

A Brief Survey through the Hebrew Scriptures

Viewing the basic overall themes
and different high points of the books
from an ancient Near-Eastern
and Christological approach.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my parents for instilling in me a love of the Bible from childhood.

Thanks to Keith Doyle and John Nimmiti for their work in transcribing, and to Martin Johnson for his work in editing. They each have done wonderful work and have true servant hearts.

Finally, and foremost, I want to thank my wife Janet for her unfailing encouragement, her infinite patience and kindness, and for her constant love and sharing in all of life and ministry with me. She is truly *לְיָיִתּוֹשָׁא*.

—Gary Staats

Twelve Periods of Old Testament History

(Dates are approximate and in round numbers)

- I. Pre-Patriarchal History Period (5000+ - 2100 BC)
Genesis 1-11 (beginnings)
 1. Creation (1-2)
 2. Fall (3-5)
 3. Flood (6-9)
 4. Tower of Babel (10-11)

- II. Patriarchal Period (2100-1840 BC)
Genesis 12-50 (covenant of Abraham)
 1. Abraham (12-25)
 2. Isaac (26)
 3. Jacob (27-36)
 4. Joseph (37-50)

- III. Period of Israel in Egypt (1840-1440 BC)
Exodus 1-12 (Call of Moses, Plagues, Passover)

- IV. Period of Exodus and Wilderness wandering (1440-1400 BC)
Exodus 12 - Deuteronomy
 1. Exodus 12-40 (Exodus, 10 commandments, law, tabernacle)
 2. Leviticus (worship)
 3. Numbers (wilderness wandering)
 4. Deuteronomy (suzerainty treaty - God and Israel)

- V. Period of Entrance into Canaan (1400-1380 BC)
Joshua (entrance into the land of Canaan)

- VI. Period of Judge (1380-1050 BC)
 1. Judges (period of apostasy)
 2. 1 Samuel 1-7 (last of judges - Samuel)
 3. Ruth (kinsman-redeemer)

- VII. Period of United Kingdom (1050-931 BC)
 1. Saul - 1 Samuel 7-31 (1050-1010 BC) (a failure as king)
 2. David - 2 Samuel and Psalms of David (1010-970 BC)
(David - a good king with failures; Davidic covenant; Psalms, Israel's hymnal)
 3. Solomon - 1 Kings 1-11 (970-931 BC)
 - a. Song of Songs (a litany of marriage songs)
 - b. Proverbs (wisdom maxims)
 - c. Ecclesiastes (vanity of vanities)

- VIII. Period of Divided Kingdom (931-722 BC)
 Assyrian Captivity (722 BC) — *Background*
1. Joel (Locust Book) — 2 Kings 12
 2. Jonah (God's Grace) — 2 Kings 14
 3. Amos (Cowboy Turned Preacher) — 2 Kings 14
 4. Hosea (Bad Marriage) — 2 Kings 14
 5. Isaiah (Shakespeare of OT) — 2 Kings 15-18
 6. Micah (Little Isaiah) — 2 Kings 15-18
- IX. Period of Surviving Kingdom (722-536 BC)
 Babylonian Captivity
1. Nahum (Judgment on Nineveh)
 2. Zephaniah (Day of Lord)
 3. Habakkuk (Just live by Faith)
 4. Jeremiah (Weeping Prophet)
 5. Lamentations (Weeping over Jerusalem)
- X. Period of Exile (586-536 BC)
1. Daniel (Gentile World Power)
 2. Ezekiel (The Apocalyptic Prophet)
 3. Obadiah (Judgment of Edom)
- XI. Period of Restoration (536-400 BC)
1. Exiles Return Under Zerubbabel (536 BC) Ezra 1-6
 2. Temple Rebuilt (520-516 BC)
 - a. Haggai (The Exhorter)
 - b. Zechariah (The Visionist)
 - c. Esther (Providence of God) (480 BC)
 - d. Ezra Returned and revival (458 BC) (Ezra 7-10)
 - e. Nehemiah's Return (Building of City Jerusalem) (448 BC)
 - f. Chronicles (encouragements in restored temple worship)
 - g. Malachi (Questions and Answer Prophet) (430 BC)
- XII. Intertestamental Period (536 BC - 135 AD)
1. Persian Period (536-331 BC)
 2. Greece Period (331-327 BC)
 3. Ptolemaic/Seleucid Period (323 BC - 63 BC)
 4. Roman Period (63 BC -135 AD)

Christology in the Old Testament seen through New Testament lenses

“An Emmaus Walk” - Luke 24 (An Outline)

(The Bible passages cited should be read and studied in depth.)

I. CHRISTOLOGY IN GENESIS

1. Genesis 1
Christ the eternal Creator (Genesis 1; John 1)
2. Genesis 2
 - a. Sabbath or rest (Genesis 2:1-4)
 - b. Resting in Christ's finished work (Hebrews 3:7-4:11)
 - c. Marriage a mystery of Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5)
3. Genesis 3
 - a. Proto Evangelium (Genesis 3:15; Romans 16:20)
 - b. The Second Adam is Christ (Genesis 3; Romans 5)
4. Genesis 9:27
The Gentiles dwell in the Tents of Shem (Genesis 9:27)
5. Genesis 12
 - a. “In you all nations blessed” (Genesis 12:3)
 - b. Christ the fulfillment (Galatians 3:7-9)
6. Genesis 14
Melchizedek - Christ is King, Priest after order of Melchizedek (Genesis 14; Psalm 110; Acts 2; 1 Corinthians 15; Hebrews 7)
7. Genesis 22 and John 3:16
 - a. Abraham type of father
 - b. Isaac-type of Christ in carrying the wood of the cross
 - c. Ram-type sacrifice of Christ (John 1:29)
8. Genesis 37-50
 - a. Joseph a type of Christ
 - b. Rejected by his brothers (John 1:11)
 - c. Married a Gentile bride (Ephesians 2:11-13)
 - d. His own kinsmen brought back in relation to him (Romans 11)
9. Genesis 49
 - a. The scepter will not depart from Judah until Shiloh come.
 - b. It is His right to rule as the lion of Judah (Revelation 5:5)

II. CHRISTOLOGY IN EXODUS

1. Exodus 2 and Matthew 2
 - a. Moses a type of Christ
 - b. Called out of Egypt
 - c. Protected from King's wrath
2. Exodus 3 and John 8
God's name "I AM" and so is Christ the great I AM (John 8:58)
3. Exodus 12
 - a. Passover
 - b. Christ our Passover is sacrificed (1 Corinthians 5:7)
 - i. Innocent Lamb and a male
 - ii. Blood applied
 - iii. No bone broken (John 19:36)
 - c. Feast of Unleavened Bread
 - d. A call to Holiness (1 Corinthians 5:7-8)
4. Exodus 15
 - a. Song of Moses at Exodus
 - b. Sung at Christ's victory (Revelation 15)
5. Exodus 16
 - a. Manna type of Christ
 - b. Heavenly manna (John 6) is Christ.
6. Exodus 17
 - a. Water from rock
 - b. Christ as the Rock (1 Corinthians 10:4)
7. Exodus 25-32
 - a. The Tabernacle
 - i. Brazen Altar - Christ our sacrifice (Hebrews 10:11-12)
 - ii. Laver - Christ our cleansing (1 John 1:9)
 - iii. Showbread - Christ our sustenance (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)
 - iv. Menorah - Christ our Light (John 8:12)
 - v. Altar of Incense - Christ our intercessor (Romans 8:34)
 - vi. Veil - Christ our access (Hebrews 10:19-25)
 - vii. Two tables of Law - Christ the fulfillment of the Law (Matthew 5:17-20)
 - viii. Manna - Christ our eternal bread (John 6:22-71)
 - ix. Aaron's rod that budded - Christ our resurrected Priest (Hebrews 7:11-28)
 - x. The Kapharet or *hilasterion* in LXX (Septuagint) - Christ our propitiation and expiation (Romans 3:24-26)
8. Exodus 40
 - a. The glory dwelt (*shakan*) in the tent
 - b. Christ dwelt among us (John 1:14)

III. CHRISTOLOGY OF LEVITICUS

1. Leviticus 1-3
 - a. Sweet Savor offerings - fulfilled in Christ (Ephesians 5:1-2)
 - b. Sacrifice and meal offerings - in Christ (Hebrews 10:5-10)
 - c. Peace offering - Christ our peace (Romans 5:1-2 and Ephesians 2:14-21)
2. Leviticus 4
Sin offering - He became a sin offering for us (Ephesians 5:21)
3. Leviticus 5
Trespass offering - Christ delivered us from our trespasses (Ephesians 2:1-10)
4. Leviticus 16
Day of Atonement - Fulfilled by Christ (Hebrews 9-10)
5. Leviticus 23
Feasts
 - a. Passover
Christ our Passover sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians 5:7)
 - b. Unleavened Bread
We are to keep feast of unleavened bread by a holy life (1 Corinthians 5:7-8)
 - c. First Fruits - offered the day after Sabbath
The first fruits in Christ's resurrection on the day after Sabbath (1 Corinthians 15:20)
 - d. Pentecost
 - i. 2 loaves baked together
 - ii. Jews and Gentiles brought together at Pentecost by Christ's pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2 & 10)
 - e. Trumpets
 - i. Announcing the Day of Atonement
 - ii. Day of Atonement - Calvary (Hebrews 9-10)
 - f. Tabernacle
Picturing permanent dwelling in the new heaven and new earth in Christ's coming eternal kingdom (Matthew 17:1-13; John 7:1-2, 37-39; Revelation 21:1-4)
 - g. Leviticus 25
Year of Jubilee, the final freedom from sin's slavery in glorification (Romans 8:18-24).

IV. CHRISTOLOGY IN NUMBERS

Numbers 21

1. The bronze serpent (Numbers 21:1-9)
2. A type of Christ on the cross (John 3:14-16)

V. CHRISTOLOGY IN DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy 18:15

The Prophet fulfilled in Christ (John 1:21-28)

VI. CHRISTOLOGY IN 2 SAMUEL

2 Samuel 7:12-14

1. The Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-14)
2. The prophecy of the eternal kingship of Christ (Psalm 110:1; Acts 2:32-36; Hebrews 1:5, 13).
3. Spoken by Gabriel concerning its fulfillment in Christ. (Luke 1:32-33)

VII. CHRISTOLOGY IN PSALMS

1. Psalm 2
 - a. A Christology of the Cross (Acts 4:13)
 - b. Resurrection and Second Coming (Acts 13:33 ff.)
 - c. "This day I have begotten you" (Psalm 2:7) is the coronation on day of resurrection (Acts 13:33-37)
2. Psalm 8
 - a. Man a little lower than the angels (Ps. 8:6-9)
 - b. A type of Christ made a little lower than angels in incarnation and now crowned above them (Hebrews 2:5-9)
3. Psalm 16
 - a. "You will not leave my soul in Sheol" (Psalm 16)
 - b. Applied to resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:22-36)
4. Psalm 22
 - a. "Prayer of Christ on cross" (Psalm 22:2; Matthew 27:46)
 - b. A type of Calvary (Matthew 27: John 19)
 - c. Thirst on cross (Psalm 22:16; John 19:28)
 - d. Angry crowd around the cross (Psalm 22:13-19; Matthew 27:39-44)
 - e. Garments divided (Psalm 22:19; John 19:24)
 - f. Resurrection (Psalm 22:23; Hebrews 2:10-18)
5. Psalm 40:7-9
Sacrifice and offerings replaced by Christ's willing sacrifice (Hebrews 10:5-10)
6. Psalm 45
 - a. "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever" (Psalm 45:6-7)
 - b. Applied to the eternity and deity of our Lord (Hebrews 1:7-12)
7. Psalm 68
 - a. "You ascended on high and led captives" (Ps. 68:18)
 - b. Capture applied to Christ's incarnation and spiritual victory in the resurrection (Ephesians 4:7-12)
8. Psalm 89
 - a. The Kingdom promised to David (Psalm 89)
 - b. Fulfilled in Christ (Matthew 1:1-17)
9. Psalm 102
 - a. "Your years fail not" (Psalm 102:26-27)
 - b. The eternity of Yahweh applied directly to Christ's eternity (Hebrews 1:10-12)

10. Psalm 110
 - a. “The Lord said to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right side until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet’” (Psalm 110:1)
 - b. Applied to Christ as the king resurrected (Acts 2:32-36; 1 Corinthians 15:23-24; Hebrews 1:13 and 10:11-13).
 - c. “You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek” (Psalm 110:4)
 - d. Applied to Christ as to eternal priesthood by His resurrection (Hebrews 7:11-25).
11. Psalm 118
 - a. “The stone the builders rejected has become the head of the corner” (Psalm 118:22-23)
 - b. Applied by Christ to himself (Matthew 21:33-44)
 - c. Rejected by the religious leaders (Matthew 21:37-39)
 - d. He became the head of the church (Ephesians 1:23-27; 2:20-21).

VIII. **CHRISTOLOGY IN PROVERBS**

Proverbs 8

1. Wisdom personified as with Yahweh from the beginning (Proverbs 8:22-36)
2. Applied to Christ the Eternal Second Person of the Trinity through whom all things were created (John 1:1-5)

IX. **CHRISTOLOGY IN JOEL**

Joel 2

1. “I will pour out my Spirit” (Joel 2:28ff)
2. Christ equal in deity with Yahweh in pouring out the Spirit (Acts 2)

X. **CHRISTOLOGY IN JONAH**

Jonah 2:28-32

A type of Christ - Jonah three days in whale; Christ three days in heart of the earth (Matthew 12:38-42)

XI. **CHRISTOLOGY IN AMOS**

Amos 9

Tabernacle of David built up by Christ in the Church (Acts 15:12-21)

XII. **CHRISTOLOGY IN HOSEA**

Hosea 11

1. “Out of Egypt Israel is called as God’s Son” (Hosea 11:1)
2. A type of Christ as the final Israel called out of Egypt (Matt. 2:13-15)

XIII. CHRISTOLOGY IN ISAIAH

1. Isaiah 7:14
The virgin birth of Christ fulfilled in Matthew 1:18-25.
2. Isaiah 9:5-6
Messiah's name is called forth followed by His unending kingdom.
(Fulfilled in Luke 1:32-33; Revelation 12:15)
3. Isaiah 11:1
 - a. Christ the Messiah from the seed of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1; Romans 1:3)
 - b. Christ is the *nezer* (branch) from Nazareth (*Nazoraios* = branchtown) in Matthew 2:23)
4. Isaiah 28:16
Christ is the true and tried stone fulfilled in I Peter 2:1-8
5. Isaiah 35
 - a. There is a highway to Zion for the redeemed (Isaiah 35:8-9)
 - b. Christ is the way to heavenly Zion (John 14:1-6)
6. Isaiah 40:3-4
A voice calls in the desert pointing to John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-12)
7. Isaiah 42:1-9
The gentle ministry of Christ (Matthew 12:15-21)
8. Isaiah 49:1-6
Christ a light to Judah and the nations (Luke 2:29-32)
9. Isaiah 52:13-53:12
The vicarious suffering of Christ (Acts 8:26-40; 18-25; 1 Peter 2)
10. Isaiah 55
 - a. "All thirsty to come and drink" (Isaiah 55:1)
 - b. Fulfilled in Christ (Revelation 22:17)
11. Isaiah 61:1-4
Christ gives liberty to spiritual captives and brings the redemption of salvation
(Luke 4:16-21)
12. Isaiah 65:17
A new heaven and earth. (Fulfilled in Revelation 21-22)

XIV. CHRISTOLOGY IN MICAH

Micah 5:2
The birth place of Christ is Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1-12)

XV. CHRISTOLOGY IN HABAKKUK

Habakkuk 2:4
The just shall live by faith in Christ (Romans 1:17)

XVI. CHRISTOLOGY IN JEREMIAH 24:31-34

Christ fulfills the new covenant (Luke 22:20; Hebrews 8-10)

XVII. CHRISTOLOGY IN DANIEL

1. Daniel 2
Christ is the rock that establishes the final kingdom (Matthew 21)
2. Daniel 7
Christ is the Son of Man who receives the eternal, final kingdom from the Ancient of Days (the Father) at His second coming (Revelation 4-5; Matthew 24)
3. Daniel 9
Christ's death and resurrection seen in Daniel's 70th week
4. Daniel 12:1-2
The final resurrection of just and unjust applied by Christ to Himself (John 5:28-29)

XVIII. CHRISTOLOGY IN EZEKIEL

1. Ezekiel 34
Christ is the shepherd and the final David (John 10; Matthew 1)
2. Ezekiel 36:24-27
The new heart and new birth applied by Christ to Nicodemus (John 3:1-16)
3. Ezekiel 48
 - a. The Lord is there with His people
 - b. A type of heavenly Jerusalem where Christ is there with the Father (Revelation 21-22)

XIX. CHRISTOLOGY IN HAGGAI

Haggai 2

1. God will shake the earth with the appointed man Zerubbabel as governor
2. A type of the appointment of Christ as being the final king in the shaking of the world to establish an unshakable kingdom (Hebrew 12:25-29).

XX. CHRISTOLOGY IN ZECHARIAH

1. Zechariah 6
Christ is king and priest typified by Zerubbabel and Joshua
2. Zechariah 9:9
The triumphal entry of Christ is prophesied and fulfilled (Matthew 21:1-11).
3. Zechariah 11:12-14
Zechariah a type of Christ sold for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14; 27:3-10)
4. Zechariah 12:9-13:1
A fountain opened and they look on Him whom they had pierced fulfilled in Christ (John 19:31-36)
5. Zechariah 14:4
Return of Christ to Mount of Olives (Acts 1:6-11)

XXI. CHRISTOLOGY IN MALACHI

Malachi 3:1 and 4:5-6

Elijah announcing coming of Messiah fulfilled in John the Baptist (Matthew 17:9-13)

Introduction

The Hebrew Scripture is best understood by the word, *TaNāK*. The word *TaNāK* is an acronym that has the letters T, N, and K (or CH) and representing the first letters of the threefold division of the Hebrew Scriptures: the *Tōrah*, the first five books of the Bible containing the Law and Instructions; the *Nēvi'im*, the Prophets; and the *Ketuvim*, the Writings. The letter *a* is interjected simply to make it into a word: *TaNāK*. The Old Testament, or the Hebrew Scripture, was written in Hebrew with a few sections written in Aramaic, including Daniel 2:4-7 through chapter 7, portions of Ezra-Nehemiah, and one word in Genesis.

In the first five books in the Hebrew Scriptures, we have the *Tōrah*. *Tōrah* means Law and in the *Tōrah*, we have five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. *Tōrah* also means instruction because in these five books we find more than just simply Law; we also find narrative. The next division of the Hebrew Scripture is called the *Nēvi'im*. The *Nēvi'im* has eight books we call the Former Prophets and the Latter Prophets. The Former Prophets are the four books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. The Latter Prophets also have four books: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve. The Twelve is comprised of the twelve minor prophets (shorter in length), and are counted as one book in the Hebrew canon. The third section, called *Ketuvim*, the Writings, has eleven books: the poetical books are Psalms, Proverbs, and Job; the scrolls, or in Hebrew the *Megilloth*, are the five books of the Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther; and then we have three books that we might call the prophetic-historical books of Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

This division is very different from our division in the English Bible. The Hebrew Scripture begins with Genesis and ends with 2 Chronicles whereas the English Bible begins with Genesis and ends with Malachi. In the English Bible, the books are organized according to law,

history, poetry, and prophetic books. The English Bible looks to the Greek Septuagint sequencing where Scripture is organized by subject matter, and it was from this arrangement that we receive the English order of books. In the English Bible, the five books representing the Law begin with Genesis and conclude with Deuteronomy, the same as the Hebrew ordering. Next, we have the historical books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. The poetic books then follow: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. Finally, we have the prophetic books: Isaiah, Jeremiah-Lamentations, and Ezekiel, what we call the Major Prophets because they are larger books. The Minor Prophets, so-called because they are shorter in length, include Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The order of the prophetic books is not based on chronology or importance, but on length, largest to smallest.

Our main objective in this book will be to concentrate on the thought or message of the book, on what the book is actually saying. What does it say in its Old Testament setting and how does the New Testament use a particular book in its setting? It is most important that we try to understand how Jesus is revealed, and how the New Testament writers understood Jesus according to the Old Testament Scriptures. In John 5:39 Jesus is recorded as saying, “search the scriptures for they testify of me.” In Luke 24:44 on the road to Emmaus, Jesus is recorded as taking the *Torah* and the Prophets and the Writings and opening up the Scriptures concerning Himself. It is my belief that the New Testament writers emulated and continued that method of opening the Hebrew Scriptures to teach of Christ, a method that Jesus introduced after the resurrection. It is important to see how the two testaments work together, and how the New Testament utilized the Old Testament in applying it to the ministry of our Lord.

The Old Testament and New Testament refer to the Old Covenant and New Covenant. In Jeremiah 31:31-34, Jeremiah predicts a day when God would make a new covenant and He would write His laws on the hearts of His people. Jesus, in Luke 22, applies Jeremiah 31:31-34 to Himself at the Last Supper when He speaks of the new covenant which His sacrifice would fulfill (Luke 22:14-20). It is because of this covenant that Jesus introduces that the New Testament writers talk about Jesus and His sacrifice and what He came to do; thus, we speak of the New Covenant and Old Covenant, or the New Testament and the Old Testament. “Testament” means “covenant.” The Septuagint was the translation of the Hebrew Scripture that appeared around the second century BC (200 BC) and represents a translation of the Hebrew Scripture into Greek. The New Testament writers typically employed the Greek Septuagint text when they dealt with the Hebrew Old Testament.

It is further important to understand that when we talk about the Hebrew Scripture, we are dealing with text that was written in ancient Hebrew utilizing only consonants, because ancient Hebrew was a consonantal language. This consonantal text had a long history, being copied and recopied. Then around 500 AD a group called the Massoretes, who, with the traditional pronunciation that they had received, added vowel sounds to the consonantal text of the Hebrew Scripture. This is why the Old Testament Hebrew text is called the Massoretic text because the diacritical marks denoting the vowel sounds were added by those called Massoretes. Massorete means “traditionalist.”

***Torah* – The Law**

We now look at the Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew Scripture, also called the Pentateuch (“five cases”). We begin with Genesis, which in Hebrew is known as *bereshit*. It was common to take the first word or series of words appearing in a book and make that the title of the book. *Bereshit* means “in the beginning” and is the name of the first book. The book of Exodus begins with the words *‘elohim shemot*, “these are the names.” The same method of titling is used in Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. However, in the Greek Septuagint these words were replaced with different titles. For example, the title for Genesis does not come from the Hebrew *bereshit* (“in the beginning”) but from the Greek word *genesios* meaning “beginning”; and in the same way, the Greek Bible used the Greek word *exodus* meaning “way out” instead of the Hebrew words *‘elohim shemot* (“these are the names”). Numbers was so named because of the two numberings found within. From the Greek through the Latin into the English came the titles of the books as we know them today in our English Bible. This is why we read it as Genesis (“beginning”) instead of *bereshit* (“in the beginning”).

The books of Genesis through Deuteronomy are collectively called the Pentateuch (“five cases”) because it represents the first five books of the Hebrew Scripture or the *Torah*. These books are knit together by a common theme: covenant. First we see God, after the prologue in the first 11 chapters of Genesis, choosing Abraham and telling him that He would bless him, that He would make his name great, and in Abraham all nations would be blessed (Genesis 12:3). We also see the promise of the land of Canaan given to Abraham’s seed (Genesis 15). The Pentateuch traces this theme of the covenant as Abraham is blessed and his family grows from a small beginning to a large nation. We see how God takes Israel into Egypt still promising them Canaan, the Promised Land. In Exodus, we see God calling Moses to be the deliverer of His

people, and how He fulfills that original covenant promise made with Abraham. We see how God brings Israel out of Egypt, takes them through the Red Sea, through the desert, and ultimately to the borders of the promised land of Canaan by the time we come to the book of Deuteronomy. This thematic development shows the election of Abraham followed by the promise in the covenant that God would make him into a great nation, would bless and multiply him, and that he would give Abraham's descendants the land of Canaan. We see this carried out in Exodus and we see Israel ready to enter the Promised Land by the end of Deuteronomy. This covenant theme ties together these five books; we see a lot in between, but the covenant is the basic theme.

