king.

### **CAPTIVITY**

2 Kings, 2 Chronicles

God judged the northern kingdom of Israel first by sending the Assyrians. The Assyrians conquered the kingdom of Israel and carried the people away as captives. Later God judged the southern kingdom of Judah by sending the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar. The kingdom of Judah was conquered and the people were led away to Babylon as captives.

### **CONSTRUCTION**

Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

Seventy years after the Babylonian captivity, God was gracious to the nation of Israel and He allowed a small group of Jews (about 50,000) to return to the land. At this time they constructed or built the temple of God which the Babylonians had destroyed (see Ezra). Later they built the walls of the city of Jerusalem (see Nehemiah). Soon after these events, Old Testament history came to an end. In approximately 400 years Christ would be born in the city of Bethlehem.

[Please note, the above memory aid using the letter "C" is not original with us. It was taken from the very helpful book entitled *Bible History Visualized—C-ing Bible History* by Ray E. Baughman.]

In the chapters which will follow we will take a closer look at all 39 Books of the Old Testament. As we consider each book we want to be asking questions like these:

1. What is the name of this book and why was it given this name?
2. What is the book about?
3. Is there a key verse in this book?
4. What should I remember when I think about this book?
5. How does this book connect with the other books in the Bible?
6. How can the message of this book change my life?

May God help us as we find the answers to these questions!

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## THE HOLY BIBLE