Beginning with Genesis, in the first 11 chapters we have a prologue. In this, we see four great events: creation, the fall, the flood, and the tower of Babel. We see in these events God preparing a way of delivering His people. We see God as the sole creator, we see everything good, and then we see rebellion and God's judgment against that rebellion. We see increased rebellion against God, and judgment, which is always followed by mercy. We finally see the dispersion of peoples and it is at that point that the Creator God moves into history to call His own people and begin a program of deliverance in redemption for them. This begins with the call of Abraham in Genesis chapter 12. God promises Abraham the land, He promises to bless and multiply him, and to make him into a great nation, and so in chapters 12 through 50 we see God carrying out this promise through Abraham's descendants. God repeats the covenant promise to Isaac, to Jacob, and ultimately to Joseph—four great personages who make up the section from chapter 12 through chapter 50. In this section, we see the promise reiterated again and again. (Genesis 12:1-3; 13:15-18; 15:13-21; 17:7-9; 22:15-19; 26:1-6; 28:12-15; 32:10; 46:1-4.)

Genesis begins with a small family, we move from that family to tribes and from tribes into a

great people in Egypt. As we move to the book of Exodus we find Israel as a nation, the promise and the covenant that God would make Abraham a great nation having been realized (Exodus 3:5-8).

The first 12 chapters of Exodus could be entitled “the battle of the gods.” God calls Moses to be His great deliverer, He reiterates the promise of the covenant with Moses, and then there is the battle against the gods of Egypt, seen in the plagues, to determine who really is in control. Is Pharaoh in control, are the Egyptian gods in control, or is God? Every plague is an attack against a particular Egyptian god. For example, the sun was worshiped as the god *Ra*; in the plague of the blotting out of the sun we see the sun god *Ra* in defeat. Pharaoh was also worshiped as a god, and when God said through Moses, “Let my people go,” Pharaoh asked, “who is Yahweh that I should listen to him? I am the Yahweh around here.” We find this defiance going on, and then we witness the plagues to prove who is really in control: Pharaoh, the gods of Egypt, or Yahweh? We learn through the plagues that Yahweh is in control, He is the sole God, He is the Creator, and hence, He is the one who is victorious over Pharaoh and the so-called gods. In the first twelve chapters in Exodus, we see the call of a deliverer, how God went about demonstrating who He was, overthrowing the gods of Egypt to bring deliverance to His people. This culminates in the Passover, the great deliverance Yahweh affected for His people, which God then instituted as a great celebration kept year after year in remembrance of His deliverance.

In Exodus chapters 13-18 we see the way that God moved to deliver the people of Israel through the Red Sea. The Hebrew *yam suf* means “Reed Sea” or “sea of reeds,” usually understood as Red Sea. We see this glorious deliverance, followed by the great song and hymn of praise in chapter 15, with God miraculously leading Israel up to Sinai. From chapters 13-18

we move from Egypt through the Red Sea to Sinai. God then takes care of the people through the supply of the manna, which in Hebrew means, “what is it?” They did not know what it was so they called it “what is it?” bread. We see God supplying and caring for them; we see the miracle where He supplies water out of the rock, with His provision leading them to Sinai.

Then in Exodus chapter 19 through Numbers chapter 10, we find ourselves at Mount Sinai. It is during this period of time that the Law is given to Moses. The text describes this in Exodus 19 where Moses and the people enter into an agreement with Yahweh that they will accept the Law. This is followed by the 10 commandments in Exodus 20. As a nation that has been delivered, there needs to be regulation not only in their relationship to Yahweh as their true God, but also in their relationship with each other describing how they are to live. This is seen in the 10 commandments.

In Exodus chapters 21-24, we have the various judgments or laws that Israel was to apply and how they were to live in relationship to one another. As a religious nation, it is important that they have a place to worship Yahweh, so in Exodus chapters 25 to 40 we see the tabernacle, the place that God gave Moses for Israel’s worship. He describes in detail, in Exodus chapters 25-31, how the tabernacle was to be constructed. Then in chapters 32-34, there is a brief historical narrative that describes a tragic failure that Aaron committed with the golden calf, and we see how God nearly destroyed the Israelites because of it. This historical account is sandwiched in between the instructions for building the tabernacle from chapters 25-31 and the actual construction that is described in chapters 35-40. It could be that this historical interlude is placed here for a perpetual warning to later readers of the awfulness of idolatry, showing how Israel almost lost their existence because of idolatry had it not been for the pleading of Moses and the mercy of God. In Exodus 21-40, we have a redeemed people receiving a constitution as well as a

place of worship. The tabernacle was to accompany them through the desert in preparation for the time when they would go into the land; much later, the temple would be built on the pattern of the tabernacle.

Following the sequence of the first five books, we then come to the book of Leviticus. In Leviticus, we deal with regulations that have to do with priests and how worship was to be carried on. In the first seven chapters of Leviticus, we are dealing with different types of offerings and sacrifices. Then we see how the priests were to be prepared and ordained (Leviticus 8-10). We next have prescriptions given for which foods could be eaten and which foods should not (Leviticus 11), and how the skin disease or “leprosy” was to be taken care of (Leviticus 13-14). We then have the great Day of Atonement showing how Israel was to make a great atonement once each year. The high priest would go into the Holy of Holies to atone for the sins of himself and then for the sins for the people, and for one year their sins would be covered (Leviticus 16). This was called *Yom Kippur*, the “Day of Atonement.” We then we have other things in Leviticus such as laws concerning purity and holiness and how people were to live in relationship to each other (Leviticus 18-22). Finally, we have the festivals of Israel beginning with Passover and culminating in the Feast of Tabernacles in Leviticus 23. The book of Leviticus deals primarily with priestly matters and the details of how worship was to be carried out in the tabernacle and later in the temple. We can see a logical ordering here when we look at Exodus and the constitution in the Law, followed by the place of worship (the tabernacle), and then prescriptions as to how worship was to be carried out.

In the book of Numbers, we continue the narrative by first looking at the numbering that took place in the ordering of the tribes in the first 10 chapters. Then, in Numbers 11-20, we have the desert experience until we come to the slopes of Moab at the end of chapter 21. There are

forty years of history compressed into those chapters. The text portrays the sin of the people, and why the older generation did not make it into the land of Canaan. The highlight of that section is the incident of Kadesh-Barnea. When the spies go into the land of Canaan, they encounter giants and the majority report is that the Israelites cannot go in to the land. This majority report is believed and because of this, the Israelites are doomed to wander for forty years and perish in the desert. During those forty years, God raises up a new generation that will go in to the land of Canaan. The book of Numbers deals with that failure on the part of the older generation of Israelites that came from redemption in Egypt and failed to enter the land. This is then followed by the experience on the slopes of Moab, which cover Numbers 22 through the end of Numbers, and includes the book of Deuteronomy. Also in Numbers, we have that incident of Balaam and Balek (Numbers 22-25). Balaam is to curse Israel, but instead of cursing Israel, he continues to bless Israel. Ultimately, however he becomes a bad influence on Israel by causing the Israelites to have relationship with idol worshipers. After blessing Israel, he causes such idolatry to happen that there is a judgment of God (Numbers 26). This is then followed, in Numbers 27-36, the numbering of the new generation; various laws conclude the book of Numbers.

This leads us to the final book of the Pentateuch: Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy completes the theme of *covenant* that we have been tracing in the Pentateuch. Moses is now pictured with this younger generation reviewing the laws of God prior to their entrance into the land God had promised. Deuteronomy concludes with Moses' death and his not being able to go into the land; because Moses had willfully smitten the rock twice (Numbers 21), God denies him entrance to Canaan. Deuteronomy records the address that Moses gives to this younger generation. Many scholars notice that this book is patterned after what is called the *Hittite Suzerainty Treaty Pattern*. This was a treaty that a suzerain king would make with a vassal people. The suzerain

king gave instructions on how the people were to fulfill their relationship with himself, and he would instruct them on how they were to live with one another. The Hittites were a group of people that appeared for a short time in history, from approximately 1600 to 1200 BC. We have found examples of their treaties that date to around 1300 BC.

The treaty begins with a prologue in which the suzerain king speaks to the vassal people concerning obedience to him. He first tells the vassal people what he has done for them. The second section of the suzerainty treaty has to do with the relationship of the vassal to the suzerain, which is the relationship of a servant to a master. The suzerain would say, "Here is what I expect of you now as your master: I expect you to respond to me in obedience and serve no other suzerain or master." Then under the stipulations of the second part of the treaty, the relationship of the vassal people to one another is stated. The third part of a suzerainty treaty includes blessings and curses; "If you do what I say, here are the blessings you will receive; if you do not do what I say, here are the curses that you will receive."

The book of Deuteronomy fits this treaty pattern very closely, in many ways. In the first four chapters, Yahweh speaks to Israel as the Suzerain, telling Israel what He has done for them: "I have brought you through the Red Sea; I have delivered you; I have brought you through the desert; I have brought you to this point." Then we move to the stipulations in chapters 5-26. In the stipulations, we have the two parts of the treaty. In chapters 5-11 God says, "You should love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind; you are to serve me; you are to have no other Gods before me; you are to keep the 10 commandments." This section deals with the vertical relationship between Israel and Yahweh. This is then followed by laws dealing more with the horizontal relationship of how Israel is to relate with one another in justice, how they are to keep the central place of worship, and the kind of laws that God wants them to live by. This is

found in chapters 12-26. It concludes with the blessings and the curses; God says, “If you do not do what I say, here are the curses that will come to you; and if you do what I say, here are the blessings that will come to you.” This is found in Deuteronomy chapters 27-30. It is interesting that the final grand curse for disobedience and idolatry is that a foreign invader such as Babylon would come against Israel later in history and would take her into captivity. If she repented and turned away from idols back to Yahweh, He would then bring her back to the land and restore her. This is indicative of the same theme of sin, judgment, and mercy that we saw run through the prologue of Genesis 1-11; when Adam sinned there was judgment, yet it was followed with mercy of God clothing Adam. The same cycle of sin, judgment, mercy occurred with Cain. Even with the flood, here again we see the same pattern of God’s judgment for sin followed by His mercy when there is forgiveness. In Deuteronomy chapters 31-34 is an epilogue in which we have the song of Moses with a prediction of Israel’s disobedience and her restoration back to the land after disobedience. We also have predictions concerning the twelve tribes of Israel, and what they would be like. The book culminates in the death of Moses, with a recounting of that event leading to the fulfillment of the promise God had made with Abraham, when He brings Israel into that land He had promised her, as we move into the book of Joshua.

Having seen this overview of the *Torah* thematically, it is interesting that this is the same overview that Paul uses in his sermon in Acts 13. We are told in Acts 13:15, that after reading from the Law, the synagogue ruler sent word to Paul saying, “Brothers if you have words of encouragement for the people please speak.” Standing up Paul motioned with his hand and said, “Men of Israel and you Gentiles who worship God listen to me; the God of the people of Israel chose our fathers.” That is the first emphasis or step that we saw in the book of Genesis, especially chapters 12-15. “He made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt with mighty

power.” The second step is that He made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt. We see that with Joseph and we see that in the first part in Exodus after they become a nation. We have the third step in this thematic development, “With mighty power he led them out of that country.” This leads us to see God’s power and provision in the plagues of Exodus that we read about in Exodus 1-12, followed by the deliverance of the Red Sea experience in Exodus 14 and then the song of Miriam in 15; we see God’s mighty power displayed as He led them out of Egypt. Then Paul continues in Acts 13:18, “He endured their conduct for about 40 years in the desert.” We see that theme running from the end of Exodus, after the giving of the Law, the commandments, and the tabernacle, through the book of Numbers. This four-fold theme is what knits together the first five books: the call of the fathers, the prospering of them in Egypt, the deliverance of them out of Egypt, and God bearing with the people in the desert leading them up to the point of bringing them into the land as He had promised. It is interesting, as a way of application, that we as Christians today in the New Testament Church experience a very similar liberation. We were dead in trespasses and sins, and we are told that God appeared to us in Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for us. Christ brings us a spiritual deliverance that, through faith in Him, Christ defeats all the gods of this world of sin and death, and through faith in Him, we are then liberated from our own sins, and brought into a relationship of eternal deliverance. We are not headed for a literal Canaan, but we are headed for a spiritual Canaan of eternal fellowship with Jesus Christ through that great deliverance that He has brought to us through His death and resurrection and our faith in Him as our personal Savior and Lord. It is interesting that even in the Revelation that John picks this up in the song of Moses (Revelation 14) in which there is a song that is sung concerning this great deliverance that Jesus Christ brings to those who trust Him. Even the ministry of Jesus begins in the desert where Jesus is tempted, and moves on to the

ultimate deliverance of salvation that He brings in the cross and in the resurrection. We can join in that song in the book of Revelation as the imagery is borrowed from Exodus 15 in the song of Moses, depicting the deliverance Jesus brings for those who have placed their faith in Him. It is interesting that this theme of Exodus and deliverance was so great in Israel's mind that it was repeated throughout history. Even in Isaiah in chapters 40-55, the deliverance from Babylon is described in terms of the Exodus. In Isaiah, chapter 44, God says of Cyrus, "he is my Shepherd and I will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem 'let it be rebuilt,' of the temple 'let its foundations be laid.'"

Authorship of the Pentateuch

For many years up to the mid-1800s, it was believed unanimously that Moses was the author of this section of the Bible. Around this time a man named Julius Wellhausen, who lived from 1844 to 1918, popularized a hypothetical view. Wellhausen, working on previous work of others, developed a theory that is referred to as the documentary hypothesis known as JEDP. These letters represent supposed literary sources that go into the making up of the Pentateuch. It was his theory, and those who have followed Wellhausen since that time, that “J” was the first source dating around the 9th century BC. This was followed by “E” which was dated around the 8th century BC. Then there was a “D” source in the 7th century BC, and finally a “P” source supposedly during the post-exilic period of the 5th century. The letters indicate the supposed source. “J” represents a source referring to the Hebrew name for God, *Yahweh* (*Yahweh*), and is the *Yahwist* or *Jehovist* source; “E” represents the name *Elohim*, and is the *Elohist* source; “D” represents the *Deuteronomist* source; and “P” the *Priestly* source. It was Wellhausen’s theory that since there were places in Genesis where the word *Yahweh* is used and there were other places where *Elohim* is used, these indicate two different documents or sources that were later put together. Then he assigned “D” primarily to Deuteronomy and called it the *Deuteronomist*. He saw this book popularized during the time of Josiah, the king, around 621 BC. Then the *Priestly* source was after the people returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile around 536 BC. He saw this source contained in books like Leviticus that dealt primarily with priestly material and matters. It was his opinion that this source was later brought together with the other sources in a final editing, and theorized that this is how the Pentateuch developed. Most modern critical scholars still use this hypothesis. Still, it is a hypothesis and cannot be proven; there are no documents called “J,” “E,” “D,” or “P” that have been discovered outside of the Bible. We are

dealing with a theory that cannot be proven, yet many modern critical scholars operate today in this understanding of these first five books.

There are other ways that the *Torah* has been understood, and those who hold a conservative approach, or a traditional approach, feel that Moses is responsible for the writing of the *Torah*. Many who hold that approach today would recognize that there seems to be some later elements found in these first five books which therefore suggest that there was minor editing done after Moses, all done through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit working through Moses, and then finally through other editors that updated material. Added phrases such as “the Canaanites were in the land” is a phrase that appears in *Torah* that implies a time of composition after the Canaanites had been uprooted. Therefore, it is believed by some conservative editors that there may have been some later minor editing for later readers. It might be that even Ezra, who was involved in the reading of the book of Moses, could have been involved in the final editing process. Conservative or traditional scholars feel that Moses is the author of the *Torah*, which came about all under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. The teaching of Christ and the New Testament affirms this view.

Today in biblical studies there is an emphasis on looking at the finished product; looking at the end result and trying to understand what the *Torah* means over against the background in which it was written. One popular area of study today is called “literary criticism.” This type of study seeks to look at the first five books of the *Torah* or the Law from the literary standpoint. Literary criticism analyzes such things as the author’s point of view and how it might be used; literary criticism looks closely at imagery, repetition, events, and the narrative view point in which scholars are trying to understand, from a literary perspective, what the text is seeking to communicate to its audience.

Toledot of Genesis

In looking more closely at the book of Genesis, there is a word in the Hebrew called “*toledot*” translated in English as “generations” or “generation.” It is found ten times in the book of Genesis and this word seems to tie together the Genesis account. There are five “*toledots*” or generations found in the first eleven chapters in what is commonly called “Primeval History.” There are also five “*toledots*” found in chapters 12-50 in what we call “Patriarchal History.” In Genesis 2:4, we have our first “*toledot*.” It says, “This is the account” or literally “this is the *toledot* (or “this is the generation”) of the heavens and the earth when they were created.” The next *toledot* is found in Genesis 5:1, “this is the *toledot* (or “this is the account”) of Adam’s line.” The next *toledot* is found in Genesis 6:9, “this is the *toledot* of Noah” (or “this is the account of Noah).” In Genesis 10:1, we have the next *toledot*, “this is the *toledot* of Shem, Ham and Japheth.” We have the last *toledot* in this last primeval section in Genesis 11:10, “this is the *toledot* of Shem.” These five genealogies or histories are used by the writer in a literary sense to pull this narrative together.

Then beginning in Genesis 11:27 we move to the next series of five *toledots*: “this is the *toledot* of Terah” from which we now move through Abraham’s family, Terah being the father of Abraham. Then in Genesis 25:12 we have the next *toledot* spoken of, the *toledot* of Abraham’s son Ishmael. The next *toledot* is found in Genesis 25:19, in the *toledot* of Abraham’s son Isaac. In Genesis 36:1 we have the *toledot* of Esau, “this is the *toledot* of Esau” and then we can see Esau’s genealogy and descendants. Finally, in Genesis 37:2, “this is the *toledot* of Jacob.” It is with this one word (*toledot*) that the book of Genesis can be seen to be tied together around these ten sections.

In reading Genesis systematically, one can understand what the writer is doing and how he is putting it together as a whole. Beginning with the narrative of the Heaven and the Earth, followed by Adam and his descendants, the story of Noah and what happened in his life and with his sons, then Shem leading to Terah, the father of Abraham, to Ishmael and his descendants, and Isaac and Jacob and the story of Joseph and his brothers, we can see that it is around this one word (*toledot*) that the narrative of Genesis has all been tied together.

The Pattern of Genesis 1-11

Further, there are four events in chapters 1-11: the creation, the fall, the flood, and the tower of Babel; the creation in chapters 1-2, the fall and its sequel in chapters 3-5, the flood in chapters 6-9, and the tower of Babel in chapters 10 and 11. In this section, the author build upon the foundation that God is the sole Creator; that humanity's predicament has come about by self-will and disobedience to God, with an increase in sinfulness and evil; and that, as a result, God disperses his created people. Throughout this section, we find the theme of sin, followed by judgment, followed by mercy. After God created humankind, Adam and Eve sin; God then judges them by barring them from the tree of life so they and all their progeny can no longer have access to it—depicting humanity's physical and spiritual death that would result. However, this judgment is followed by mercy in that God clothes Adam and Eve to hide their shame. We then have an increase of sin, seen in murder and violence of Cain against his brother Abel. God's judgment on Cain is to drive him from the very soil in which he worked and to cause him to wander the earth, and yet, following that judgment on Cain, God bestows mercy by placing a mark on Cain so that his life would not be taken.

The theme continues with the flood narrative. After the wickedness of the human race grew, God judges with the flood, yet God's mercy is shown as he promises never again to destroy the earth with a flood, and the rainbow is given as a sign of God's covenant blessing to the human race. After the flood, we see humanity rebel against God. God tells people to spread throughout the land, but they come together and build the tower of Babel. As a result, God causes their language to be confused and disperses them. In this we see sin on a corporate scale (disobedience and rebellion) followed by judgment (dispersion and confusion of language). Now we await the mercy that will surely follow. The writer keeps us in a state of anticipation as we

move into the next section of the book of Genesis. Up to this point, we have seen God as the sole Creator, we see the perfect and beautiful universe he has provided, and yet we see that humanity has willfully fallen from God through disobedience. We see sin in its complexity and proliferation and yet we see God's mercy and grace throughout. We end chapters 1-11 with the whole human race dispersed, and we wait for God's mercy, which is revealed when God calls Abraham and says, "In you all the peoples of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 12:3).

The Theme of the Promise

Genesis

Beginning in chapter twelve to the end of the book of Genesis, we see the election of God's chosen one, Abraham, and we see that election followed by his promise. It is the promise of God, the covenant promise, that in Abraham all nations will be blessed. God would further give Abraham a land and he would become a great nation. This theme is reiterated and this blessing is seen repeatedly throughout these remaining chapters of Genesis. Notice in Genesis 12:1-2 after God calls Abraham we see the mercy of God when he says, "I will make you a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great and you will be a blessing, I will bless those who bless you and whosoever curses you I will curse, and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Notice that this is repeated in Genesis 13:14, 17. It reads, "The Lord said to Abraham after Lot had parted from him 'lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever, I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth for if anyone can count the dust then your offspring could be counted. Go walk through the length and breadth of the land for I am giving it to you.'" Notice again a reiteration of the blessing of multiplication of seed as well as land.

In Genesis 15:2-5, we have the same teaching. Abraham said to God "Oh sovereign Lord what can you give me since I remain childless and one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus. Abraham said, "You have given me no children so a servant in my household will be my heir." Then the word of the Lord came to him "this man will not be your heir but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." Notice the promise again, he took him outside and said, "Look up to the heavens and count the stars if indeed you can count them, so shall your offspring be." Abraham believed the Lord and God credited it to him as righteous. Notice again

the repetition of God's blessing that he would make Abraham a great nation, as the stars of the sky so his offspring would be. Again in verses 18-21 we see a continued repetition of the same, which reads: "On that day the lord made a covenant with Abraham and said 'to your descendants I will give this land from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites . . . will be yours.'" So again, we have the repetition of the promise of the land that God is going to give to Abraham.

In Genesis 17:7 and following, after Abraham is given the institution of circumcision, the Lord says, "No longer will you be called Abram (which means "*exalted father*"), but your name will be Abraham (which means "*father of many*"), for I have made you a father of many nations; I will make you very fruitful, I will make nations of you and Kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come to be your God and the God of your descendants. The whole land of Canaan, of which you are an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you and I will be their God." Again, notice the repetition of the promise of many nations coming out of Abraham, and how God would give him the land of promise. Abraham circumcised his son as a sign of faith in God's covenant promises to him and to his "seed," or offspring.

Then in Genesis 17:15 and following "God said to Abraham 'As for Sarai your wife, her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and I will surely give you a son by her, I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations, kings of people will come from her.'" God is establishing the same promise that through Sarah he would carry out the promised blessings that he has made. In verse 19 God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear a son and you will call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him."

In the narrative, the original promise based on Abraham's step of faith is repeated repeatedly and it is now promised to Isaac. In Genesis 26:2 and following, we see the promise given to Isaac. In Genesis 26 God says to Isaac "Stay in this land for a while and I will be with you and I will bless you for to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed because Abraham obeyed me and kept my commandments, my decrees, and laws." The text of this glorious book of Genesis shows us that Isaac is the next link to receive God's promised blessings.

Not only Isaac, but also his son, Jacob receives the same blessing three times in his life. The first time before he goes to uncle Laban in Genesis 28:13 we read: "God said, 'I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham, and the God of Isaac; I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are dwelling. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth and you will spread out to the west and the east, and the north and the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you, and will watch over you, and where ever you go I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.'" After Jacob has gone to his uncle Laban and comes back into the land, the same promise is reiterated in Genesis 35:11-13. In Genesis 35:11 God says to Jacob, "I am God almighty, be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you and kings will come from your body. The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you."

Finally, in Genesis, chapters 46-48, we have the promise repeated yet again before Jacob goes down into Egypt. In Genesis 46:3 God spoke to Jacob in a vision at night saying: "I am

God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go into Egypt for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down into Egypt with you and bring you back again.” Before Jacob leaves for Egypt, the same promise is reiterated with Jacob that God had made with Abraham years ago. The same promise is repeated from Egypt as seen in Genesis 48:1-4. “Some time later Joseph was told, ‘Your father is ill.’ So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim along with him. When Jacob was told, ‘Your son Joseph has come to you,’ Israel rallied his strength and sat up on the bed.” Jacob said to Joseph, ‘God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me and said to me, “I am going to make you fruitful and will increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.”’” All the way through Genesis, the writer is trying to show the interconnectedness of the promise beginning with Abraham when he followed God by faith that in him all the nations that had been scattered would be blessed. He would multiply him; he would give him the land. We will see when we come into Exodus that this same promise is then reviewed again with Moses, as he is ready to deliver the people in Exodus 3.

It is interesting that in the New Testament the ultimate fulfillment of this promise to Abraham is found in Jesus Christ according to the apostle Paul in the book of Galatians when he quotes the passage of Genesis 12, “In you all nations will be blessed,” and applies it to Jesus (Galatians 3:8). As the descendent of Abraham through whom all nations would be blessed, all peoples who put faith in him as Savior and Lord are blessed in Christ. This ties together the purpose of the book of Genesis—the theme of the covenant and how God is true to carry out his promise in multiplying Abraham into a great nation, blessing him, and ultimately bringing him into the land and blessing all nations in his seed through Christ.

Flow of Thought—Genesis: The *theme* of the book of Genesis is “beginnings.” The book of Genesis divides naturally into two major sections. The first deals with the beginning of human history from creation to the tower of Babel (1:1-11:9), and the second major section discusses the beginning of Hebrew history, tracing it through the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, (11:10-50).

In the first major section entitled, “the beginning of human history,” the author discusses four very important events that introduce the origin of all later revelatory history.

The first major event is the creation of man and of the world (1:1-2:25) in which the author gives to his readers not only the order of the universe and its origination and formation, but also the origination and creation of man and woman. This sets the stage by which God can begin to carry out His purpose in His theocratic kingdom.

From this introduction, the author quickly moves to the second important event of history’s beginning, the fall (3:1-5:32). He not only discusses the facts of the fall (3:1-13), but also gives the fruits that followed (3:11-5:32). This event is vital to all subsequent history for it describes where and when sin entered the human race and the results of its entrance. It placed judgment upon Satan (3:15), the woman (3:16), and man (3:17-19), but the event also issued in a promise of available salvation in the woman’s seed (3:15). Following these judgments and promises, the consequences of the fall are seen in murder (4:1-15), in the ungodly line of Cain (4:16-24), and in death.

After the fall, the next important event in the beginning of human history is the flood (6:1-10:32). Here, Moses discusses the cause and preparation for the flood (6:1-18), the rescue from and culmination of the flood (7:1-8:19), and the subsequent history after the flood (8:20-22). The cause seems to be the intermarrying of the godly line with the ungodly line. Only Noah

and seven other of his family were preserved in the ark while the rest of the world perished. Following the flood, the sin of Noah issues in the curse on Canaan. At this point, the reader is naturally introduced to the sons of Noah through which the variant nationalities of the world have come.

The final and climatic event in this section that is important to the writer of Genesis, concerns the tower of Babel (11:1-9). Here the sin of pride and disobedience is recounted (11:1-4) along with the judgment of God which resulted in confounded speech and scattering (11:5-9). It is at this point that the diversification of languages sees its origination.

In the second major section, the book of Genesis leaves general human history and deals with specialized Hebrew history (11:10-50). It is in this section that one is introduced to the patriarchs and the origination of the history of Israel with which the remainder of the Old Testament is concerned. It is with this nation that Yahweh is to work out His revelatory kingdom program on earth and thus, it is most fitting that the origin and early history of this nation be introduced.

This history begins with the life of Abraham and traces his history from his background and call to his death (11:10-25:18). The author begins by discussing the family background of Abraham (11:10-32), and then moves immediately into God's call and covenant to Abraham (12:1-3). The account then traces Abraham's sojourn in Egypt (12:10-20), his separation from and deliverance of Lot (13:1-16), and then his blessing by the Lord for his faithfulness (14:17-20).

The covenant already made with Abraham is then formalized and seen as unconditional and immutable since it would depend on God alone for its fulfillment (15:1-2). Even following

this, Abraham is seen to be impatient (16:1-16), but God still faithfully confirms and enlarges the original covenant (17:1-27).

After discussing the covenant and God's dealing with Abraham, the book then traces the prayer of Abraham for Sodom and the deliverance of Lot (18:1-19:38). It then honestly gives a picture of the weakness of the man Abraham in his sin at Gerar (20:1), and moves on to trace the fulfillment of God's promise of a "seed." The promised seed begins with the birth of Isaac (21:1-8). As the son is growing, God tests the faith of Abraham toward Him and His promise by telling Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice (22). Abraham makes preparation to obey, and God answers his obedience by providing an animal substitute and delivering Isaac.

The writer closes his narration of Abraham by discussing his sorrow over Sarah's death (23), his work in obtaining a wife for his son Isaac (24), and by giving a brief summary of his final days and death (25).

After describing the death of Abraham, the book then devotes a much briefer discussion to the history of his son Isaac (25:19-26:35). The important events in his life significant to the book concerned are the birth of Esau and Jacob, the confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant to Isaac (26:1-5), the repeated sin of his father committed by him at Gerar (26:6-11), and his communion and worship of Yahweh (26:23-25).

The author continues to trace the promised seed in Jacob (27:1-36:43). After having described how Jacob won the birthright from Esau (25:29-34), the book gives the history of Jacob narrating his reception of the blessing by Isaac (27:1-46), his exile and journey to Paddan Aram (28:1-22), his sojourn and experience at Paddan Aram with Laban (29-31), his return to Canaan during which time he is reconciled to Esau (32:1-33:20), and concludes with a brief discussion of Jacob in his latter days and the experiences which he and his family underwent (34-

36). This section is especially important by showing the continuation and confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant to Jacob (28:13-15), and in tracing the development of the family of the promised heir (29:1-30:24).

One of the twelve sons of Jacob, is then discussed and the remainder of the book is devoted to him. This one is none other than Joseph (37:1-50:26). The history of Joseph finds him as a son who is beloved by his father. This creates jealousy on the part of his other brothers and they therefore seek to kill him. Instead of carrying out this act, they decide to sell him, and Joseph is sold to Ishmaelites who take him to Egypt (37:36).

The story of Joseph resumed with him in Egypt after a brief parenthesis in which the shame of Judah's sin is set forth (38). Joseph is viewed as one suffering sensual temptation by Potiphar's wife, (39:1-12) and imprisonment for doing the right thing (39:13-23), and increased confinement due to a forgetful and unfaithful butler who forgot to mention Joseph to the king (40:1-23).

At this point Pharaoh has a series of dreams and no one can interpret them. Joseph is finally remembered by the cupbearer and called to interpret the king's dream. From this point on, the writer sets forth the sovereignty of Joseph (41:1-50:26) discussing his advancement to a governor (41:1-57), and then the assistance given to his family and others in this position (42:1-50:14).

In discussing his rulership he traces the dealings of Joseph with his brothers (42-45), and with his father (46:1-50:14). His brothers made two visits to Joseph to get food before bringing their father Jacob to him. On their first visit, Joseph recognized them but did not reveal himself to them, keeping Simeon as a hostage while the others returned (42).

On their second visit, Joseph has his silver cup placed in Benjamin's sack as the brothers prepare to leave unto their father. Before they are very far away, Joseph sends a servant to fetch his cup and finds it in Benjamin's sack as planned. With great anxiety and worry, the brothers return to Joseph and it is at this point that he reveals his identity to them (44:1-45:15). The brothers are then blessed by Joseph and return to bring their father, Jacob to Egypt.

The remainder of the book deals primarily with Joseph and his dealings with Jacob (46:1-50:14). The book describes Jacob's coming from Canaan to Egypt (46:1-34), his reception and blessing by Joseph after his arrival in Egypt (47:1-31), his blessing of the sons of Joseph (48:1-22) and his own sons including Joseph (49:1-27), and then his final petition of burial followed by his death (49:28-50:14). The author then concludes the history of Joseph by showing his continued kindness toward his brothers even after his father's death (50:15-21) and by describing Joseph's own death and burial (50:22-26).

The Ancient Near-Eastern Background of Genesis 1 and 2

We are going to make an about-face and go back to the first eleven chapters of Genesis, which is commonly called Pre-Patriarchal history. The first of four events that we have talked about begins with creation. Critical scholars believe that in Genesis 1:1 to chapter 2:4 we have an account of creation that is different from 2:5 to the end of chapter 2; these scholars speak of these as two accounts of creation. Conservative scholars believe that chapter 2 is just complementary to Genesis, chapter 1. Chapter 2:5 and following is, I believe, more complementary with different detail added and is really a preparation for chapter 3.

Enuma Elish: It is important to gain a little background from some of the ancient near eastern accounts of creation to understand better the book of Genesis. We know today that in Mesopotamia (the land between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris), east of Palestine, that there were texts discovered that give an account of creation. These were myths about the Babylonians gods. There are actually two basic stories that we need to understand before we study this section of Genesis. There is first of all *Enuma Elish* (meaning “when on high”), which gives the Babylonian account of creation.¹ *Enuma Elish* was written in the Babylonian language, commonly called Akkadian, getting its name from the city of *Akkad*. Akkadian was a cuneiform language that was carved into stone. The Babylonian creation tablets were discovered in the library of the Assyrian emperor Ashurbanipal at his capital of Nineveh, the age of which dates back to around the 7th century BC. Fragments of seven tablets were discovered between 1848 and 1876 AD. While the age of the tablets date back to the 7th century BC, the dating of the composition of the *Enuma Elish* Babylonian creation account goes back long before to the early part of the second millennium BC, around 2,000 BC.² This means that this ancient account of creation precedes the biblical account. It was an account of creation that was recited on the

fourth day of the New Year's festival in Babylon. The account talks about two gods, *Apsu*, the god of fresh waters, and *Tiamat* the goddess of salt waters. These two gods merge and create mini-gods, a progeny of gods, which become their children. In the sexual merging of these two gods come their children, or minor deities, a "theogony" or birthing of gods. In time, these minor gods became so noisy that their father, *Apsu*, decided to get rid of them. One of these gods was named *Ea* who cast a spell on *Apsu* and ultimately killed him. This caused *Tiamat*, his wife, to fly into a rage. She promoted another god named *Kingu* to be her commander-in-chief, and she set out to kill all the other gods. It was at this time that the god *Marduk* was appointed as one of the gods who would defeat *Tiamat*. *Marduk* (who ultimately became one of the leading gods of Babylon) goes forth to battle *Tiamat* and with him has the winds of heaven: the cyclone, the hurricane, and the matchless wind, along with his bow and his mace. We are told that as he battles with *Tiamat*, he opens her mouth and lets loose the winds that fill her belly and splits her in half like a shellfish. With one-half of her, he makes the heavens, and with the other half of her, he makes the earth. We are told in the sixth tablet that from the blood of *Kingu* humanity is fashioned for the service of the gods because the gods were tired of working, and they wanted humanity to do their work for them. The poem ends with Babylon as the abode of the gods. It is clear that this was told to elevate Babylon above all nations and to elevate *Marduk* as the chief god of the Babylonian pantheon.

Atrahasis: Another account of ancient Babylon is known as "*Atrahasis*."³ This story, along with *Enuma Elish*, is most relevant to understanding the first part of Genesis especially chapters 2-9. The *Atrahasis* story begins with the heavens in rebellion; the lower gods are in rebellion against the higher gods. They are rebelling because they do not want to do work for the other gods. It is resolved therefore that human beings would be created to do the work to

alleviate the burden on the lower gods, and so in *Atrahasis*, just as we saw in *Enuma Elish*, the human race is created to be the servants of the gods. However, it is not long before the human race becomes offensive to the gods because of their noise. (The Akkadian word *rigmu* probably means noise.) Because of their noise, or *rigmu*, there is a succession of plagues sent against humanity by the gods that ultimately would culminate in a flood. This flood destroys every one of the human race with the exception of one person and his wife; this man's name is *Utnapishtim*. He was a divine favorite of the gods. This particular individual was told to build a boat. He survives a great flood; he comes out of the boat after the flood, and is given immortality by the gods. The *Atrahasis* story is known from copies made from around 1600 BC, but the origin of the story precedes that and provides a backdrop for understanding the book of Genesis.

The interpretation of the Biblical Account: With that in mind, it is now good to try to understand how our biblical account compares with these others and what Genesis is saying to the reader. In Genesis 1, there are seven days, instead of seven tablets as in *Enuma Elish*. On the first day, we have the creation of the heaven and earth with light created. On day two, we have the separation of the waters creating heaven and earth. On day three, we have the sea, the land, and vegetation created. The next three days parallel the first three days. On day four, we have the light holders created; the moon, the sun, and stars paralleling the light of day one. On day five, we have the creation of fish and birds paralleling day two, the separation of the waters and the creation of the expanse, the heavens in which the birds would fly. Then, on day six, we have land animals and man created paralleling to some degree day three where we have the waters separated in one place and the dry land appearing. The ultimate goal of these first six days is to show that God is the sole Creator leading up to the high epitome of his creation in humankind on the sixth day. Everything is building up to that. The final climax though comes on the seventh

day. Since God is the sole Creator and man is his creation placed over all he has created excepting himself, then man is to keep the seventh day as an act of worship to God. I believe that when the writer composes this account of creation he is commenting, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, against the other creation accounts; the writer is making a declaration and teaching about who God is.

As we go through this passage from Genesis 1:1 to 2:4, the writer is using in the background the model of a king. We see God commanding. He says to the light, “you will be the day.” He says to the darkness, “you will be the night.” As he speaks, it is done as when a king gives a command. The text shows God as the King calling out commands, and his creation responding to him. This is so very different from the other accounts in which the gods battle each other to create. In those accounts, there is struggle—here in Genesis there is no struggle; God is very simply depicted as a Sovereign giving the commands and what he says is done. This is a purposeful depiction because this same God of creation will soon call Abraham and promise him a covenant, and the writer wants the reader to realize that it is God who is King of all creation who ultimately called our forefathers and led them to the land of promise. This, I believe, must be the emphasis here.

Further, when we study the word “day” we are probably dealing here in a sense with a poetic kind of description. Some have tried to find literal 24-hour days; others have talked about the days as long ages. Some view the days of the week as a literary pattern, which the inspired writer uses to teach about God’s sovereignty. Led by the Holy Spirit, the writer is teaching about who God is and what he is like.

Interpretation of Day One: The text begins by saying “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” It does not have to begin by telling us that God came into being from

existing matter through some sexual union. He is beyond all that. He simply is there, and by faith we accept Him as such. The writer says, “in the beginning God.” There is also no female with him, as in the Babylonian account with *Apsu* and *Tiamat* merging to create other gods. There are no other gods and there is no female goddess. God is—always existing. The text presents God in that light, and so we see the purpose of why Genesis begins, “in the beginning God.” In the book of Hebrews, chapter 11, the writer states, “the one who comes to God must believe that he is and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him.” Notice again what God did, “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

Some would understand this first verse as simply a circumstantial clause which they would want to translate, “at the first, when God began to create 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 was hovering over the face of the waters, then God said, ‘let there be light.’” Those who take this translation do so by comparing this passage with the way the Babylonian creation account begins in *Enuma Elish*, with a long sentence starting with this kind of circumstantial clause. However, it seems much simpler to begin with the phrase “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” referring to the entire universe, giving a summary statement of what God did as sole Creator. This is the way it is translated in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, which appeared around 200 BC. I believe this translation fits more properly and more completely with the way the rest of the Genesis narrative develops. “In the beginning,” just a simple sentence, “God created the heaven and the earth,” and this simple sentence becomes a brief but complete summary of God’s first creative activity.

The text continues, “Now the earth was *tohu va vohu*,” that is “the earth was formless and empty.” It was a formless, empty place; that is the first thing the text wants us to know. The word

tohu in the Hebrew is often used of a desert area, empty and barren. The author is depicting the earth as empty and without inhabitants. It is interesting to note that for the first three days, the text deals with what God does about this formless empty state of the world and how he is going to bring form to it, while on the last three days the text deals with what God does to fill it and populate it.

The second characteristic the text wants us to know is that the darkness was upon the face of the deep. The Hebrew word, *tehom*, translated as “deep,” actually means “waters” or “world ocean.” Further, the spirit of God was *merahepheth*, perhaps either soaring over the face of the waters or hovering over the face of the waters. Thus there are three things that the text says about the original time when God begins creation. The earth was formless and empty, there was darkness over the face of the deep, and the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

There are some commentators that would like to understand the *ruach Elohim*, the spirit of God, to be a mighty wind. *Ruach* is the Hebrew word for “wind” and *Elohim* means “God” and sometimes “mighty.” These commentators would understand it to mean that a mighty wind was soaring over the face of the waters. The imagery would be that of a storm, in the middle of which God speaks and creates light. The participle in the Hebrew *merahepheth* sometimes is translated as “hovering” sometimes translated as “moving.” What does the word mean? The word only occurs one other time in the *Torah* in Deuteronomy 32. It is used of an eagle stirring up its nest. The eagle hovers over the eaglets, getting them out of the nest to teach them to fly. The word is looking at God hovering over the waters in order to bring about a mature creation. Here we see divine activity; we see God at work. What we do not see, as in the Babylonian *Enuma Elish* creation account, is any kind of battle or conflict. In the Akkadian account, the

female goddess *Tiamat* battled *Marduk*, and *Marduk* defeated her and divided her in half to create the heavens and the earth. There was a violent struggle. Here, the writer of Genesis purposely wants us to know there was no struggle. The text says simply that “darkness was on the face of the deep;” neither the darkness nor the water were gods here, only elements of God’s creation, and God simply says “let there be light,” and the light appears. The king speaks, there is no struggle, and creation comes forth by his word. This is what we must see here; God merely speaks and creation is accomplished.

“Then God saw the light and that it was good and God divided between the light and between the darkness and God called to the light, ‘day’ and to the darkness, ‘night.’” The imagery is that he said to the light, “Light, you are going to be the day,” and he said to the darkness, “Darkness, you are going to be the night.” We see again the king speaking forth his command and it was done as he commanded; there was evening and morning; day one. We are taught here that God is the sole Creator; there is no combat or struggle; he is on the throne; he calls creation into being and tells light and the darkness what they are going to be. He moves in the midst of this unfinished state of empty nothingness to bring into being the beautiful creation.

Interpretation of Day Two: On day two, we are told that God speaks again. God said “let there be a *rakia* between the waters.” The Hebrew word *rakia* is sometimes translated as “firmament” or “expanse.” It is something like a disk, hammered out, that God slides in between the waters to separate the waters of the earth from the waters in the heavens. Again, comparing to the Babylonian *Enuma Elish* account, God does not use a sword, he does not blow wind into a female deity like *Tiamat* and divide her into heaven and earth through violent means, God merely speaks and causes this expanse to occur. We are told there was a literal division of the waters, and God called the expanse “heavens” and there was evening and morning; day two. As

we go on each day, we see God in action creating with no competition, no one thwarting what he is doing. He is God, and he deserves our worship because he is the sole, un-contended King.

Interpretation of Day Three: On day three, God calls the waters under the heaven to be gathered into one place and he lets the dry land appear. God calls the dry land “earth,” and the gathering together of the waters he calls “the seas.” He sees it is good. We see in Genesis that the seas are sent to one place. In Canaanite religion, *Yamm* (“sea”) was an enemy of *Baal* the god of Canaan. *Baal* had to fight the sea constantly. It is interesting here that God does not fight the sea, he just tells the waters where to go, and they go to their place, again alluding to God being the sole God of creation who speaks forth commands and creation simply obeys. In Genesis, we discover that creation does not rebel against God. The text continues, telling us that God then puts forth seed-bearing grasses and herbs, and fruit-bearing trees—all bearing the ability to reproduce after its kind; he speaks and it is so. There are two types of “seed” here: one that is in the fruit and one that is scattered around like grass seed. God saw that it was good and there was evening and morning; day three.

Interpretation of Day Four: Then on day four, we have the creation of the heavenly bodies. On day four, the Hebrew text says. “God said ‘let there be (literally) *light holders* in the expanse (*rakia*) of the heaven. It is interesting to note that on day one God created light and now on day four he creates the *light holders*. These light holders—the big light and the little light, the sun and the moon—are to be for signs and for seasons, for days and for years. They are to help Israel carry out their worship of God, to denote the proper seasons and times of the year when religious feasts and festivals are to be held. In the Genesis account, God made the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night; lights to rule under God’s authority within the parameters he has set forth. This is important, because in the ancient world the sun and the moon

were considered gods—this is true in both the Babylonian and the Egyptian religions—but in Genesis, the text does not even name them, he simply says “big light” and “little light.” If the writer of Genesis had named the lights, the Hebrew word for sun, *shemesh*, would have sounded a lot like the Akkadian name *Shamshu*, which was the sun god. The Genesis text is very careful not to name the heavenly lights to show that God alone is the un-contested king who created the lights and who allows these inanimate objects to rule under his authority. Again, they are created things under his rule.

It is interesting to note that even the light itself is something God had already created. The sun is not the source of light, nor is the moon, these greater and lesser lights are simply channels or light holders. The text in Genesis is making a statement that God is the Creator of light, not the sun god *Ra* of Egypt or the sun god *Shamshu* of Babylon; it is God. This has to make an impact on the reader against idolatry and against polytheistic belief in many gods. It points to one God who is the sole Creator of the earth and the universe. It also seems that the text briefly mentions “and he threw in the stars also” almost as an ironic aside; in Babylonian belief, the stars were also gods, so Genesis mentions them almost as an afterthought of God’s grand creation. Scientifically we know today that the nearest galaxy is 30,000,000 light years away. If we were in a spaceship traveling at the speed of light (186,000 miles per second), we would pass the moon within two seconds. Continuing at that rate of speed, we would still have 30,000,000 light-years (the distance light travels in a year) still ahead before we reached the nearest galaxy. We know that there are millions of galaxies and billions of stars in our universe, and it is interesting that the writer seems to say that God simply threw in the stars almost like an added benefit. This shows again his complete control and mastery of his creation, and points up how much more he deserves our praise and worship; he is certainly the God who will deliver us, and

he will do what he has promised as we see in his covenants (Abrahamic covenant—Genesis 12:1-3:15; Davidic covenant—2 Samuel 7:13-14; and New Covenant—Jeremiah 31:31-34).

Interpretation of Day Five: On the next day, the fifth day, God creates the fish and the birds and he gives them their proper environment. Notice that on that day God created the great sea monsters, in Genesis 1:21. In Egypt, animals such as fish and birds were worshiped. In Canaan, the great sea monster was another of the great enemies of *Baal*. The writer of Genesis is telling us that God is not only the sole Creator of these sea creatures, he maintains authority over them, telling them where they are going to go and what they are going to do in the seas which he has created.

Interpretation of Day Six: On the sixth day, we come to the pinnacle of his creation. After God told the earth to bring forth living creatures, cattle, creeping things, and wild animals, he finally comes to man, the epitome of his creation (Genesis 1:26). God said, “Let us make man in our own image.” The words, “let us” is imagery of God speaking as a king in his court; he is in control of everything, and by saying “let us” shows a plurality of majesty, allowing for the reality of the Trinity seen through progressive revelation. Thus, he says, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish in the sea and over the birds of the heaven and the domesticated beasts, over all the earth, and over everything that creeps upon the earth” (1:26). In verse 27, we move from prose to poetry as we are told, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female, he created them.”

The writer is communicating several interesting things here, in that man is created in the image of God. The word “image” or “likeness” in the Hebrew is the word *selem*, which is very similar to a word often used in the Akkadian language (*salmu*) of a king who commissioned a statue to be built and placed within a city where he could not be. The statue of the king would

represent his authority in that city even though he could not personally be there. I believe that this is a purposeful and powerful way the writer of Genesis makes the statement that humankind is God's representative on earth; we have been given the right to rule and reign over the animal creation. This is the emphasis of the text. We are not to bow down to the animals and worship them as was done in Egyptian religion, for example, but we have been given the right to rule over them. In this word "image," the writer is depicting the likeness of a king that represents the authority of that king, and so we are God's representatives here on earth. It is interesting that he includes both male and female. Note that the writer says, "let them have dominion" over the fish of the sea and so forth. God created both male and female, blessed them, and gave both, equally, rule over creation; there is a tremendous equality here. The text emphasizes that women and men both are created in the likeness and image of God; both (like the statue of the king), represent God in ruling and subduing the earth. It is a beautiful equality, a beautiful co-partnership as the original intention of God found here at the beginning of creation. The writer concludes by saying, "God saw everything he had made and behold it was VERY good" (*tov me'od* in the Hebrew), and there was evening and morning, day six.

Interpretation of Day Seven: After bringing us up to this lofty position for mankind in God's creation, after refuting all the types of idols that one might want to worship either in heaven, on earth, or under the earth, and after showing us that God is the King, the sole Creator, and the only One to be worshiped, this first creation account climaxes with the Sabbath. "Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done." The seventh day is really the culmination of it all, and since God is the sole

Creator and it is on that seventh day that he rested from his labor, Israel was to set that day apart and worship their Creator, *Elohim*, or God. (*Elohim* is one of the Hebrew words for God, which the writer uses throughout Genesis 1.)

In the New Testament, the writer of Hebrews makes an interesting application of Sabbath in that he applies the idea of Sabbath to an ongoing idea of rest and worship of Christ as the new creation of God who gave us a new creation by his death and resurrection. Therefore, we cease from our own works and rest in his finished work. It is fascinating that the writer of Hebrews alludes to the idea of Sabbath and applies it in this way to believers in Jesus Christ. Thus, the Genesis account of creation (Genesis 1:1 to 2:4) is written in contrast to the Babylonian accounts *Enuma Elish*, and *Atrahasis* that we discussed earlier. In creation, there is no battle, there is no struggle with any other god, and no violence or discord between God and his creation. God simply creates, as a king speaking forth his commands. In the creation of humanity, particularly in *Atrahasis* and *Enuma Elish*, humans were created to do the menial work of the gods. In Genesis, man was created, not to do the dirty work, but to reign as viceroy under God on earth. Notice for example, reading from the Babylonian creation epic *Enuma Elish*, “Blood I will mass and cause bones to be. I will establish a savage, man shall be his name; barely savage man I will create; he will be charged with service to the gods that they might be at ease.”⁴ What a stark difference from Genesis in which humanity enjoys a high elevation in the eyes and estimation of God. The Genesis account clearly makes that point, and this sentiment runs through the Old Testament and the Hebrew Scriptures. For example, in Psalm 8 we read, “What is man that you remember him or the son of man that you visit him. You made him a little lower than the angels and you have crowned him with glory and honor.” What a tragedy it is that so often people treat

one another worse than they treat animals, and yet in God's original creation the intention is that humankind, male and female, are created to rule over God's own creation.

Two Models in Genesis 1 and 2

In the supplementary account of creation found starting at Genesis 2:4, it says, “these are the generations (or, “account”—*toledot*, as mentioned earlier) of the heavens and the earth when they were created.” As we move into the second, complementary creation account, the name *Yahweh* will be used. *Yahweh* is another name for God used in the Hebrew Scriptures. *Elohim*, remember, was used throughout Genesis 1 looking at God as a king, now *Yahweh* is used to look at God as he moves to create man as a potter would create a work out of clay. In these two accounts of creation, we have two models or types. In Genesis 1, we have the model of a king. Our text is very precise and formal because *Elohim* is speaking and giving commands as a king in his dominion. In Genesis 2 *Yahweh* will be depicted as the model of a potter with his hands in the clay.

In Genesis 2:5ff we are told that there was no plant or herb of the field on the earth for the Lord had not yet caused it to rain, and there was no man to till the earth. We read there was a mist that kept coming up from the earth; that word “mist” in the Hebrew is *‘ēd* which comes from a Sumerian word *id* which means “river.” Although we are not exactly sure to what this refers, we understand that there was some type of a spring, river, or overflow of water coming up from the earth. (The Sumerians lived before the Babylonians; Sumer was the capital of Sumeria prior to the time of the Babylonians. The Sumerian language is another cuneiform language, like Akkadian, and it seems that *id* may be a loan word from Sumerian to Hebrew.) This *id* or *‘ēd* overflow kept coming up from the earth, and although there had not been any rain, we are told that the overflow watered the face of the earth like a river.

The text goes on to explain that the Lord God formed man from this *‘ēd* watered dust, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; hence, man became a living creature. Here we see

God as a potter. In the Hebrew, Genesis 2:19 says, *wayyiser*, that is, “the Lord God formed man,” the verb used here is *yasar* that in Hebrew means, “to form as a potter.” Yahweh formed man as a potter forms something from the clay, and then breathed life into his nostrils. The writer of Genesis wants the reader to realize that even though we represent God as a viceroy under his rule, we must never lose sight of the fact that we are still just clay, and God is the “Potter.” The prophet Jeremiah, the Apostle Paul later in the New Testament, as well as other writers will use that same imagery.

Genesis goes on to tell how the Lord planted the Garden of Eden and put man there and how God caused to grow from the ground every tree that was pleasing to the eye and good for food; and in the middle of the garden grew the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (This passage is clearly preparing the way for chapter three; the fall of man, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life will all be seen again in chapter three.) The writer describes the rivers that were in this land, and names two of the rivers: the Tigris and the Euphrates. This places the event in geographical space and time of history. The Lord takes man and puts him in the Garden of Eden to dress it and keep it. He gives the man complete freedom to eat of every tree but one; of the tree of knowledge of good and evil God said, “you shall not eat of it for in the day you eat from it you will surely die.” Adam is given every tree then except for that one. God wants a place where he is the sovereign king. I believe that the writer is telling us this as a way of expressing that God will give us everything, except for certain things that he reserves for himself. It is as if God is saying, “I am not selfish, you can have all of these things in the garden but this one tree; of this tree you may not eat.”

What is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? I believe that good and evil refers to complete or full knowledge and it is a term that is often used of a person who moves into

adolescent years when he or she begins to understand good and evil or gains knowledge in a fuller sense. For example, in Isaiah 7 we are told a virgin will conceive and bear a son, and before this son can grow up and know good from evil his diet would be a diet of butter and honey; so in that particular passage we learn that the knowledge of good and evil seems to come with the arrival of the adolescent years when a child grows to understand, in a more complete, personal way, the concepts and practices of good and evil. While this tree symbolizes full knowledge, the tree of life symbolizes immortality.

Next, we are told that God is going to create a wife for Adam. The writer states God's concern that it is not good for man to be alone. God says, "I will make for him an '*zer kenegdo*, a wife corresponding to him." In other words, it is good that man has a wife and that the two correspond to each other. Adam then names all of the animals and shows that not one of the animals is fit for as "a helper corresponding to him." God causes Adam to have a deep sleep, a *tardemah*. (This word is also used when God gives Abraham a deep sleep and makes a covenant with him—Genesis 15:12.) As Adam sleeps, God takes from Adam's rib and makes a woman. In Hebrew, God actually builds (*yiben*) woman from the rib that he has taken from the man. It is interesting that in the Hebrew, Adam makes a poetic statement or description. "She is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; on account of this she shall be called '*ishah* (woman) because she was taken from '*ish*' (man)." There is definitely a play on the words '*ish* and '*ishah* to show the intimacy, the closeness, between a husband and wife in marriage. On account of this, a man is to leave mother and father and cleave to his wife and they are to be one flesh. It is interesting here that the text is making a statement about the importance of marriage relationship and how it is not good for man to be alone. God created a helpmeet, a helper corresponding to the man.

The Temptation and Fall of Man

The model of parent/child relationship: The man and the woman were naked and they were not ashamed; they were like children in the innocence of childhood. The nudity here depicts their innocence. As we have seen the model of a king in chapter 1 and as we have seen the model of a potter in chapter 2, I believe the writer uses a model of a parent/child relationship in chapter 3. God is as a father, and as a parent, he tells his children not to do certain things. He has already told them not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for should they do so they would die. Parents say, “don’t touch the stove or you will burn yourself,” “don’t cross the street or you may be hit by a car.” You can hear the “parent” speaking in this admonition. The children, Adam and Eve, are innocent beings, depicted by their unclothed state. This parent/child relationship is the background or model used in this chapter. As we look at this passage, we find that there are several layers of interpretation. The New Testament gives one basic layer of interpretation; Romans 5 looks at the original fall of first man and first woman, the fall that infected the entire human race since that time. It also looks at the fall of every human being with the continual sinning that all of us experience even when God gives us everything. In going through this narrative, I would like to emphasize both aspects but also try to see what happens when one sins against God; what goes on under the model of the parent-child relationship because this is what the writer seems to be emphasizing.

The serpent’s temptation: We know the man and the woman were naked, and we know that there was a serpent in the garden. There are two words used here in the Hebrew text that bear careful inspection. The word ‘*arūmmina* means, “naked,” and depicts the man and the woman as such, and the word ‘*arum* means “crafty” and depicts the serpent. This is an interesting play on words, perhaps emphasizing, “be careful of your ‘*arūmmina* (your innocence)

less the '*arum* (the crafty serpent) steal your innocence away from you." I believe by repetition of the same sound in Hebrew that this is the message the writer is driving home to the reader.

We know that in the world of the biblical writer, in the Canaanite religion the serpent was an object of worship. This was true also in Egyptian religion. Here it is viewed as a sinister creature. I believe that the serpent was used by Satan and is a symbol of temptation in all its craftiness and evil. Satan, I believe, used the serpent, and certainly the text illustrates what Satan did and does. According to John's Gospel, Jesus said that Satan was a liar and the father of lies from the beginning (John 8:44). Taking the words of our Lord, I would understand Satan to have been active in the original temptation and fall. The text, I believe, is speaking of the serpent as a symbol of temptation and evil, and later on, we learn that there was a spirit-being called Satan who was also active in the serpent according to the teaching of our Lord recorded in John 8. Temptation is very crafty; it can look so good, yet steal the innocence of the one who follows it.

Notice the serpent comes and it was more crafty than any wild animal of the field that Yahweh had made. The serpent spoke unto the woman, and the Hebrew here is a little difficult in that we have to supply a question, "Is it indeed that God said, 'you should not eat from every tree of the garden'? God did not really say that you could not eat of every tree of the garden... did he? The parent didn't really say that you could not do that... did he?" The woman said to the serpent, "From the food of the trees of the garden we may eat, but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden God said 'you shall not eat from it nor shall you even touch it lest you die.'" There is no statement in the previous chapter in which God had said, "you shouldn't touch this tree." The text here shows the development of temptation. It begins by questioning the parent, by questioning God. Then, after listening to that questioning temptation, the woman adds more detail to the command. God did not say, "you should not touch it." This is added purposely,

I believe, because many times the things that God has asked us not to do, when we realize that we have been given everything by God except one thing, we begin to desire what is prohibited and begin to see God as very narrow, restrictive, and legalistic. I believe the writer has captured this in the statement “you shall not touch it.” It is the same way children view their parents when the parents say, “don’t do this.” Often the child will see the parent in a much worse, more rigid light than the parent really is.

As we read on, the serpent says to the woman, “You will not surely die!” God had said, “you will surely die.” A parent may say, “If you do this, you will be grounded.” What Satan has done is like someone saying to a child, “Your dad won’t really ground you, will he? That won’t really happen.” Satan pushes further, “God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be open and you will be as God,” knowing experientially good and evil. The serpent suggests, “God is jealous, he doesn’t want you to be like him. Your dad doesn’t want you to have the knowledge he has.” I believe this is the emphasis here. The serpent further suggests, “God is jealous of his position, and the only way God can maintain his sovereignty is to give you a plan whereby you cannot achieve what he has achieved.” I believe when the serpent says, “you will know good and evil,” he is looking at adolescence.

In Isaiah 7:15, Isaiah predicts, “before the boy knows good from evil this land will be forsaken.” It seems to me that the expression “know good and evil” looks at the totality of knowledge, and knowing good and evil becomes a symbol of what one understands when one moves into adolescence over against the nudity of childhood and innocence. The serpent says, “and so you will know good and evil and God sees this as his right, and he does not want you to invade into that arena with him, because you would be equal with him.”

The next step in the temptation process is this; “and when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes and the tree was desired to make one wise, she took from its fruit and she did eat and she gave to her husband that was with her and he ate.” Notice that the text has captured temptation and all of its attractiveness. The parent had said, “Don’t do this.” The tempter said, “The parent says that because he doesn’t want you to be equal with him.” Now she focuses on the temptation, the tree from which she was not supposed to eat. There are many other trees around that are good for food, but she sees this tree; she ignores all the others, and sees only this tree. Isn’t that the way temptation works? You have the world and yet it is the *one thing* that you are prohibited from doing that looks so good, and so she sees this tree as good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes. It was not only good to eat, but it also looked good as well, and it was a tree that would make one wise. There is nothing wrong with wisdom, but a wisdom that goes against the command of God is the wrong kind of wisdom. An adolescent or infant wisdom that seeks to disobey the parent is not wisdom, and this is the emphasis that the text is presenting here. The wisdom she felt she could have is nothing but a false type of wisdom and it will not help her. Yet, she takes of the fruit and eats and then she passes it on to her husband and he eats with her.

The cover up: The next step is that the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew experientially at that point *‘arūmma*, they were naked. Before this time, they did not know they were naked, but now they have lost their innocence. It is like children that have grown up and become aware of their nudity and choose to put on clothes. The man and woman are the same way, and so we see this model developing. They now know they are naked so they sew fig leaves together and make for themselves a covering. They are covering up their shame. This is the first thing that seems to happen when sin invades the life of a person or when one disobeys God; the

first thing is to cover up, to hide. The writer has captured this. He has captured the covering up of what they did; the covering up that everyone does when they sin.

Casting blame: The next step in the narrative is that they hear the voice of *Yahweh Elohim* walking, strolling around in the garden in the cool of the day, or evening. No doubt, they had walked with God in the garden at this time of day on other occasions, but now the man and his wife hide themselves from the presence of *Yahweh Elohim* in the midst of the trees in the garden. Not only have they tried to cover their shame, but this step now has them running and hiding from God. When a child disobeys a parent, the first thing they do is to run, hide, and try to get away from the parents. The man and woman hide in the midst of the trees of the garden, and the text captures the irony of it all when he says, “and *Yahweh Elohim* called unto the man and said, ‘where are you?’” as though he didn’t know. The irony is thick here, “where are you, Adam?” I am reminded of children playing a game of hide and seek, and the parent saying, “where are you?” while seeing them all along. I believe that the text has captured this here. There is strong irony here, as though God did not know.

The man then said, “I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself; I was ashamed.” God said, “who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree which I commanded you not to eat from?” We can just see the parent here, the child has disobeyed and here is this innocent child now aware of his nudity and trying to cover himself up, and God as a parent saying, “how did you know that you were naked? How did you know this, did someone tell you, or did you eat from that tree I told you not to eat from?” You can just see the parent here addressing the child and the child is helpless at this point.

The normal response when one is guilty is to cast blame, so the writer beautifully captures this in the sentences that follow, “the man said, ‘the woman, it’s the woman that you

gave to be with me, she gave to me from the tree and I did eat.” Notice the emphasis here is that no one wants to accept the blame. Everybody wants to blame everyone else; no one is taking the responsibility here. We start now with Adam, who says, “God it is you, you are really the fault because you gave me the woman, and the woman is the one that caused me to sin. So since you gave me the woman in the first place, so in a very real sense, you are the problem behind the problem.” This must be what the writer is implying here. It is often true that we choose to blame others or to blame God for the situations in which we find ourselves in life. How human this is. The truth of what the text has captured here is ingenious and it applies to all time. The text then moves to the woman. God says to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman replies, “The serpent deceived me and I ate.” There is an emphasis on the sound of this phrase in the Hebrew, *haiššah hannahaš hiššî ‘ani wa’okel*—you can almost hear the hissing of a serpent in the “ish” sound in Hebrew, and I believe the writer has captured this with the word he uses here in the Hebrew. The woman shifts the blame, “It’s the serpent that deceived me, and I ate.”

The judgment of God: The serpent now is rebuked. We started with the questioning of the man, then the woman, yet now there is no question of the serpent. Obviously, he will not talk. The serpent is going to be confined to judgment. We move then from the serpent to the woman to the man and we have what is called a chiasmus here. The letter *Chi* in Greek is like a big X and is used to describe a literary pattern of A—B, B—A. Here we have a slightly more complex chiasmus with an A—B—C, C—B—A pattern. We have the man addressed first (A), and he blames the woman (B), and then she blames the serpent (C). Then judgment is pronounced on the serpent (C), God gives judgment on the woman (B), and then we come back to (A) with the judgment on the man. The chiasmus is for emphasis, and I believe the center element of this is the double C. This literary construct is important to the writer, and can be seen in the following

verses when the text says, “the Lord God said unto the serpent, ‘Because you have done this cursed are you above every beast, and above every living creature of the field. Upon your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life.’” The first curse is on the serpent directly; as he slithers in the dust, it is a picture of the curse upon the evil that the serpent represents. Then we come to the second C of the chiasmus, “and I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and between her seed, she shall *y^eshūph^eka r’osh* (she shall crush the head) but you shall *t^eshūph^ennū ‘aqēb* (you shall crush the heel).” There is a play on the verb *shūph* here in the Hebrew, meaning, “to crush.” I believe the text is teaching something that has become very real in the physical world: when a serpent slithers in the dust and meets a woman, the first thing that the woman wants to do is to kill the serpent, to hit it on its head; the first thing the serpent wants to do is bite the heel. It shows a conflict between humanity and snakes.

I believe this conflict between humanity and snakes pictures a deeper conflict between good and evil. There is also the implication that coming from the seed of woman—from humankind—the head of evil itself would ultimately be crushed. Even in this judgment, there is an optimistic note. I believe it is seen in the repetition of the verb *shūph*. Who wins, ultimately, is the seed or progeny of the woman. Many have called this the *proto-evangelium*, that is, the first statement of the Gospel. Coming out of the human race, Jesus Christ came as the God-man to defeat evil itself. We are told in chapter 8 of John’s gospel that Satan was a liar from the beginning, and I believe that while the serpent took a lead in the temptation, the evil behind the serpent was the tempter Satan himself, speaking in the mind of the first woman. The text supplies an optimistic note that coming from her offspring, from her seed, not only would humans defeat snakes, but ultimately evil would be defeated. Jesus Christ, coming from the seed of the woman,

defeated Satan, the one who was the liar from the beginning. By Christ's death on the cross, and by his resurrection, and in his glorious second coming someday, Satan himself we are told will be cast into the lake of fire, which in Revelation 20 is symbolic of eternal judgment. Ultimately, by way of typological fulfillment, we see an optimistic note that is realized in the New Testament in Jesus Christ, the victor over Satan, over sin, over temptation, and over evil.

The text continues to the next emphasis as God says unto the woman, "I will greatly multiply your pain and travail, in pain you shall bring forth children and your desire shall be to your husband and he shall rule over you." This is a statement of judgment as a result of the original fall and sin. The writer describes the pain of childbirth and he is also describing the domination of men ruling over women. This is not the divine will of God as we see originally in Genesis 1. It was God's will that men and women rule together as co-partners over creation. However, as a result of what happened with the first pair because of sin having entered the human stream, men tended to dominate and rule over women. This statement is more a prophecy of what would happen because of sin, not a statement of God's will. It was the result of sin entering into the human race and so we see this judgment pronounced on this woman. The writer further tries to explain why women have pain in childbirth, why it is that husbands tend to rule over their wives. I believe when we encounter the judgments here, we see that the writer is pointing to the fall, the original situation that resulted in pain at childbirth, and men dominating women. This is not something that was in God's original, ideal intention at all.

The text talks about the condition of the world; why is it that we have thorns and thistles; why is it that we all die? The writer deals with that in verses 17 and following and when God says, "because you have harkened unto the voice of your wife and you have eaten of the tree which I commanded you should not eat of it, cursed is the ground for your sake. In toil shall you

eat of it all the days of your life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you and you shall eat the herb of the field by the sweat of your face. You shall eat bread till you return unto the ground, for out of it you were taken, for dust you are and to dust you shall return.” Judgment is brought forth to all humankind. Why do we have thorns and thistles? Why do we have to do hard laborious work? Was this always the case? I believe the writer is telling us this was not always the case; it was not until the first pair disobeyed God. Why is it that we die, why do we go back to dust? Did God originally create human kind to die? No, this came about because the original pair, the children, wanted to be the parent. The writer is explaining the results of the first pair’s sin, and how it has come down through time to all of humanity, answering the question of why we all die. The writer is describing how it was willful disobedience to God that brought humanity into this situation; it was not because God placed humans in this helpless situation. They did not die on the very day that they ate from the forbidden tree, but death entered the human stream at that point. In other words, it was not instantaneous, but in that very day of knowing good from evil, death began to be experienced. It became a separation from God by way of physical and spiritual death. The writer then ends on a note about Eve, saying, “and the man called his wife’s name Eve” which in the Hebrew is related to the word *hayah* meaning “living” because she was the mother of “all living.”

God’s grace in the midst of judgment: The Lord God made for Adam and Eve garments of skin and clothed them. Notice the positive response here in that God took Adam and Eve and covered them. Not only did he allow them to live for a time, and for Eve to become the mother for all living, but he also clothed them with garments of skin to cover their shame. This has to depict God’s grace. They try to cover themselves with temporary covering and God gives them a more permanent covering and clothes them. We see disobedience—we see breaking the covenant

of God, which is sin. We see God's judgment—death entered the human race; in the day Adam ate the forbidden fruit, the death process started. Yet, at the same time, God is merciful—he allows offspring and he covers Adam and Eve's nakedness and their shame by a blood sacrifice of an animal, depicting symbolically the mercy of God and the grace of God to cover one's shame, typologically in Jesus Christ.

Expulsion from the garden: The writer brings us back to the tree of life, that tree he introduced in Genesis 2. The Lord God said, “‘behold the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil. He must not be allowed to put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever.’ Therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from where he was taken. So he drove the man out and he placed at the east of the Garden of Eden the *Cherubim* and the flaming sword which turned every way to bar the way to the tree of life.” Notice that the tree of life is symbolic of immortality; Adam and Eve, hence, all humanity, lost immortality by disobedience. The first couple is on the outside, they cannot have access to the immortality granted by the tree of life. The *Cherubim* symbolize the judgment of God, barring them from the garden and the tree of life. Based on these immortal creatures guarding the entrance into Eden, many ancient temples had statues of similar creatures guarding the entrance. We know from Babylonian temples that *Cherubim*-like statues with the face of a man and the winged body of an animal would guard the presence of a god in the temple. These *Cherubim* are the guardians of the presence of God and the eternal life found in the garden at the tree of life. Adam and Eve are no longer able to get to the tree of life and gain immortality.

In summary, what has the text been teaching? I believe that as we look at this text, the author is answering several different questions: What went wrong? Why must humanity die? Has it always been that man was a sinful person and that death has always been his lot? The text

clearly shows that it was not always so, and that God created all things good. There was a time when our first parents sinned, and as a result of disobeying God, we see the loss of immortality and the introduction of death. Yet, in the midst of this judgment, we still experience God's mercy and his covering. I believe this historically is what the writer was saying, but he is saying more than that. He is also using the parent-child model to teach the continuing fall of everyone and the process of that same disobedience to God. He gives us all things, yet we sin nevertheless, and then we cast the blame on others when we are found out. We are led into a separation from God and from the perfect plan of eternal life and fellowship because of our disobedience. We can see there are several layers of meaning here. There is the original fall and its results and the judgments that followed, and there is the consequent experience of every person since that time. I think the writer is combining both of these ideas.

Jesus Christ as the Second Adam

As we look at this passage in Genesis through the eyes of the New Testament, we have a great word of encouragement given by the apostle Paul in Romans 5. He applies this passage and interprets it in this way: “sin entered into the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all man because all sinned. Before the law was given sin was in the world, but sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses even over those who did not sin by breaking a command as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come” (Romans 5:12-14). Paul is telling us here, in the book of Romans, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, that the text in Genesis depicts that through one man, death entered into the human race—spiritual separation from God as well as physical death—and that from that point death passed through to all of the human race.

Paul draws the contrast between the first Adam and the second Adam by telling us that Jesus, as the second Adam, brought us *life* in contrast to that of the first Adam who brought us *death*. Notice Paul says in Romans 5:17, “For if by the trespass of the one man death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.” Paul tells us that if by Adam’s sin death reigns supremely all the way throughout time to the present day, how much more will the gift of righteousness reign in eternal life through Jesus Christ in those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace. Paul says consequently just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all humanity, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all humanity. Notice the contrast: for just as through the disobedience of the first Adam in the human race all were made sinners, so also the obedience and the divine sacrifice of the second Adam (Jesus) all have the benefit available of being made

righteous and inheriting eternal life. It is a gift that is received through faith, Paul says, and once one enters into that gift of grace, one is given the righteousness of God and hence eternal life. What was done back in Genesis, Paul is teaching us, is now undone in Christ for those who accept him and receive his gift of righteousness. It is in this gift of grace and righteousness that the real equality of men and women is fully restored. In the new covenant, through Jesus Christ, the result of sin ruling in relationships has been made null. In Christ, we now have a restoration of co-partnership regardless of gender, and equal fellowship in Jesus Christ. It is also interesting, as we are looking at some of the New Testament application of this passage, that we are told in Romans 5:15-16, "But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification." The message here is that from Adam's sin, a tremendous avalanche of sin occurred from that point on bringing sin into the human stream. Not only did all humankind sin in Adam, as Paul said previously, but all have followed Adam as well in disobeying God. This tremendous cascade of sin is like Niagara Falls, it starts with a small stream, then it builds and builds, and when you see the torrent of water roaring over the precipice, you witness its tremendous power. Paul likens Jesus as one standing at the bottom of those falls, stopping its flow. By becoming the second Adam, and by his redemption of us through his divine sacrifice on the cross, and by his glorious resurrection, through our faith in him he is able to stop sin's effects and cover all who will accept him as Lord and Savior.

As we look at this passage, we see in the whole canon of Scripture showing how Jesus Christ overcomes the results of that original first fall. It is also interesting that the tree of life is

restored again in Revelation 22. The symbolism that John uses there is that in the new Jerusalem, the tree of life is re-established, so someday we will be back into that experience of life that Adam had before he sinned; we are back into that experience of immortality through what Jesus Christ has done.

Contrasting Genesis 3 with the Adapa account: There is an account in an ancient near eastern myth of a person named *Adapa*,⁵ who was offered eternal life. He was offered the bread of life by the gods, but he refused it because one of the gods told him, “don’t accept anything to eat if you are offered bread.” The gods say among themselves, “as for us, what shall we do about him, fetch for him the bread of life and he shall eat it.” When the gods brought to *Adapa* the bread of life, *Adapa* did not eat it because a god had told him not to. When they brought to him the water of life, *Adapa* did not drink. When they brought to him a garment, he put it on; when they brought to him oil, he anointed himself. At that point, *Anu*, one of the gods, looked at him and laughed and said, “Come now *Adapa*, why did you not eat or drink? You shall not have eternal life.” *Adapa* said, “*Ea*, my master (which is another god) commanded me, ‘You shall not eat, you shall not drink.’” But, the gods said, “Take him away, and return him to earth.” There has to be a contrast here in the writer’s mind in Genesis. In this Babylonian account, we do not know why we do not have eternal life; it belongs to the gods and the gods have kept it a secret and kept it away from us. In contrast, in the biblical account in Genesis, God gives Adam eternal life but it was in Adam’s hands to choose. Yet, Adam and Eve choose to reject it, and in willful disobedience, lose it based upon their choice, not upon an arbitrary decree of capricious gods. That has to be one of the strongest purposes in the writing the Genesis narrative.

I think a second purpose, by way of review, is that it looks at the sin of every human being. All want to be a parent with God, yet we must always remain in the attitude of an innocent

child, and so we all go through the process of temptation, of trying to cover up, trying to hide, and then blaming someone or everyone else. I think the third purpose in the Genesis narrative must be uncovered by looking at the whole canon of Scripture. That is as Paul views it through inspiration in Romans 5. Paul it looks at the original sin of the first pair that brought sin and death to all humankind; it was reckoned from Adam and Eve down to all of us and practiced by all of us. However, Paul says that the second Adam, by his sacrifice and resurrection, undid for us what first Adam did so that by faith in him we now will have the tree of life restored to us in the New Jerusalem someday.

The Person and Work of Christ Seen Typologically in the Torah

Exodus

The final Moses: The great book of Exodus looks at God's deliverance of His people Israel out of Egypt. We see many highlights that point to Jesus Christ as our final deliverer by salvation through him. Moses is called out of Egypt, and in Matthew 2, Jesus as the final Moses is called out of Egypt. As Moses would later go up to the Mountain and give the law, so Jesus Christ gave the Sermon on the Mount as the final Moses. It is significant when Moses asked, "Who do I tell them has sent me?" God responded, in Exodus 3, "Tell them 'ehyeh 'asher 'ehyeh 'I am that which I am,' (from the verb *hayah* meaning, "to be"), 'I AM' has sent you." Here we see the eternity of Yahweh set forth in the phrase, "I AM." It is significant in John 8 that Jesus Christ makes the astounding statement that "before Abraham came to be, I am." Jesus Christ takes the very same title that Yahweh used for himself and applies it directly to himself, and in so doing Jesus Christ is claiming eternity with the Father as the great "I AM." All of the "I AM" passages in John's Gospel drive home the reality referring of this title.

The Passover type: It is significant as we come to Passover in the great narration of Exodus 12, we see the lamb being offered as an innocent, perfect Paschal lamb with its blood being sprinkled over the doorposts. This happens "between the evenings," and we note that not a bone of the lamb was broken. As we look into this fulfillment in Jesus Christ, Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 5 that Christ our Passover had been sacrificed for us. We have the innocent lamb of God in Jesus Christ, as John 1 says, "Behold the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world." We see Jesus Christ dying on the cross, between the evenings, for the sins of the world and those who put faith in him experience the reality of being saved from spiritual death through the blood of Christ. In Ephesians 1 we see that we have redemption, and through the blood of

Jesus Christ we are delivered from eternal death. It is also significant that not a bone of Christ was broken, yet in John 19, when Jesus Christ dies, the others on the crosses beside Jesus Christ had their legs broken to hasten their death by crucifixion. Christ fulfills the great Passover type.

The Rock: In a further parallel of the Old Testament, as the Israelites were going up to Mount Sinai, and the rock was struck and water flowed out (Exodus 17), Paul comments in 1 Corinthians 10 that Jesus Christ was the rock that accompanied them in the desert; it was Jesus who was providing water because he is the water of life. Jesus himself makes this great claim in John 4 when he says to the woman at the well, “If anyone thirsts let him come and drink.” He is the one that provides that eternal well of water springing up unto eternal life.

The Tabernacle: When we consider again the tabernacle, we see a beautiful type of Jesus Christ from all the furniture of the tabernacle. We see the brazen altar in the court, picturing the final sacrifice that takes us into God’s presence. Within the holy place, we see the bread of the presence, which was representative of God’s presence with his people to sustain them, and signifying that Jesus Christ provides the eternal food for us in eternal salvation by our faith in his advent, death, and resurrection. We see the candelabra, and see the foreshadowing of Christ as the light of the world spoken of in John 8. On that last great day of the feast of tabernacles when the high priest was lighting the candelabra, Jesus Christ cried out and said, “I am the light of the world.” We see the altar of incense, representing the sweet smelling incense spoken of in Revelation, which are the prayers that rise up into the presence of God. Jesus Christ becomes our intercessor like the incense. We are told in Romans 8, “he ever lives to make intercession for us at the right hand of the Father.” We see the veil, the great curtain barring the way into the most holy place of the tabernacle. Jesus Christ, by his flesh, becomes the veil that opens the way into

the Father's presence according to Hebrews 10. The high priest would enter the most holy place only once a year, yet Christ entered heaven as our high priest once and for all.

Next, we see in the most holy place, the ark of the covenant, which contain the two tablets of the Law, which represent Jesus Christ as coming to fulfill the law seen in Matthew 5. Also inside the ark of the covenant are remnants of the "manna." The rabbis have taught that the manna had gone to heaven when the temple was destroyed and would return when Messiah came. It is significant that in John 6, Jesus Christ claims to be the manna come from heaven, and that "if you eat of me and receive me as Lord and Savior, I will give you the nourishment whereby you will never die." In the book of Revelation, the overcomer is promised to eat the hidden manna, which is Jesus Christ. Within the ark of the covenant is also kept Aaron's rod that budded – a depiction of Jesus Christ as the one who conquers death as the reigning, resurrected type of high priest, fulfilled in Hebrews 9. We see the lid of the ark of the covenant, which represents the blood of Christ. In the Septuagint, or the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, the lid is called the *hilasterion*. It is usually referred to as "the mercy seat," and it can mean the expiation for sins. In Romans 3:25, Paul says that God placed Jesus Christ as the *hilasterion* so that through faith in his blood, we might have salvation. Like the lid, Christ became our propitiation – the satisfaction for our sins; he also became our expiation – the removal of our sins. What happened on the day of atonement is now permanent through Jesus Christ and his sacrifice for us.

As we see in Exodus 40, God's presence appears among humankind in the tabernacle as the cloud overshadowed it, and it was called *kabod*, "the glory of God," and was said to *shakan*, or "dwell" over the tabernacle. The glory of God dwelt over the tabernacle. This picture is repeated in John 1:14, where the Word becomes flesh and "dwells" among us, meaning that God

came and pitched his tent among us. He dwells among us and we have gazed upon his glory – the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. So the book of Exodus concludes with the *shekinah*, the dwelling of the glory of God, which has its ultimate fulfillment in John 1:14 with the incarnation of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Flow of Thought—Exodus: The *theme* of the book of Exodus is the exodus of Israel from Egypt. The theme of the book of Exodus concerns the redemption of Israel and the book easily divides itself chronologically into three major sections. They are as follows:

- I. Israel in Egypt (1:1-12:30)
- II. Israel from Egypt to Sinai (12:31-18:27)
- III. Israel at Sinai (19:1-40:38)

In the first major section, the writer deals with Israel’s complete deliverance and redemption from their Egyptian oppressors. The first chapter introduces the reader to the history of Israel’s growth and oppression in Egypt (1:1-22). This connects the book directly with Genesis and shows how the nation had grown during their intervening years in Egypt.

After the chapter introduces the need for God’s deliverance, the book introduces the one who is chosen to deliver Israel (2:1-4:31).

His birth, his adoption by Pharaoh’s daughter, his flight, and his marriage are quickly given (2:1-16), and then the call of Moses is narrated (2:23-3:10). After describing his call by God through the burning bush the book immediately describes the various objections offered by Moses. His basic objections are answered (3:11-4:17) and Moses returns to Egypt to begin his confrontation with Pharaoh (4:18-31).

The contest with Pharaoh consisted of an announcement of judgment followed by increased hardening by Pharaoh (5:1-7:7), and then the execution of the judgment in the ten

plagues (7:8-12:30). These ten plagues were from Yahweh against the gods of the Egyptians. These plagues were: the plague of blood (7:14-25), of frogs (8:1-15), of lice (8:16-19), of flies (8:20-32), of murrain (cattle disease—9:1-7), of boils (9:8-12), of hail (9:13-35), of locusts (10:1-20), of darkness (10:21-29), and the death of the first born (11:1-12:30). The last plague resulted in the redemption of Israel's first born and the subsequent institution of the Passover feast.

The second major section of the book traces the actual exodus of the Israelites from Egypt to Mount Sinai (12:31-18:27). After giving commands to depart and to remember the Passover, Yahweh leads Israel out of Egypt by the cloud and fire (12:31-13:22). Following the guidance of Yahweh, Israel meets her first big test after the exodus. The place of this test of faith is the Red Sea and the record of God's miraculous deliverance of Israel from the Egyptians is recorded (14:1-31). This is then followed by a song of deliverance in which the children of Israel praise Yahweh for His power and for His sovereign defeat of the enemy (15:1-21).

As the journey is continued several problems arise, but all are met by Yahweh. The first problem is caused by bitter water. Yahweh, however, makes this water sweet for them at Marah (15:22-26), and gives them refreshment as well at Elim (15:27). The second problem of hunger is met when the Lord graciously provides manna and quail (16:1-36). At this time, the Sabbath is also instituted for them. The third problem they face is thirst again and water is provided again from a rock at Rephidim (17:1-7). The fourth problem is a conflict with the Amalekites who were sovereignly defeated by Yahweh as the arms of Moses were supported above his head (17:8-16). The final problem in this journey was noticed and solved by the advice of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, who saw the magnitude of Moses' work and advised him to appoint

Judges of the people to help him (18:1-27). This was done and as a result a great burden was lifted from Moses.

At this point, the author gives the legislation that Yahweh gave to Israel while at Mount Sinai. This begins the third and final section of the book (19:1-40:38). This large section neatly divides itself into three subsections as follows:

1. The will of God is revealed (19:1-31:18).
2. The will of God is repudiated (32:1-34:35).
3. The will of God is realized (35:1-40:38).

Under the first sub-section the book reveals the will of God in two particulars: in the Law (19:1-24:18), and in the Tabernacle (25:1-31). After preparing the people and manifesting Himself (19:1-25), the Lord revealed the Decalogue (Ten Commandments) to Israel (20:1-17), which contained duties both Godward (20:1-12) and manward (20:13-17). Following this the Lord presented the rest of the law with various commands and judgments concerning slavery (21:1-11) personal injuries (21:12-36), theft (22:1-6), deposits (22:7-15), right conduct (22:16-31), justice (23:1-9), various seasons (23:10-19), and concerning the future conquest of the land (23:20-33). The revelation of the law concludes with its ratification to Israel (24:1-18).

The second major area of revelation concerns the tabernacle (25:1-31:17). The book begins this revelation by giving the overall layout of the tabernacle (25:1-27:21). This included a list of all that would go into making the tabernacle including such important items as the ark (25:10-22), the table of showbread (25:23-30), the golden candlestick (25:31-40), the brazen altar (27:1-8), etc. Following its layout, revelation is then given concerning the priests who would carry on the worship in the tabernacle (28:1-29:46). Their clothing is described (28:1-43), and their consecration (29:1-46) including their washing (29:1-4), their anointing (29:5-9), their

offerings (29:10-25), their food (29:36-37), and their daily sacrifices (29:8-46). Chapters thirty and thirty-one conclude this section by giving some supplementary instructions regarding the tabernacle and by setting forth the sanctity of the Sabbath Day (30-31).

The second major sub-section concerns the transgression of the golden calf and its attending results as the will of God is repudiated (32:1-34:35). While Moses delayed to come down from Mount Sinai the people made a golden calf under the permission of Aaron. When Moses returned in anger he broke the tables of the law, rebuked Aaron, and disciplined the people. Afterwards Moses interceded for the people and his prayer was answered with a promise of the manifestation of Yahweh (33:18-23). This section is closed with a rewriting of the tables of the law and a renewal of the covenant promise, the feasts, and with the manifestation of Yahweh (34:1-35).

In the final sub-section, the will of God is realized in the assembling and erecting of the tabernacle (35:1-40:38). The tabernacle is first assembled (35:1-39:32) and then it is erected (39:33-40:26). In the assembling of the tabernacle, the book traces the various parts that went into the final construction of the tabernacle as they were assembled together. Following this somewhat detailed description, the tabernacle is erected by Moses, and then the presence and glory of Yahweh is pictured filling the tabernacle as the book concludes (40:34-38). Since God's will had been faithfully carried out, God demonstrates His approval by dwelling in the completed tabernacle.

Leviticus

Sacrificial system: As we come to the great book of Leviticus, we have many allusions, typologically, pointing to Jesus Christ. We have the sacrificial system described in the first seven chapters. In the first three chapters, we have the offerings that are sweet smelling, offered to the Lord. We have the *olah*, the ascent offering, representing Jesus Christ as he died and all that he did which was brought up to the Father. We have the meal offering, viewing the perfect humanity of Jesus Christ being offered as a gift to the Father. We have the peace offering, which represents the worshipper before God. In Ephesians 2, Paul writes, “Christ came and preached peace to the Jew and peace to the Gentile and made the two one.” Romans 5 says, “Having been justified now we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is to these three sweet smelling offerings that Paul refers in Ephesians 5 when he says we are to walk in love just as Christ loved us and delivered himself on behalf of us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. As we carry our love to others, we fulfill what Christ accomplished for us in his sacrifice.

In the fourth and fifth offerings, the sin offering and the trespass offering, Jesus Christ fulfills both of those, typologically. In the sin offering, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 5, “he who knew no sin became the sin offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Jesus is also the trespass offering. We are told that we are dead in our trespasses and sins, but now because of Jesus Christ in Ephesians 2, those trespasses have been removed by his sacrifice so that now, by his grace, we have been acquitted and are now raised and seated with Christ.

The Day of Atonement—the two goats: Continuing to look at the book of Leviticus, our mind goes to the great Day of Atonement, *Yom Kippur*. On that day, the high priest, after offering a bullock for himself, took two goats and cast lots for them; one would be killed and its

blood would be taken and sprinkled on the *hilasterion*, or mercy seat, in the most holy place. The high priest would come back out of the most holy place and lay his hands on the second goat, the live goat, and it would be led alive to a *gezerah* place—a “cut off” place—bearing the sins of the people away. We are told in Hebrews 10, that Jesus became our great high priest, the final high priest, and that in his flesh, he himself entered the holy of holies, or the most holy place. Like the first goat, Jesus took his blood and sacrificed for us, taking away the sins not for a year, but permanently. The writer of Hebrews says, “the blood of bulls and goats could never take away the sins, but he by one sacrifice forever sat down on the right hand of God in heaven having taken care of our sins forever (Hebrews 10). The second, live goat also became a type of depiction of Christ. In Isaiah 53, which I understand to be a great picture of the atonement of Christ, we read, “who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken” (Isaiah 53:8). The Hebrew verb *nigzar* meaning “he was cut off” comes from the same root *gazar* “cut off” which is used in Leviticus 16 when referring to the second goat that was “cut off” when it went to the *gezerah* land or the “cut off” place—led out into the wilderness separated from the people; Jesus Christ was “cut off” by his sacrifice and went to an eternal cut off land on our behalf. He suffered an eternal death on the cross in our place so that we would not have to bear our sins.

The yearly festivals: Furthermore, as we think of the great book of Leviticus, the *moadim*, or the festivals of Leviticus 23, are so beautifully fulfilled, typologically, in Jesus Christ. There is the Passover, which we have already learned about in the book of Exodus, in which Jesus Christ is our Passover. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 5, the Lamb of God takes away our sin. There is the feast of the unleavened bread in which Jesus Christ, now that we are in him, calls us to lead holy lives, rooting out the leaven of sin from our lives and seeking to follow him

in holiness. There is the feast of first fruits, where, on the day after the Sabbath, the priest of the people would wave the first fruits before God. This festival depicts the resurrection of Jesus Christ who rose from the dead on the day after Sabbath. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15 that Christ is the “first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:20), and that when Jesus comes again, those who have fallen asleep will also rise like him.

The great feast of Pentecost (meaning “fiftieth day”) looks forward to the giving of the Law in Jewish history, as well as being a celebration of the springtime harvest. Two loaves of bread were baked together into one. In Acts 2, at Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection, we see the fulfillment in that Jew and Gentile are brought together in a beautiful depiction of the spiritual harvest and in the pouring out of the Spirit upon all people. Next, the feast of trumpets could be said to find its ultimate fulfillment in that, after a lengthy wait throughout history, there will be a final blowing of trumpets on the day Jesus Christ returns. Following this, the festival of the great Day of Atonement takes us back to what we have learned in Leviticus 16. Jesus Christ, by his death, provided a final and complete atonement, and the future of God’s people, Israel, will enter into it according to Romans 11; someday, “all Israel will be saved” (Romans 11:26).

The final feast, the Feast of Tabernacles again has its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Those who celebrated this feast lived in temporary dwellings (tents) to remember Israel’s looking forward to their permanent dwelling in the land of Canaan while they wandered in the desert wilderness. Today, we look forward to that permanent dwelling in that eternal Canaan with Jesus Christ where we will live with him through the ceaseless ages of eternity. The mount of transfiguration in Matthew 17 alludes to this when Peter says, “let us make three tabernacles, one for you Lord, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. At that point, the voice from heaven said: “This is my beloved Son, hear him.” Jesus Christ is the means that allows us to celebrate the

final feast of tabernacles that he has come to provide for us by fulfilling the law and the prophets, and leading us to that eternal Canaan of heaven by his death, resurrection, and glorification.

The final reference to Jesus Christ in Leviticus is Leviticus 25, the Year of Jubilee. In this year of freedom, slaves were set free and debts were paid or dismissed. In Luke 4, Jesus has come to liberate people from the captivity to sin, to set free those who are in bondage to sin, and to lead them to an eternal freedom, which only Christ gives by his final and divine sacrifice.

Flow of Thought—Leviticus: The *theme* of the book of Leviticus is holiness. The book of Leviticus can be divided into two major sections: Laws concerning approach to God or salvation (1-16), and Laws concerning a walk with God or sanctification (18-27). The entire book deals with “holiness” as a Holy God seeks to communicate to a people who He seeks to make into a holy people. To be acceptable before a holy God they must first of all gain a proper approach to Him, and then having received this, they must continue walking and living a holy life.

In the first major section of the book, the author begins with the five offerings and their regulations. These typify the sacrifice of Christ on the cross (1:1-6:7). The burnt offering (1:1-17) typifies Christ offering Himself without blemish to God for sinners. The meal offering is next discussed (2:1-11) speaking of the life of Christ in His perfect character. The peace offering (3:1-17) follows which speaks of Christ as our peace and also as the One who creates peace between Jew and Gentiles. The sin offering (4:1-35) is taken up next and this typifies Christ on the cross in the sinner’s stead dying for his sins. The last of the offerings discussed is the trespass offering (5:14-6:7) which depicts Christ as the One who has taken care of the sinner’s trespasses against God’s law and against others.

Following the five offerings, the book contains specific laws to regulate each one (6:8-7:38), and then immediately moves into a discussion of the priesthood (8:1-10:20). First, the consecration of the priests are discussed (8:1-36), including their washing, anointing, and their offerings. Second, their inauguration to office is described (9:1-24) including various offerings that attend this event and the ceremony involved. The book then moves immediately into a transgression among the priesthood namely the strange fire of Nadab and Abihu. These are punished by God and this becomes a lasting judgment on all who try to approach God in an improper manner. The final discussion concerning the priests in chapter ten deal with their separation and their food and sustenance (10:8-20).

After describing the offerings and the priesthood as necessary in approaching God, the author next discusses the observance of certain purification laws which are also necessary in this approach (11:1-15:33). He discusses laws concerning foods that are clean and unclean (11:1-47), laws concerning motherhood (12:1-8) dealing with the period of motherhood (12:1-5), and offerings for purification (12:6-8), laws regulating leprosy (13:1-14:57) in which he includes leprosy of persons (13:1-46), of garments (13:47-59), and of houses (14:33-53), and he concludes his discussion by giving laws to govern personal uncleanness (15:1-33) for both men (15:1-8) and women (15:18-33).

The first major section of approach closes with a treatment of the Day of Atonement which must be observed annually as the Israelites would approach Yahweh (16:1-3). Chapter sixteen discusses this by setting forth the basis whereby expiation of sins was made (16:1-28), and the cleansing of the priests (16:23-28) that followed. The chapter concludes by making this an annual ordinance of approach to God for the nation (16:29-34).

Beginning with chapter seventeen, the second major section of the book is developed which entails various laws regarding a walk with God on the part of the Israelites. This is their sanctification (17:1-27:34). This major section may be subdivided as follows:

1. Laws regarding moral matters (17:1-18:30).
2. Laws regarding social matters (19:1-37).
3. Laws regarding spiritual matters (20:1-27).
4. Laws regarding the priesthood (21:1-22:33).
5. Laws regarding the feasts (23:1-44).
6. Laws regarding additional duties and miscellaneous sins (24:1-23).
7. Laws regarding the land (25:1-55).
8. Laws regarding vows and tithes (27:1-34).

The section begins then with laws that concern moral matters (17:1-18:30). Laws relating to blood and its sanctity (17:10-16), to unlawful marriages (18:1-18), and to unlawful lust (18:19-30) are discussed. Next, laws regulating social matters are considered (19:1-37) including such things as parents (19:3a), the Sabbath (19:3b), the poor (19:9-10), theft (19:11a), deceit (19:11b), etc. Following this, the book goes to spiritual matters (20:1-27) and gives laws regarding such matters as idolatry (20:1-5), spiritism (20:6), obedience to God's statutes (20:7-8), etc.

The fourth sub area of discussion concerns the priesthood (21:1-22:33), especially as it relates to their practices (21:1-16) and sacrifices (22:17-33). In chapter twenty-three, the seven feasts are given and laws regarding their observance. In the next chapter, various additional duties and miscellaneous sins are considered (24:1-23), and from there the author discusses various laws regarding the land (25:1-26:46). In chapter twenty-five, the Sabbatic year (25:1-2)

and the year of Jubilee are both discussed (25:8-55), and in chapter twenty-six the conditions of blessing in the land are given (26:3-13) over against the chastisements for disobedience (26:14-39). The chapter also pictures the future restoration of Israel after confession (26:40-46). Finally, the book is concluded by giving laws regarding vows (27:1-25), devoted things. (27:26-29), and tithes (27:30-34).

Numbers

In the book of Numbers, or in Hebrew, *bamidbar*, “in the desert,” we see the failure of the children of Israel to enter into the land of promise because of their disobedience to Yahweh at Kadesh-Barnea. That event becomes a picture in Hebrews 4 of a warning that believers are to press on to enter into the rest of the Lord. It is a warning against the apostasy of non-believers that would fail to press on; there is that encouragement to keep on keeping on in Jesus Christ.

The bronze serpent: In Numbers 21, we have a great Christological moment when the people of Israel are bitten by serpents. They set up a bronze or brass serpent, and when the people looked upon that serpent, they would be healed. In John 3, Jesus Christ alludes to this very text in Numbers when he says, “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so the Son of Man will be lifted up.” Those who look to Christ are rescued from the venomous poison of sin and are brought in to eternal life through faith in him. Jesus goes on to say, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Star of David: There is another reference to our Lord Jesus Christ in Numbers 24. We see in that great prophecy of Balaam of a star rising. I believe it has not only its fulfillment in David, but ultimately its fulfillment is in Jesus Christ who is that final one, that final light or star

of God as the final Messiah. In Matthew's Gospel, the wise men following the star that was the glory of God that came and dwelt over the place where Jesus was born. Therefore, Jesus Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of that great star as he comes through the Davidic line and becomes the final David, the Messiah, who is to be worshipped as the final sovereign king.

Flow of Thought—Numbers: The *theme* of the book of Numbers is wilderness wanderings. The book of Numbers can be divided into four major sections. The *first section* deals with the preparation of Israel for the wilderness journey (1:1-10:10). This begins with the numbering of the children of Israel, as well as the arrangement of the camp for marching including the arrangement and ministration of the Levites (1:1-4:49). From here the book deals with purity in the camp (5:1-6:27) giving regulation concerning the evil practices that might arise in the camp (5:1-31), as well as information concerning the Nazarite vow (6:1-27). Under the discussion of the Nazarite vow, the author treats the vow itself (6:1-8), the penalty for defilement of the Nazarite (6:9-12), the law of the Nazarite (6:15-21), and finally the Aaronic blessing (6:22-27).

Moses then gives the worship of the camp (7:1-9:14) discussing the offerings of the princes (7:1-89), the lighting of the lamps (8:1-4), the consecration of the Levites (8:5-22), the celebration of the Passover (9:1-14), and the manifestation of the cloud and the fire (9:15-23) as God's provision for guidance in the wilderness journey. The section is concluded by a discussion concerning the silver trumpets (10:1-10).

The *second major section* of the book deals with the journey of Israel from Sinai to the wilderness of Paran (10:11-14:45). Within this section the procession to Kadesh-Barnea is given which includes the departure from Sinai (10:11-36), the murmuring at Taberah (11:1-3) and the lusting at Kibroth-Hattaavah (11:4-35), and the murmuring of Miriam and Aaron against Moses

(12:1-16) and the vindication of Yahweh because of it. Following this, the book in chapters thirteen and fourteen consider the sin of rebellion at Kadesh-Barnea (13:1-14:45). Here the author narrates the mission of the spies (13:1-25), their report (13:26-33), and the response of unbelief by the people (14:1-45). Because of this disbelief and rebellion, God judges them by not permitting that generation to enter Canaan.

The *third major section* follows, and it treats the wanderings in the wilderness following Kadesh-Barnea (15:1-20:29). After giving legislation for Canaan (15:1-41), the section narrates the rebellion of Korah (16:1-50) and God's demonstration of Aaron as His high priest by the divine sign of the rod that blossomed (17:1-13). After demonstrating this, the book deals with basic regulations for the priesthood (18:1-32), gives the basic regulations for the ordinance of the red heifer, an offering of cleansing for the people (19:1-22), and concludes by giving a summary of incidents up to Mount Horeb (20:1-21). In chapter twenty, the book deals with the death of Miriam (20:1), the sin of Moses in striking the rock twice (20:2-13), the sin of Edom in not permitting the Israelites the privilege of passing through their land (20:14-22), and finally, speaks of the death of Aaron at Mount Horeb (20:23-29).

The fourth and final section of the book covers the journey of Israel from Mount Horeb to Transjordan (land east of the Jordan river—21:1-36:13). This section can be easily subdivided into two minor sections. The first minor section treats the journey of Israel from Mount Horeb to the steppes of Moab (21:1-35) discussing the victory of Israel over Arad the Canaanite (21:1-4), the murmuring sin of the people and the brazen serpent (21:5-9), their march to Pisgah (21:10-20), and their victories over the two kings Sihon and Og (21:21-35).

The second sub-division is at the plains of Moab (22:1-36:13) and their experiences here conclude the narrative of the book of Numbers. First, one reads of the incident of Balaam (22:1-

25:18) in which the story of Balaam is recounted. Here one sees how God preserved Israel from being cursed (22:1-24:25) as well as from the corrupting influence that Baal worship would have had on the Israelites (25:1-18). From here a new census of Israel is taken (26:1-65). the law of inheritance, is discussed (27:1-11), a new leader is appointed for Moses (27:12-23), and various regulations are given concerning offerings and vows (28:1-30:16).

The author next announces the judgment to be administered against the Midianites (31:1-54), narrates the settlement of land given to Reuben, Gad and Manasseh (32:1-42), and then retraces the journeys of Israel from Egypt to their present location at Moab (33:1-49).

Following this, the book concludes by discussing various plans for settlement in Canaan (33:50-35:3). Plans concerning the expulsion of the Canaanites (33:50-56), the division of the land (34:1-29), the possession of the Levites (35:1-8), and the protection of the manslayer (35:9-34) are discussed, and the book is concluded by giving the regulations for the inheritance of women who might marry from another tribe (36:1-13).

The book covers around thirty-nine years of wilderness experience. It begins with the numbering of the people at Mount Sinai and concludes with them on the plains of Moab ready to enter Canaan.

Deuteronomy

The book of Deuteronomy, the final book of the Torah, is a beautiful book that can be summarized as a treaty that Yahweh makes with the people of Israel. In the first four chapters, it is like a suzerain king saying to his vassal people, “Here is what I have done for you and here is where I have brought you.” From chapter 5 to 11 is what might be called the body of the treaty, spelling out what God wants Israel to do in their relationship with him. It is a vertical calling:

“You will have no other gods before me,” says Yahweh. “You have to set me apart; you have to give all your allegiance to me.” From chapter 12 to 26 are conditions of how the people are to treat each other and how they are to act in relationship to the land. Then, there is a section of blessings and curses in chapters 27-30: “If you do what I say, here are the blessings you will receive; if you do not do what I say, here are the curses you will endure. In chapters 31-34, Yahweh calls the heaven and earth to bear witness as the treaty is being made. This covenant very closely parallels the Hittite treaties of that time, wherein a suzerain king (an overlord controlling a dependent nation) makes a covenant with a vassal people (a nation dependent upon another nation and its ruler).

This great book of Deuteronomy has several Christological allusions. The first is in the great *Shema* of chapter 6 with the words, “Hear O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is One.” It is significant that the word *‘ahad*, “one” in Hebrew, is the same adjective used in Genesis 2 of male and female becoming one flesh, *bašar ‘ahad*. Two can be one in Genesis 2 and I believe we see that three can be one in this great prayer to the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—by the use of *‘ahad*, “one.” The text of Deuteronomy goes on to say, “Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” This is the same text found in Matthew 22 when Christ was asked which was the greatest of the 613 law codes of Judaism. Jesus responded that the first and greatest commandment is, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” Jesus Christ wants us to love the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with everything we have, with all our being. The second greatest commandment is like the first, Jesus teaches us, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” quoting from the book of Leviticus. Jesus brought these two texts together and said, “All the Law and the

Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:40). Hence, Christ teaches that these two commandments summarize the whole Torah.

Deuteronomy 18 speaks of a prophet who was to come. He was to be one like Moses, and while some apply this prophecy to Joshua, I believe in the ultimate fulfillment this prophecy refers to Jesus Christ. In John 1, John the Baptist was asked, “Are you the prophet?” John the Baptist assured them he was not the prophet, but said, “I am just the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord.’” The prophecy then points to the one John the Baptist is announcing—Jesus Christ. Jesus is the final prophet that Moses predicted was to come (Deuteronomy 18).

In Romans 10, Paul quotes Deuteronomy 30:11-14, which reports Moses giving the Torah to those of the second generation of Israel who are ready to go into the promised land. Paul says, “But the righteousness that is by faith says: ‘Do not say in your heart, “Who will ascend into heaven?”’ (that is, to bring Christ down) or “Who will descend into the deep?”’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead) But what does it say? ‘The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart. . . .’” (Romans 10:5-8). The Word of God has been given to you; it is in your mind for Jesus Christ has been given to you, and it is in your mouth so you may utter it—it is on the tip of your tongue. Paul then takes this great text and applies it, by way of what we call *Midrash*—the commentary on the Hebrew Scriptures—and led by the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to the final fulfillment of the Law which is Jesus Christ.

In Jewish exegesis, as has been seen, there were four basic principles that were applied in exegeting or understanding a text. There was what was called *Peshat*, which means “blow” and is the literal interpretation of a text. There was *Remes*, which means a “hint.” There was *Darash*, which means “commentary” on a text, and finally there was *Sōd*, which means “mystery” or the

deeper meaning in the text. An easy way to remember these four principles of exegesis is to combine the first letters with vowels, and you get the simple mnemonic, “PaRaDiSe.” The rabbis said that if you put these four principles together, you end with paradise as you read the Biblical text—which becomes like a beautiful garden of meaning. I believe Paul employs the methodology of *Darash*, by divine inspiration, in Romans 10. Since Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the law, Paul says, “we don’t have to go to heaven,” that is, in order to bring Christ down as Messiah, he has already come. “We don’t have to go to the underworld to bring Christ up from the grave,” that is, in order to bring Christ up, but you must believe with the heart and confess with the mouth that God raised Him from the dead. Here is a commentary on heart and mouth: you must believe in your heart that God has raised Jesus from the dead, and you must confess from your mouth that Jesus is Lord, then you will be saved. For with the mouth confession is made to salvation, and with the heart, one believes resulting in righteousness. We see Paul taking *Darash* from Deuteronomy 30 and applying it to Jesus Christ as the ultimate fulfillment of Deuteronomy 30. Jesus Christ is the final *Torah* come down from heaven that has conquered death, and if one believes that God raised Him from the dead and confesses Him as Lord, one can be saved and have eternal life.

Flow of Thought—Deuteronomy: The *theme* of the book of Deuteronomy is “the restatement of the Law.” The book of Deuteronomy is not only a review of the law, but it gives added revelation following the forty years’ experience in the wilderness. The book may be divided into five basic sections comprising four principle orations of Moses, and then a closing section treating the closing words and events in the life of Moses.

The first oration of Moses (1:1-4:43) entails a historical review and exhortation. The historical review covers the nation in the wilderness journeying and this is reviewed in three

basic sections according to geography. The writer traces Israel's experience from Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea (1:6-46), discussing such things as the appointment of administrators to help Moses, and the failure of Israel at Kadesh-Barnea. Secondly, the book traces Israel's history from Kadesh-Barnea to Heshbon (2:1-37) discussing the thirty-eight years of wandering, the instructions concerning Ammon, the command to possess the land, and the defeat of Sihon. Thirdly, the author concludes the journeys by tracing Israel's experience from Heshbon to Beth-Peor (3:1-29) in which he discusses the defeat of Og, the possession of Transjordan, and the replacement of Moses. Following a discussion of these journeys, there is an exhortation to obedience (4:1-40), and the book closes with a transitional statement regarding the cities of refuge (4:41-43).

The second oration of Moses comprises the longest section of the book (4:44-26:19). This section may be subdivided into two. First, Moses treats the exposition of the Sinaitic law (5:1-11:32), and then he culminates the section by an exposition of special laws (12:1-26:19).

In the first sub-section dealing with the exposition of Sinaitic law, the author gives a recitation of the Decalogue (Ten Commandments—5:1-33) and then turns to an exhortation from it (6:1-11:32). In giving his exhortation he deals with exhortations on the meaning of the law (6:1-2), on the first commandment (6:3-25), on idolatry (7:1-26), on forgetting God (8:1-20), and on disobedience (9:1-11:32) by giving the sad results of disobedience (9:1-10:11) and the happy results of obedience (10:12-11:32).

In the second sub-section the author gives considerable time in dealing with the exposition of special laws (12:1-26:19) in which he specializes on three particular aspects of legislation. The first aspect of legislation considered is religious legislation (12:1-16:17) in which the writer discusses the place of worship (12:1-28), the rejection of false worship (12:29-

13:18), the exhortation to consecrated worship (14:1-29), an exhortation to beneficent worship (15:1-23), an exhortation concerning festal worship (16:1-17), and finally the religious legislation is concluded with a discussion concerning festal gifts (16:16-17).

The next area of legislation to be considered is that concerning civil legislation (16:18-21:23). Here the book treats legislation concerning the authority of the Judge, priest, and king (16:18-17:20), various rights (18:1-8), false spiritism (18:9-14), criminal law (19:1-21), and holy war (20:1-20). The area of legislation is concluded by a consideration of miscellaneous civil laws (21:1-23) including such areas as unsolved murder, rights of inheritance, judgment of a disobedient son, etc.

The final area of legislation under the exposition of special laws concerns social legislation (22:1-26:19). Here the writer deals with property (22:1-4), various distinctions (22:5-12), personal and family morality (22:13-24:5), economic and social justice (24:6-25:19), and a discussion concerning offerings and stewardship (26:1-19).

The third oration of Moses (27:1-28:68) concerns one of warning. In this section the book contains the instructions for the land (27:1-26), and the results of obedience and disobedience in the land (28:1-68). A command is given to exhibit the law (27:1-8) along with a command to bless and curse (27:9-26). Following this, the blessings of obedience are given (28:1-14) followed by the curses for disobedience (28:15-48). The curses for disobedience may be summarized in three ways: vexation (28:15-48), invasion of the land (28:49-62), and dispersion from the land (28:63-68).

After this, the fourth oration of Moses is treated (29:1-31:13) and this is an address concerning the Palestinian covenant. Moses first of all gives an introduction to the Palestinian covenant (29:1-29) by a review of the past (29:1-8). This is followed with a repetition of blessing

for obedience (29:9-15), and cursing for disobedience (29:16-29). The terms of the covenant are then given (30:1-10) which confirm and enlarge the original Abrahamic covenant with particular reference to the land aspect. The section is then concluded by a final challenge to obedience to keep the commandments of Yahweh (30:11-20).

The final section of the book treats the closing words and events of Moses (31:1-34:12). Here one finds his final charges to the people (31:1-6), to Joshua (31:7-8), and to the priests (31:9-13). Following this is his song (31:14-32:47) which gives a wonderful treatise of Israel's history. In it he discusses Israel's election (32:6-14), her rebellion (32:15-18), her rejection and vexation (32:19-35) and her restoration (32:36-43). Next, after giving the announcement of Moses' death (32:48-52), the blessing of Moses on the twelve tribes individually is given (33:1-29), and the book is concluded by viewing the end of the life of Moses (34:1-12). Moses is given the opportunity to see Canaan (34:1-4). He then dies and is buried by Yahweh (34:5-8). His successor is briefly extolled (34:9), and then the name of Moses is eulogized as the greatest prophet in Israel (34:10-12).

***Nevi'im* – The Prophets**

Having finished the study of the *Torah*, the first five books of the Bible or the Law, we now come to the next division of the Hebrew Scriptures called the *Nevi'im*, or The Prophets. We have what are known as the “Former Prophets” and the “Latter Prophets.” The Former Prophets are Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings. The Latter Prophets are the major prophets of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel (called “major” because of their length) and the twelve minor prophets, again named “minor” because of their more diminutive literary word count. The Twelve consist of Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. In the English Bible, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings are historical books, rather than prophetic books. In the Greek Septuagint, these historical books were followed by poetry, and then by the prophets. As we speak of these books, we will do so in the original order of the Hebrew Scriptures, and include them, as they are in the Hebrew Scriptures, as part of the *Nevi'im*, or The Prophets. It should be noted that the book of Daniel, included in the English Bible as a minor prophet, is listed later in the Hebrew Scriptures as part of “The Writings.”

The Former Prophets

Joshua

Beginning with the former prophets, we start with Joshua, or “*Yehoshua*” meaning, “*Yahweh* will save.” The Book of Joshua completes the story started in the Torah. In the book of Joshua, the promise that *Yahweh* had spoken to Abraham when he promised that he would be a stranger in a foreign land (in Genesis 15) for 400 years and that Abraham would be brought into the land of promise, is fulfilled. In the book of Joshua, we see God’s covenant now fully realized. We can outline the book as follows: first, we see the entrance into the land of Canaan in Joshua chapters 1 through 5:12; second, we see the conquest of the land in Joshua 5:13 through chapter 12; then finally, we see the division of the land in Joshua chapters 13 through 22. The book of Joshua concludes with two farewell addresses by Joshua in chapters 23 and 24. It is much like the book of Deuteronomy, which concludes with farewell addresses by Moses.

As we look at the book of Joshua, we ask the question: “what is the intent of the writer or writers of this book?” There are various opinions among scholars today about the composition of this book. Some would feel that Deuteronomy through Kings was written by one author. This was popularized by Martin Noth, a German scholar, who believed that these books were written to the generations after the Babylonian captivity, to encourage faithfulness to *Yahweh*, and to encourage them not to defile themselves with the inhabitants of the land. This early history was a way of promoting faithfulness in the people returning to the land of promise after years of exile. There are other scholars from the conservative or traditional background that would feel Joshua is distinct from Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy having been written earlier. From Joshua on, they would argue, we are not only recording early history, but like the viewpoint of Noth, we are also looking at a warning to a latter generation and the call to faithfulness to *Yahweh*.

However, we view the composition of this section, whether we understand Joshua through Kings as one literary corpus, or whether we see Joshua as distinct, we can see that the book of Joshua has its own religious message. It shows Yahweh's faithfulness. As He was with Moses, so He was with Joshua. He called Joshua, Joshua went across the river as Moses, and the Israelites had been called and crossed through the Red Sea. As Joshua and the Israelites go into the land, we see God appearing and the deliverance of the land in a supernatural way into the hands of Israel. In Joshua, we have a constant stress on "contamination." As we look at the *Achan* narrative (Joshua 7), we see that *Achan* disobeys *Yahweh* and the writer wants us to catch that point. When *Achan* took something that was to be completely devoted to *Yahweh*, we learn that *Achan* was put to death along with his family. It was as if radiation had contaminated *Achan* and his entire household. The *Achan* account, I believe, is placed here in the description of the way in which the land was to be conquered, in order that a latter generation could more fully understand the vital need of faithfulness to *Yahweh* and non-contamination with the Canaanite ways. It is interesting that the last two messages of Joshua stress this fact; Israel is to be faithful. "You decide, Israel," says Joshua, "but for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). It is because God has given Israel the land that Israel must be faithful to *Yahweh* and must not assimilate themselves with the inhabitants of the land, or their practices. This is the religious message that the author wanted to communicate to his audience, concluding with his final challenge from Joshua.

Flow of Thought—Joshua: The *theme* of the book of Joshua is the conquest and the division of Canaan. The book of Joshua deals with the possession of the land of Canaan and it is easily divided into four basic sections as follows: the entrance into the land (1:1-5:12), the

conquest of the land (5:13-12:24), the division of the land (13:1-22:34), and the farewell addresses and death of Joshua (23:1-24:33).

In the first section dealing with the entrance into the land (1:1-5:12), the author begins with the preparation of Israel for entrance (1:1-2:24). Here the book treats the commission and command of Joshua (1:1-18). He is commissioned by Yahweh as the leader of Israel (1:1-9) and he then assumes command and gives directions to the officers and the three-and-one-half tribes (1:10-18). The book then discusses the commission and report of the spies (2:1-24) as they spy upon Jericho (2:2-22) and then report their findings to Joshua (2:23-24). In Jericho they are hidden from their enemies by Rahab (2:2-16), who in turn is given a promise of deliverance when the Israelites would overtake Jericho (2:17-22).

In chapters three and four, the writer narrates the passage of Israel across the Jordan into Canaan (3:1-4:24). The crossing of the people is first recorded (3:1-17), then the crossing is commemorated by a memorial on land and one in the Jordan (4:1-9), and finally the crossing is consummated by the priests after erecting the memorial in the Jordan (4:10-18). Following this the people are consecrated and prepared for the conquest of the land (4:19-5:12). Four basic things are included in this. Joshua has a consultation with the people at Gilgal (4:19-24), the enemies of Israel are made afraid (5:1), the new generation of Israel is circumcised (5:2-12), the manna previously eaten ceases as the old grain of the land is eaten in its place (5:11-12).

The second major section concerns the conquest of the land (5:13-12:24) in which Israel is pictured conquering the land of Canaan for her promised inheritance. After the preparation for the conquest by Joshua's encounter with the captain of the Lord's host (5:13-15), the section is subdivided by three main campaigns: the central (6:1-8:35), the southern (9:1-10:43) and the northern (11:1-15).

The campaign of central Canaan is first (6:1-8:35) and here the familiar victories' of Jericho and Ai are recorded. The campaign of Jericho (6:1-27) describes the instructions about Jericho (6:1-7), the inarch around it (6:1-7), its fall (6:15-21), the salvation of Rahab from Jericho (6:22-25), and the curse of Joshua pronounced on the future builder of Jericho (6:22-25). Following this successful campaign, the campaign of Ai is first met with defeat due to the sin of Achan (7:1-26). The sin is discovered and Achan and his family stoned. After this purification, the Israelites finally realize victory over Ai by the strategy of an ambush (8:1-29), and the central campaign is concluded by a reading of the law with its blessings and curses (8:30-35).

The second campaign is the southern campaign (9:1-10:43). The background for this campaign is given in the compromise of Israel with the Gibeonites (9:1-27). When a confederation by Adoni-Zedek came against Gibeon, the Gibeonites called upon Israel's help (10:1-43). Israel answers to the call of help (10:1-7) and defeats the coalition with the help of hailstones and the miraculous miracle where the sun stands still (10:8-14). The five kings of the coalition flee, are captured and executed by the command of Joshua (10:15-28). The remainder of southern Palestine is quickly conquered (10:29-43).

The third campaign is in northern Canaan (11:1-15.). Upon hearing of the defeats in the southern campaign, Jabin, king of Hazor, formed a confederation against Israel (11:1-5). Joshua quickly moves his men up against this coalition and sees victory at Merom (11:6-14). The section is then concluded by a commendation of Joshua for his exact obedience to Yahweh, and with a summary of the land and the kings conquered in the overall conquest of Canaan (11:16-12:24).

The third major section is then begun in which the division of the land is considered (13:1-22:34). After instructions are given to Joshua concerning division (13:1-7) the inheritance

of the eastern tribes are given (13:8-33) in which the territory of Reuben (13:15-23), of Gad (13:24-28), and of eastern Manasseh (13:29-31) is spelled out followed by an overall summary.

Following this, the book gives the inheritance of the western tribes (14:1-19:51). After establishing that the territory is to be divided by lot (14:1-5), the territory of Caleb is discussed (14:6-15). Caleb's request is stated (14:6-12), and it is answered because of his past faithfulness (14:13-15). Then the territory is divided to the various tribes of Judah (15:1-63), Ephraim (16:1-17:18), Manasseh (17:1-18), Benjamin (18:11-28), Simeon (19:1-9), Zebulun (19:10-16), Issachar (19:17-23), Asher (19:24-31), Naphtali (19:32-39), and Dan (19:40-48). The territorial divisioning is then culminated as Joshua himself is given an inheritance (19:49-51).

In chapter twenty, the purpose of the cities of refuge is reiterated (20:1-6), and their locations are given both west and east of the Jordan (20:7-9). The inheritance of the Levites is then given (21:1-42) in which various cities are divided among the Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites. This is followed by a testimony to the faithfulness of Yahweh (21:43-45). This third major section closes with a narration concerning the construction of a misunderstood altar that nearly caused civil war between the tribes (22:1-34). The building of this altar by the tribes of the east caused a grave misunderstanding which was finally settled when it was explained that the altar had nothing to do with sacrifice, but was merely a memorial or witness to testify that the tribes east of Jordan were still God's people and an equal part of Israel's twelve tribes. This explanation was accepted by the western tribes and civil war was escaped.

The final section of the book of Joshua treats his farewell addresses and his death (23:1-24:33). This section may be subdivided into three parts: his first address (23:1-16), his second address (24:1-28), and his death and burial along with that of Eleazar (24:29-33).

In the first address, Joshua appeals to the children of Israel to live separated lives from the pagan deities around them (23:1-11) and then outlines the effects of disobedience (23:12-16). In the second basic address (24:1-28), after reviewing Israel's past blessings (24:1-13), Joshua appeals to Israel for dedication (24:14-24), and reminds them of the promise they have made (24:25-28). The book closes with a narration of the death and burial of Joshua (24:29-31), a burial of his bones (24:32), and with the death and burial of Eleazar, the priest (24:33).

Judges

The next book is Judges, which describes the period after Israel is in the land after the initial conquest of Canaan, a period of tremendous disorder and disruption. In Judges 17, the author of the book tells us that every man was doing that which was right in its own eyes. As we look at this book, we learn that it was a period of time in which there were individual tribes that functioned almost like private city-states, who, on particular occasions, would come together in a central place of worship. If there was a problem with oppression from an aggressor, the various tribes who were close to the tribe in trouble would work together to help that tribe. It was a rather loose confederation, before the monarchy or the kingdom period, when each tribal unit was independent of the other tribes. As we try to find the purpose of the book of Judges, it seems that we are brought to the issue of apostasy from Yahweh and what happens that when apostasy occurs. The book teaches the reality that apostasy from Yahweh leads to chastisement through oppression and servitude. This pattern is repeated repeatedly through Judges.

Judges begins with a prologue which we find is in Judges 1:1 to 3 4. Here we learn about the political and religious background of that period. Judges 2:10ff describes quite well that after a whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up who knew

neither the Lord nor what He had done for Israel. Because of that, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of Yahweh. They forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers who brought them out of the Egypt and they worshipped various Gods of the people around them. They provoked the Lord into anger by serving the *Baals*.

Baal was one of the male deities of Canaanite religion, he was the God who brought the rain and lightning and fertility to the land, and so people worshipped him. The word *Baal* actually means “master” or “Lord.” *Asherah* was *Baal*'s wife, and she was also worshipped with *Baal*. *Asherah* was the goddess of bloodshed, violence, and sex, and it is interesting that when we read the accounts in the Ugaritic language, we find that she was not only the wife of *Baal*, but also his sister, his consort, and a very violent goddess. She was worshipped along with *Baal* in Canaanite religion at local “holy” places where professional male and female prostitutes would engage in immoral sexual activity suggesting, like imitative magic, that *Baal* and *Asherah* should engage in sexual practice, which would then bring rain and fertility to the land. When the Israelites turned to worship *Baal* and *Asherah*, God judged the Israelites by bringing in foreign kingdoms that would come against a particular tribe. This tribe would be taken into servitude, later it would repent, and Yahweh would bring a judge and military deliverer of some sort who would come on the scene and bring deliverance of that particular area of the land. Then there would be a period of rest again until the apostasy-chastisement-servitude-deliverance theme would again be repeated.

After the Prologue describing the falling away from Yahweh, beginning in Judges 3:5 to chapter 16, the book discusses twelve different judges. Joshua would be considered the first judge of Israel, and his exploits are covered in Joshua; the book of Judges then talks about the next twelve judges, Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon,

Abdon, and Samson. (It should be noted that Samuel is considered Israel's fourteenth and final judge, and his story is found in 1 and 2 Samuel.) The writer of Judges covers the judges who serve Israel primarily through military deliverance, helping to bring Israel back to freedom during this repetitive apostasy-chastisement-servitude-deliverance cycle. Throughout we see this basic theme of falling away from obeying and worshipping *Yahweh*, followed by His chastisement through Israel's captivity by a foreign power, then when there is repentance there is deliverance through the work of a judge. It seems that the author is trying to drive home a similar message to the message we saw in Joshua: when Israel as a nation disobeys *Yahweh* and goes after other gods, she is taken captive by foreign powers and loses her freedom.

Judges concludes in an epilogue in chapters 17-21 by detailing the idolatry of *Micah* and the crime of *Gibeah*. These two events describe a completely fallen moral state and it seems that the writer is saying, read what happens when our Israelite forefathers did not respond to *Yahweh* alone, but fell away following the gods around them. Look at the dismal decay.

The story of Samson depicts this. Samson is to be separated unto *Yahweh*, consecrated to God, but instead, Samson defiles his consecration to God and the result was that he lost his power and was enslaved. It is the same theme we have seen in the narrative, reiterated almost as a climax of the book. We are not certain of the exact time of composition for the book of Judges, but we know it was written as a clear warning to Israel not to worship idols. The author is calling the people to faithfulness to the Lord instead of falling away to follow after the gods of the land such as *Baal* and *Asherah*, knowing that if that happens, there will be judgment. Yet, with repentance, *Yahweh's* mercy is seen and there is deliverance.

Flow of Thought—Judges: The *theme* of the book of Judges is that it is a narration of Israel's history from Joshua's death to Samuel. The book of Judges treats the disobedience and

apostasy of the children of Israel after they have come into the Promised Land. Instead of obeying God as they had promised Joshua, they forsook him for other gods. The book can be easily divided into three principle sections as follows: the introduction (1:1-3:4), the actual history of the judges (3:5-16:31), and the appendixes (17:1-21:25) in which the religious and moral decline of the period is clearly seen.

The first section of the book is introductory (1:1-3:4) and discusses the political (1:1-3:6) and religious background of the period (2:1-3:4). In discussing the political background of the period, the author describes how each of the tribes failed to drive out their enemies and how that with each tribe only partial victory was achieved (1:1-3:6). From this failure, the religious background of the period is treated (2:1-3:4) which describes Israel's apostasy and disobedience (2:1-19) and then the judgment placed upon Israel by Yahweh (2:20-3:4).

This leads naturally into the development of the history of the judges which contains the second section (3:15-16:31). This is the largest section of the book and here the thirteen judges of Israel are named and discussed. The first judge is Othniel (3:5-11). After Israel falls into idolatry (3:5-7) and is oppressed by Mesopotamia (3:8) there is deliverance by him and rest for forty years (3:9-11).

Following Othniel, the second judge is Ehud (3:12-30). Israel again apostatizes (3:12a) and is oppressed by the Moabites (3:12b-14). The story of deliverance is then recounted telling how Ehud stabs King Eglon with a dagger and then defeats the Moabites. Forty years of rest follows (3:15-30).

The third judge of Israel, Shamgar, is briefly mentioned (3:31) and then considerable time is given to a discussion of the fourth and fifth judges, Deborah and Barak (4:1-5:31). Apostasy of Israel is again followed by servitude as she is oppressed by Jabin, King of the

Canaanites (4:1-3). The deliverance under these judges is recalled (4:4-24) as the defeat of Sisera, captain of the Canaanites, is narrated when a woman named Jael drives a nail into the head of Sisera. The defeat of Jabin and the Canaanites is stated. As another victory is won, a song is composed by Deborah and Barak (5:1-31) in which the victory of Yahweh is extolled in song.

The next three chapters treat the story of the sixth judge Gideon as he delivers Israel from the oppression of the Midianites (6:1-9:57). The book recites the usual apostasy and oppression (6:1-6), Israel repents (6:7-10), and her repentance is answered in Gideon. The preparation of this leader is discussed including his selection by Yahweh (6:11-24), his repudiation of Baal-worship (6:25-32), his selection of an army (6:33-35), and his confirmation by the two tests of the fleece (6:36-40). Following this, the victory of Gideon's three-hundred man army is described in which the Midianites are pursued and defeated (7:1-25). Ephraim becomes jealous and is satisfied by Gideon (8:1-3), and he defeats Succoth and Penuel and the Kings Zebah and Zalmunna (8:4-21). The failure of Gideon in keeping the ephod is recounted (8:22-27) and his death closes out his work (8:28-32).

After his death, two negative incidents are recorded. First, the confusion of Israel with idols is seen (8:33-35), and second, the abortive reign of Gideon's evil son is narrated (9:1-57). Chapter nine describes the conspiracy of this one who kills all of Gideon's sons but Jotham (9:1-5). The chapter also takes up the allegory of Jotham and his curse on Abimelech (9:7-21), and concludes with the dethronement and, death of this evil son of Gideon (9:22-57).

Beginning with chapter ten, the author quickly passes over the seventh and eight judges, Tola and Jair (10:1-5), and moves on to Jephthah, the ninth judge (10:6-12:7). Again, the apostasy of Israel, her oppressors (Philistines and Ammonites) and Israel's supplication to

Yahweh is given (10:6-16). The story of the judge follows (10:17-12:15). The background and call of this one is discussed, and his victory over the Ammonites is treated (11:11-40). During the course of this deliverance, he makes a rash vow which eventuates in the sacrifice of his daughter (11:30-40). Following victory, comes failure, when due to the jealousy of Ephraim, he slaughters many of his own brethren (12:1-6). The death and burial of Jephthah follow (12:7). In passing, the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth judges (Ibzan, Elon, Abdon) are quickly named (12:8-15), and the author moves on to the judgeship of Samson (13:1-16:31).

For forty years, the Israelites had been under the servitude of the Philistines when Samson, a Nazarite, appears on the scene as a deliverer. His birth is first discussed as well as his setting apart as a Nazarite (13:2-25). His marriage to a Philistine woman is next described (14:1-20). At the wedding feast, Samson gives a riddle concerning a lion that he has just slain. The riddle is solved with the help of his wife, and Samson in vengeance destroys thirty men (14:15-20). After leaving his wife, he returns only to find that she has been given to another. Again in anger, he destroys the Philistine crops by fire placed to fox tails tied together (15:1-8). Following these two acts of vengeance, his victory over the Philistines is given, along with the refreshment from Yahweh that follows victory (15:9-20).

Throughout his life, Samson had compromised his Nazarite vow of separation and in chapter sixteen his greatest compromise and downfall is narrated (16:1-22). After visiting a harlot at Gaza (16:1-3), Samson is deceived by Delilah and in the fourth temptation he gives her the secret to his strength. He is subsequently captured and taken to grind meal in the prison house (16:4-22). Howbeit, his hair grows back and he finishes his career by pushing out the pillars of a Philistine building in which he tallies a greater victory than in his previous life (16:23-31). The section concludes with his burial.

The fourth and final section may be termed “the appendixes” for they seem to be added to the book in order to briefly give an account of the religious idolatry and moral decadence of the period (17:1-21:25). This section can be easily divided into two minor ones as follows: the idolatry of Micah and the Danites (17:1-18:31), and the crime of Gibeah and its results (19:1-21:25).

In chapters seventeen and eighteen the story of Micah and the Danites is recalled. Micah has a shrine in which he keeps an ephod and teraphim (17:1-6). His sons have been serving as priests for this shrine until an unfaithful Levitical priest comes who accepts Micah’s offer of wages, clothing, and food (17:7-13). He becomes Micah’s priest. In the meantime, the Danites have migrated from their land and upon coming to Micah, steal his images and priest (18:1-26). Micah objects but all his objections fail and the Danites go on to destroy Laish (18:27-29) after which they set up idolatrous worship (18:30-31).

The family argument that this causes leads to the separation of the concubine and the Levite. After four months, he goes to her home to bring her back, and after dining with his father-in-law, both start home (19:1-14). This is the background to the crime of Gibeah (19:1-21:25).

After migrating to Gibeah, the two are accommodated overnight at Gibeah (19:15-21) and during this time the awful crime of Gibeah is carried out. The men of the city demand the Levite for sexual purposes. The daughter of the guest and the Levite’s concubine are given to these men instead (19:23-24). The following morning, the Levite finds his concubine dead. He carries her home, cuts her to pieces, and sends her body to the various tribes of Israel (19:27-30). As a result, the chief men of Israel gather together to discuss what action to take (20:1-7) and

decide to find the guilty parties and put them to death (20:8-13). The Benjamites, however, refuse to give them the guilty ones and this leads to civil war in Israel (20:14-28).

In this conflict, there are three encounters. In the first two, the Benjamites cannot be defeated, but in the third one, they see their defeat and many thousands fall. Because the Israelites have vowed not to marry a Benjamite, the problem of Benjamite extinction is very real (21:1-7). This dilemma is solved by providing virgins for the remaining men from Jabesh-Gilead (21:8-15) and Shiloh (21:16-24). The book of Judges closes with a verse that characterizes this entire period: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (21:25).

1 and 2 Samuel

We come next to the books of 1 and 2 Samuel (just one book in the Hebrew Scriptures). These books continue the narrative of the Judges and in 1 and 2 Samuel the purpose of the author is to relate the work of the final judge of Israel and the setting up of the monarchy. Samuel being the final judge will connect the period of the judges with the period of the early monarchy. The writer tells the history of Samuel, showing his moral failure and especially the moral failure of the priesthood under Eli and his sons. Along with this, we see the rise of the office of Prophet and we find schools of prophets established. (We find reference to this in 1 Samuel 19:20.) Following this history, the book then speaks of the establishment of the king of Israel over the land. Remember that we saw a loose-knit federation of city-states in the book of Judges. In 1 Samuel, the Philistines come into power, causing a tremendous degree of pressure in Israel, and as a result, there began to be a cry for a king. There was resistance at first to the idea of a monarchy, and even Samuel warned the people that when a king would come, he would bring

about slavery to the Israelite people. Yet, there was an insistence on having a king, and the reason for it, politically, was the growth of the Philistines to the south and the west, which put pressure on Israel causing them to be fearful. The people simply wanted to have a king like the other nations; it seemed the most obvious and the most cautious thing to do.

As the book follows this development, we see Saul anointed as Israel's first king. Saul was anointed because he was handsome and charismatic, but we discover that he became an autocrat. He fails as a righteous king. We go on to read that God appointed David as Saul's successor. David is far from what we would expect as an appointment for a king. This is part of an interesting theme that permeates the patriarchal narratives; it is often the son you would least expect that inherits the blessing and not always the first-born. Here again, God makes the least expected to be king. In the story of Saul and David, we see Saul's jealousy of David and yet we see how *Yahweh* is working to install David as His king. After Saul's failure as king, David is brought upon the scene, but he has to become a fugitive for a while, hiding from the anger of a rejected Saul, until *Yahweh* ultimately brings David into his own right as His choice of king.

When we come to 2 Samuel, we see David as king. There is an interesting pattern in 2 Samuel: in the first part of the book, we see David's rise to power, we see his victories for Israel; but in the last part of the book, we see David's demise—we see his failures and his decline. 2 Samuel concludes within an epilogue in chapters 21 through the end of the book.

If we were to outline 1 and 2 Samuel, we would see in 1 Samuel chapter 1 through 7 the transitional figure Samuel; we see him as the last of the judges and the first of the prophets. This is followed by the reign of Saul beginning in 1 Samuel 8 and going through the end of the book, with David coming on the scene in chapter 15. We have a story within a story and David's rise to power begins in 1 Samuel 16. Towards the end of 1 Samuel, we see David as a fugitive, but as

we enter 2 Samuel, we see David's triumphs. We see solidification of the northern and the southern tribes brought together into a united kingdom, and we see God revealing to David through the prophet Nathan what we call the "Davidic covenant" in 2 Samuel 7. This is a high point in 1 and 2 Samuel. In 2 Samuel 7, Nathan is speaking to David, "When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish your kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Samuel 7:12-13). It is interesting here that this covenant commonly called the Davidic covenant occurred after David had brought the ark back and had established Jerusalem as the center of worship. He wanted to build a house for the ark. However, Nathan tells David that he will not build the temple but God will raise up one who would follow David who would build the temple. Through the seed of David, God would ultimately establish his throne forever.

It is interesting that Luke picks this up in his Gospel and applies these very words to Jesus Christ who is the final king coming from David; He is the one who is the eternal king over the house of Israel and the people of God today in His eternal reign. It is interesting that this covenant prepares the way for its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ, according to Luke's Gospel (Luke 1:32).

Following the rise of David to kingship, the writer of Samuel, beginning in 2 Samuel 11, shows David in his decline. I believe, especially from 2 Samuel chapters 11 through 14, the author presents David as a negative role model. By that, I mean that the author is using a great hero to teach great Truth, showing the weakness of the hero and pointing to wisdom that can be gleaned from the negative examples of his life. Thus, I believe that 1 and 2 Samuel not only traces the development of the monarchy and some of the struggles in that development and some

of the resistance to that development, but there is also an ethical theme and purpose in the narrative in which David becomes a prime example of a negative role model. The writer tells of David going into Bathsheba, the wife of another man, committing adultery with her and impregnating her. David further exacerbates the problem by calling for Bathsheba's husband, Uriah the Hittite, to come home from battle in an attempt to cover up the adulterous affair and pregnancy by getting her husband to go into his own wife to hide that she is pregnant from the king. Out of respect for his fellow soldiers, Uriah would not lay with his wife, and when David's planned cover-up would not work, he sends Uriah back to the battle, and instructs Joab, the commander, to put Uriah "in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die" (2 Samuel 11:15). Joab does as commanded by the king, and when Uriah is killed, sends the report through a messenger that Uriah is dead. David has committed two terrible crimes. After he gets all of his power, we see his abuse of power, and the writer shows us David's crimes of adultery and murder.

As we read this we ask the question, where is God in all of this? Is he going to judge David? I believe the writer poses that question. We see several other things going on here: we see evil and sin, and we see the tangled web in which David ends up after he commits adultery with Bathsheba and tries to cover it up, and ultimately orders the death of Uriah the Hittite, Bathsheba's husband. In the events of evil and sin from that first act that David committed to the last, it seems that David is doing whatever he wants to do, and God seems to be ignoring David's sin.

Throughout the text in 2 Samuel we see the term "sent" (*wayishlak* in Hebrew) in repetition. David sent for Bathsheba; David sent for Uriah the Hittite; David sent Uriah the Hittite back to Joab and sent word to Joab to place Uriah on the front lines. Here is a powerful

political ruler, David, and no one is interfering with the evil he is doing. By this repetition of *wayishlak* (“sent”) all the way through this narrative, we are left with that question, can a powerful person do this, and yet nothing happen to him? Yet, the Hebrew text in 2 Samuel 12:1 starts out with the statement, “The Lord sent Nathan to David.” With the final *wayishlak*, Yahweh does bring His judgment. It is almost as if the text is saying that God got the final word. It may take time, but even with the greatest of political rulers, God will not let them act unjustly without His ultimate interdiction and judgment; I believe that the writer is sending this important message by the repetition of this word, *wayishlak* (“sent”), a word of command and authority.

We also see something else taught in this text—a kind of cause and effect relationship. David committed adultery and then committed the act of putting Uriah to death. Within David’s own family, these two crimes are repeated when Amnon commits adultery with Tamar, his half-sister, and Absalom, Tamar’s biological brother, retaliates and kills Amnon. We see a repetition of the very things that David did, so the writer organizes these two events side by side with one another to teach the cause and effect relationship. He uses David and the sorry results of his sins as a negative role model. It is much like what we saw in the Jacob story in Genesis when Jacob deceived his father and then was later deceived by his uncle Laban, and then later on in life he was deceived by his own son Judah who in turn is deceived by his daughter-in-law in a series of cause and effect relationships.

In 2 Samuel we see the literary artist at work as he organizes the storylines of David’s sins and the sins of his sons back-to-back in a cause and effect relationship showing that sin eventuates in reaping what one sows. This is the ethical lesson found within this portion of the narrative. We also see in 1 and 2 Samuel some specific characterization. For example, we see a too trusting Uriah, and a hatchet man Joab who will do anything to further or keep his political

position; so we see the writer using characters to teach us. It is also interesting that as we move through this entire narrative, David, who is chronicled as a “man after God’s own heart” in other passages, is viewed here in a more negative way to teach wisdom to the reader. After seeing David as a negative role model, the writer traces Absalom’s rebellion and attempt to take over David’s kingdom, and how David becomes a fugitive yet again. Though Absalom fails in his attempted coup, it seems that the writer wants to illustrate the fact that it is Yahweh’s intent to exalt Solomon as the next king.

It is rather interesting to note that after David’s moral failure with Bathsheba, followed by his repentance and restoration to God, Yahweh uses a child from their union to be the next king and the royal line from which Messiah will come, showing again the great mercy of God. The child Solomon’s name, *Yediyah*, (Jedidiah) means “beloved of Yahweh.” Even in his name, we see God’s tremendous love, kindness, and forgiveness, and that God gives a second chance to those who repent and return to Him. It is interesting to see how the writer explains how Absalom could not be a contender to be the next king, and shows the reader how God, may I say, moves the chess pieces on the board to work everything around to His ultimate, sovereign purpose of making Solomon the next king.

In summary, the overall purpose of 1 and 2 Samuel in the Hebrew is to trace the monarchy from its early development to the establishment of David, to talk about Yahweh’s covenant with David, and how through this covenant Yahweh would extend His blessing to David’s offspring. It traces the uncertainty of this new monarchy, some of the opposition to it, and some of the positive results of bringing Israel into a united people. It also seems that the writer wanted to use David as a negative role model in order to teach wisdom.

Flow of Thought—1 and 2 Samuel: The *theme* of the book of 1 Samuel is the history of Israel from the birth of Samuel to the death of Saul. In 1 Samuel there are three basic developments or movements. There is the rule of Samuel (1:1-7:17), followed by the reign of Saul (8:1-15:35), and culminated with the rise of David (16:1-31:13).

The first section, developing the rule of Samuel (1:1-7:17) begins with his birth (1:1-2:11). Samuel's mother, Hanna, is very sorrowful that she does not have a child and prays to the Lord, vowing to consecrate the child to the Lord (1:1-19).

The Lord answers Hanna's prayer, and the child is named "Samuel" as a token of the Lord's faithfulness in answering her prayer (1:20-28). She praises the Lord for his power and kindness in meeting her request, and dedicates him to the Lord in fulfillment of her vow (1:24-28).

The environment of Samuel is not the best as he is reared by Eli surrounded by the immorality and flagrant wickedness of his sons, Hophni and Phinehas (2:12-17). Out of the midst of this dismal environment, however, the Lord is to call his messenger. Samuel is called by God to be His judge and prophet and is supplied with the necessary grace and power to carry out His purpose (3:1-21). His first message after his call is not an easy one as he must tell Eli of the doom that awaits his family, (3:1-21). Following this message, the writer of 1 Samuel says:

And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord (3:19-20).

The ministry of Samuel follows (4:1-7:17). During his life and ministry, the Philistines plague Israel, capturing the ark of the covenant from them and defeating them. Thousands are

slain, including the sons of Eli (4:1-22). The glory of Israel leaves her as is indicated by the name that Phinehas' widow gives to her newborn son.

While the Philistines deal a blow to Israel, the God of Israel brings His power and glory before them through the ark. The ark brings disaster among the Philistines (5:1-6:1). Placed in the temple of Dagon, the god of the Philistines is found fallen to the ground on the first morning. The second morning finds this idol shattered. This is followed by an epidemic of tumors among the Philistines. The ark travels from Ashdod (5:1-7) to Gath (5:8-9), and finally to Ekron (5:10-12) carrying judgment as it goes. Since presence of the ark is no longer bearable among the Philistines, they return it to Beth-shemesh (6:1-20), and it finally passes to Kiriath-Jearim (6:21-7:1).

After the return of the ark, Samuel delivers a stirring message to the people to turn from idols to the Lord (7:2-8). The children of Israel respond and the Philistines are defeated by them (7:9-17). The name of the place of victory is called "Ebenezer," for "thus far has the Lord helped us."

The second development of the book begins with the reign of Saul (8:1-15:35). Due to the age of Samuel, the unfitness of his sons, and the desire to be like other nations, Israel demands a king (8:1-22). Against the perfect will of God, the Lord permits the people to have their king and Samuel is told to listen to them and give them a king.

Saul, searching for his father's donkeys, meets Samuel (9:1-27), and is privately anointed by him (10:1-16), and is publicly installed at Mizpah (10:17-27). Samuel's choice is vindicated when Saul defeats the Ammonites and delivers Jabesh-Gilead (11:1-15). This ratification is then followed by Samuel's speech in which he reminds the people of the Lord's righteous deeds and of their sin in asking for a king (12:1-25).

Following this, the reign of Saul is nothing more than a demonstration of the mistake Israel has made in choosing a king and rejecting the theocracy. Saul makes three grave mistakes that lead to God's rejection of him as Israel's king. He intrudes into the office of the priesthood because of his irreverent presumption (13:1-15). He then gives a rash vow to fast, which almost costs the death of his son Jonathan (14:1-52). Jonathan's life, however, is spared as the people protect him. Saul's third mistake was his disobedience to God concerning Agag. Having been told to exterminate all of the Amalekites, Saul spares their king Agag and the best of their flocks and herds (15:1-35). Agag is finally executed and Samuel separates from Saul at this point (15:24-35).

The third and final main section of the book traces the rise of David to power (16:1-31:13). God commissions Samuel to go to the house of Jesse at Bethlehem and to anoint one of his sons for Israel's future king (16:1-13). Samuel comes to Bethlehem (16:1-5), chooses David (16:6-12), and consecrates him as the future king (16:13).

Following this comes the appointment of David to the court (16:14-19:17). Perhaps no greater event does more to exalt David in the eyes of Israel than his conflict with Goliath (17:1-58). After his defeat of the Philistine giant, David is honored as a hero. As the women praise the exploits of David more than Saul, Saul becomes jealous of David, and seeks to destroy him. He first attempts to do this with a javelin, which he throws at David (18:8-16). He tries to get his daughter to marry and betray David (18:17-30). He asks Jonathan and his servants to assassinate him (19:1-7). He again uses his spear against him but fails to kill David (19:8-10). Finally, Michal intervenes to help David escape from the hand of her father (19:11-17).

The exile of David from Saul follows (19:18-30:31). Jonathan is the first to inform David of his father's continued attitude of anger toward him and promises to protect him (19:18-20:42).

David therefore begins his wanderings. His wanderings take him to Nob (21:1-9) where David eats showbread. From there he goes to Gath (21:10-15), to the cave of Adullam (22:1-2), to Moab (22:3-4), to Judah (22:5-23), and to Keilah (23:1-12). There David is used to rescue Keilah from the Philistines. From Keilah David goes to the wilderness of Ziph where Jonathan visits him and renews their covenant (23:13-23). From there to Maon, and to Engedi where David graciously spares Saul's life (23:29-24:22). Although momentarily broken, Saul was essentially unrepentant and the pursuit continues.

Paran is David's next destination and here he obtains Abigail for his wife after Nabal senselessly refuses David and is smitten by God (25:1-44). From Paran, David goes to the wilderness of Ziph where he again spares the life of Saul (26:1-25). David finally goes to Ziklag (27:1-12) where David gets asylum from the Philistine king of Gath. Discouragement and unbelief cause the Lord's anointed to go over to the enemies of God's people.

In the meantime, Saul is facing a Philistine advancement. Threatened by defeat, Saul in fear seeks to get in touch with Samuel through the witch of Endor (28:1-25). God calls back Samuel's spirit and doom is pronounced on Saul. Following this unhappy announcement, Saul takes food and prepares for battle (28:20-25).

As the Philistines are marching to battle against Israel, the commanders of the Philistines object to David's presence. David is forced to leave, and turns back (29:1-11). By God's grace he is saved from fighting against his own people.

On his return, David finds that Ziklag has been sacked by the Amalekites. Through the help of an Egyptian slave of an Amalekite, David is able to overtake the raiders and recover his wives and goods (30:1-20). He restores peace (30:21-25), and returns the battle spoil to his people (30:26-31).

The book concludes with the death and burial of Saul (31:1-13). Battling the Philistines at Mount Gilboa, Saul's older sons are killed and he himself is wounded. Facing captivity he asks his armor bearer to kill him. Refusing Saul's request, Saul falls on his own sword. His body is dishonored by the Philistines on the walls of Bethshan, but the men of Jabesh-Gilead later recover them by night and bury the remains in Jabesh.

The *theme* of 2 Samuel is the history of Israel during David's reign. After the death of Saul, 2 Samuel picks up where 1 Samuel leaves off. The book may be divided into three basic sections: the triumphs of David (1:1-10:19), the troubles of David (11:1-20:26), and the testimonies of David (21:1-24:25).

The triumphs of David (1:1-10:19) begin with his reign over Judah (1:1-4:12). When the news of Israel's disaster and Saul's death reaches David at Ziklag, he laments his death as a real tragedy and calamity (1:1-27). During this time of weeping, the Amalekite who no doubt completed Saul's attempted suicide is executed.

After his grief, David leaves Ziklag and comes to Hebron where the house of Judah anoints him as king (2:1-11). While David is king over Judah, there is a conflict over who is to be ruler over all Israel. Ishbosheth claims to be the ruler. Thus, tribal warfare continues between the followers of Ishbosheth and those of David (2:12-4:12). After the conflict between the two parties rages for a while (2:12-3:6), Abner quarrels with Ishbosheth and as a result comes over to David's side agreeing to bring all Israel with him (3:7-21). Before he has time to keep his covenant, he is assassinated by Joab in revenge for Asahel's death (3:22-39). Following Abner's tragic death, Ishbosheth is assassinated and his head is taken to David by his murderers. Instead of commending them, David executes them for their terrible deed (4:1-12).

Following the death of Ishbosheth, the Israelites come to Hebron to anoint David as their king and his reign over all Israel begins (5:1-10:19). David is crowned and captures Jerusalem making it the new capital of his reign (5:1-16). Hearing of his anointing the Philistines seek to get a victory over the new king but are defeated in two separate engagements (5:17-25).

With the new capital in Jerusalem the ark is brought from Kiriath-Jearim to Jerusalem (6:1-23). In route to Jerusalem, Uzzah touches the ark to steady it and instantly dies. The ark finally arrives and a new worship center is instituted. As it arrives David is mocked by Michal for his jubilant actions (6:20b-23). He rebukes her for her attitude and no longer treats her as his wife.

David builds for himself a handsome home following these events, but he is unhappy that the ark of God is resting in a tent (7:1-3). He goes to the prophet Nathan with his desire and plan to build the temple, and out of this comes the Davidic covenant (7:4-17). David is promised an eternal posterity, royal authority, and a kingdom. This is followed by his own prayer of exultation (7:18-29).

Although the kingdom is now established along with a permanent covenant of blessing, there are still foreign nations that must be reckoned with in order for David's kingdom to be extended and securely established. David's marvelous military victories against enemy nations and the extension of the kingdom boundaries are next summarized (8:1-10:19). David first of all defeats the Philistines (8:1), Moab (8:2), the Arameans (8:3-8), Hamath (8:9-12), and Edom, thereby strengthening his kingdom (8:15-18). In the midst of summarizing these campaigns, the writer gives the story of Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, and shows David's grace and kindness towards him as David gives him the status of one of his own sons (9:1-13). Returning to the

summary of David's victories the author narrates David's defeat of the Ammonites and Syrians thus extending his kingdom as far north as the Euphrates River (10:1-19).

Having presented the triumphs of David, the book takes up his troubles (11:1-20:26). He has personal troubles (11:1-12:31), family troubles (13:1-18:33), and national troubles (19:1-20:26).

David's personal troubles begin with his infatuation and sin with Bathsheba (11:1-27). David commits adultery with her (11:1-5) and sends for Uriah in an effort to cover up his sin. When subterfuge fails, he has Uriah murdered by putting him in the most vulnerable position against the enemy (11:6-27). David then marries Bathsheba.

The Lord's rebuke is not long delayed in its coming. It comes through a parable delivered by Nathan the prophet (12:1-12). While David repents, chastisement comes in the death of his child (12:14-19). God does mingle grace in the midst of judgment in the birth of Solomon (12:20-31), but judgment continues.

The next great problems come with Amnon (13:1-18), and with Absalom (13:19-18:33). Amnon is infatuated with his sister Tamar (13:1-5) and commits adultery with her (13:6-18). His sin is only the reaping of the former sin of David. Absalom hates Amnon for this sin (13:19-22) and commits murder against his brother (13:23-36). He then flees to Geshur for fear of the king (13:37-39), but is later reinstated to the king's favor (14:1-33).

Just as soon as this matter is settled, another problem confronts David. Absalom revolts and seeks to draw the people after him (15:1-12). David therefore flees from Jerusalem for fear of the consequences of this rebellion (15:13-16:14). Intrigue and adventure follow as deception and defeat are witnessed before the final downfall of Absalom. Ittai stays faithfully with David (15:13-23) and Hushai is sent back to Jerusalem to spy for David (15:30-37). David further

believes the lie of Ziba concerning Mephibosheth (16:1-4), and shows restraint in the case of the cursing Shimei (16:5-14).

In Jerusalem, Hushai frustrates the counsel of Ahithophel (16:15-17:23), and Ahithophel is so mortified that he commits suicide (17:23). Following Ahithophel's death, Absalom goes to meet David's army. Absalom's forces are defeated and he is killed by Joab as he hangs from a tree in an effort to escape (17:24-18:32). His death is lamented by David (18:33) who returns to Jerusalem (19:1-15), and is restored there as king (19:16-40). Shimei is forgiven (19:16-23), Mephibosheth reconciled with David (19:24-30), and Barzillai is rewarded (19:31-40).

As soon as the rebellion of Absalom is quenched, Sheba (a Benjamite) taking the advantage of the jealousy of the men of Israel, begins a rebellion of his own (19:14-20:2). This rebellion, however, is short-lived and is ended when Sheba is executed (20:3-26).

The final major section of 2 Samuel treats the testimonies of David (21:1-24:25). A three-year severe famine is traced to the guilt upon the land for Saul's murder of the Gibeonites. David errs and permits seven of Saul's children to be killed in a terrible slaughter (21:1-14). This tragic event is followed in chapter twenty-one by memoirs of the Philistine wars (21:15-22).

In chapter twenty-two David gives a great prophetic psalm (22:1-51) in which he praises the Lord for His deliverance (22:1-28) and for exaltation over enemies (22:29-51). This has a futuristic look beyond the triumphs of David to the Messiah. Chapter twenty-three gives David's last words (23:1-7) and a roster of his heroes (23:8-39), and the last chapter concludes the book by discussing David's sin and punishment in his census (24:1-17) as well as his offering for the Lord's forgiveness (24:18-25).

1 and 2 Kings

As to the composition in the writing of 1 and 2 Kings, there is the opinion of some that Joshua through Kings was written by an writer or a school of writers during the time of Josiah around the 6th century BC to encourage the people of that day to faithfulness to Yahweh rather than to false idols. Others believe that these books might have been written after the Babylonian exile. There is the tendency to speak of the whole section as Deuteronomic history, that is, from Deuteronomy or Joshua to Kings, and to say that it was written by one author or a series of authors to encourage fidelity to Yahweh after captivity in Babylon. As you read in some commentaries, the term “Dtr” meaning Deuteronomic or Deuteronomistic Redactor, is the abbreviation for that view of history suggesting that the narrative of Deuteronomy through Kings should be read as the full history.

No matter how we may look at 1 and 2 Kings, and regardless of when this narrative may have been written, we must ask what we might find in terms of the themes that are taught. It seems that the writer wants us to trace the continuation of the period of monarchy through Solomon. He picks up the story where 1 Samuel leaves off, and continues the united kingdom that was started with Saul by showing the rise of Solomon as well as his demise. This is shown in the first 11 chapters of 1 Kings and is a very important theme. We see wisdom given to Solomon, and yet we see failure; failure because he multiplied wives that led him and Israel into idolatry. Again, here is a man that had everything going for him, and like David and Saul, there is failure after his elevation. It is also interesting that the temple is a centerpiece in 1 and 2 Kings. Solomon builds the temple in fulfillment of the promise made in 2 Samuel that David would not build the temple but his son would. In 1 Kings, we come to the knowledge that God is faithful to keep His promise; the writer emphasizes this truth.

It is also interesting as we look at 1 and 2 Kings that beginning with 1 Kings 12 through 2 Kings 17 we have what is called the divided kingdom period. This is the period in which Jeroboam I and Rehoboam separated and Jeroboam went north and established several places of worship while Rehoboam stayed in the south. Then the book of the Kings concludes with the surviving kingdom period in 2 Kings 18 through the end of the book. Dating these periods we could say, roughly speaking, that the United Kingdom period began with Saul and continued through David and Solomon, from approximately 1050 BC to 931 BC. The divided kingdom occurred after Solomon's reign, from 931 BC to 722 BC, at which time the Assyrians came in, defeated the northern kingdom of Israel, and took the northern kingdom into captivity. This event is talked about in 2 Kings 17. The surviving kingdom of Judah in the south lasted from 722 BC to 586 BC until the Babylonians took Judah into captivity in 587 or 586 BC.

What is interesting is that while these books give us a detailed history of these two kingdoms, 1 and 2 Kings are not history books—they are written with a theological intent. All of the northern kings, which followed Jeroboam I, followed Jeroboam as a negative role model; all “did evil in the eyes of the Lord.” These northern kings are contrasted with the southern kings, most of whom followed David as a positive role model; many of the southern kings “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.” David is referred to as a positive model by the writer of Kings because David is the one who championed the centralized place of worship in Jerusalem and holding to the worship of Yahweh, thus doing “what was right in the eyes of the Lord.” The northern kingdom with its many places of worship and their false idols is the epitome of evil in 1 and 2 Kings. In the northern kingdom, every king is bad, and we soon realize this is a theme the writer is seeking to drive home to us. All of their kings are viewed in a very negative light; there is not one good northern king. It is also interesting that the writer is not viewing political history

and its success because Omri was a well-known king according to Assyrian inscriptions, and yet the writer gives Omri very little attention and views him in the same negative light. When we look at the books of 1 and 2 Kings, one theme that is clearly seen is that all the northern kings were bad because they went to other places of worship, and as a result provided a negative role model of what not to do or be like; the central place of worship was to be in Jerusalem.

Another theme that can be seen is that those kings in the south who followed David's practice of worshipping only in Jerusalem are viewed in positive light. There are a few kings that are praised by the writer of 1 and 2 Kings, and Hezekiah and Josiah are two of the good kings. The writer especially emphasizes Josiah because Josiah tore down the high places of idol worship and constantly emphasizes the central place of worship in Jerusalem. However, we are told that Manasseh's sin was so great that captivity and exile was still inevitable because of the Lord's anger. We read in 2 Kings 23:27, "I will remove Judah also from my presence as I removed Israel, and I will reject Jerusalem, the city I chose. . . ." In this, we discover another purpose of the writing of the Kings, to explain why the people of the southern kingdom of Judah were taken into exile, even with Josiah's reform and revival. However, after describing the fall of Jerusalem, the writer does finish on a positive note. He talks about Jehoiachin's release, which gives the reader a sense of hope that Yahweh will one day release all exiles and bring everyone back to the land of promise.

If you enjoy archaeology, you would enjoy learning about some of the archeological discoveries that has helped illuminate the book of Kings. For example, in the story of Elijah and his debate with the Prophets of Baal, there is much to do with stopping rain and then later Yahweh allowing the rain to fall. Scholars have discovered through a study of a number of stone tablets engraved in a cuneiform script of the Ugaritic language (Ugarit was a port city to the

north of Palestine) that Baal (meaning “master”) was the god that caused rain to fall in the Canaanite religion. As a part of the rituals of the Canaanite religion, we find professional male and female prostitutes who were engaged by worshippers in temple sexual activities in order to “suggest” to Baal and his consort Asherah that they should have sexual relationships between themselves in order to start the rainfall and to enhance the fertility brought about by the rain. Remember that in 1 Kings, Elijah comes and stops the rain in the name of Yahweh, and later starts the rain again. It is very important that Yahweh is really the one who starts and stops the rain, not Baal, hence only Yahweh is the God who is to be worshipped.

It is also interesting as you read about the period of the kings in other ancient texts, namely Syrian and Babylonian texts written in Akkadian. When the Assyrian king came against the northern kingdom described in 2 Kings 17, we know from archaeology that he recorded that event in the Assyrian records, “Sargon II made the statement: ‘I beseeched and captured Samaria’ carrying 27,290 people who dwelt therein. . . .” and the records continues. Sometime later, in another inscription, Sennacherib talks about coming up against Hezekiah and in what is called, “Sennacherib’s Inscription” he makes this boast, “As for Hezekiah the Jew who did not submit for the yoke 46 of the strong cities I beseeched and took. As for Hezekiah, I shut up Jerusalem like a caged bird. I beseeched and took Hezekiah himself like a caged bird; I shut him up in Jerusalem.”⁶ The account goes on, but it is interesting that we have other ancient near-eastern texts that help explain or validate Biblical history and what was happening at that time. I would encourage you to read some of these texts, which you can do in a book called *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* by James B. Prichard, Princeton University Press.

Flow of Thought—1 and 2 Kings: The *theme* of 1 Kings is the history of Israel from Solomon's reign through the reigns of Ahab in the northern kingdom and Jehoshaphat in the southern kingdom. The books of 1 and 2 Kings trace the development of Israel's history from the reign of Solomon to the Babylonian exile. Within the books are three major sections or developments. They are: the United Kingdom (1:1-11:43), the Divided Kingdom (1 Kings 12:1-2 Kings 17:41), and the Surviving Kingdom (2 Kings 18:1-25:30).

Within the first section of the United Kingdom (1:1-11:43), Solomon follows David to the throne. Before getting the throne there are others that must be eliminated. Adonijah, David's eldest living son, seeing his chance to make his bid for king, conspires to take the rulership (1:1-9). The plot, however, is discovered by Nathan and Bathsheba (1:10-31) and David is urged to declare his successor. He declares his son Solomon as the future king and he is immediately anointed by Zadok (1:38-40). Soon after his accession, Solomon eliminates all his opponents including Adonijah, Joab, Benaiah, and Shimei (1:41-2:46).

In the first days of his reign, Solomon prays for divine wisdom (3:1b-15) and his prayer is answered by the Lord. His wisdom is displayed in practical experience (3:16-28) as well as in his administration (4:1-33). Practically, his wisdom displays itself in the careful decision in the matter of two women fighting over a child. He decides which one is the rightful mother. Administratively, his wisdom is seen in the administrative arrangements of his territory. Dividing his territory into twelve areas, he appoints governors over each area who are responsible for the proper functioning of their section. Each month a different area is given the responsibility to support the king's financial program.

One of the greatest contributions of Solomon's reign is his planning and building of the temple (5:1-7:51). By forming a league with Hiram (5:1-12) as well as placing a levy on Israel,

the king is able to build a beautiful temple. Phoenician workers are a big help in the construction of this temple. In the actual construction, the building of the temple proper comes first (6:1-38), followed by the building of the palace (7:1-12), and finally the building of the temple exterior and its furnishings (7:13-51) finish the work.

As the temple is completed the ark of God is installed in the temple, giving a permanent home for it (8:1-11). This is followed by a sermon (8:12-21) and invocation from Solomon (8:22-61) as well as a sacrifice to the Lord (8:62-66). The answer to Solomon's prayer is the appearance of the Lord who gives both the conditions of blessing (9:1-5) and the consequences of disobedience (9:6-9).

Not only is Solomon recognized for building the temple, but he is also known for his great prosperity in his other building programs (9:10-10:29). After compensating Hiram (9:10-14), the building programs of Solomon is given (9:15-22). He is known for his construction of buildings (9:15), military bases (9:19-23), a house for Pharaoh's daughter (9:24-25) and ships (9:26-28). The queen of Sheba visits Solomon and admits that the "half has not been told concerning his glory (10:1-13). The writer concludes concerning the king's prosperity by recounting his great wealth (10:14-25) in addition to his horse and chariot trade, one of the chief sources of his wealth (10:26-29).

Instead of concluding the narration of Solomon on a continued high note, the author openly and honestly gives his decline and apostasy (11:1-43). Taking foreign wives for security (11:1-3), Solomon becomes involved in idolatry (11:4-8) which leads to inevitable judgment (11:9-25). This judgment is seen in his adversaries Hadad of Edom (11:14-40), Rezon of Damascus (11:23-25), and Jeroboam, the son of Nebat (11:26-40). Solomon finally dies and is followed to the throne by his son Rehoboam (11:41-43).

The second major section of the books of Kings actually begins at this point, for it is at this point that the kingdom is divided (1 Kings 12:1-2 Kings 17:41). The period of antagonism (12:1-16:28) begins as a result of the folly of Rehoboam (12:1-15). Heedless to the counsel of the older men to reduce the burdens on the people, Rehoboam follows the unwise advice of the younger men and increases them. The result is the rebellion of the ten tribes (12:16-18) and the consequent coronation of Jeroboam over them (12:19-20). While civil war is averted (12:21-24), Israel is now divided into a disrupted kingdom.

Jeroboam I sets up his capitals at Shechem and creates idolatrous worship centers at Bethel and Dan. Two bull calves of gold are to represent Yahweh (12:26-33). This departure from the Lord brings a prophet to announce the fate of Jeroboam's plan and to rebuke the king for his terrible apostasy (13:1-32). His continued hardening of heart seals his doom (13:33-34). Some time later God's disciplining hand falls upon the king's son (14:1-4). Desiring to ascertain the future, the king goes to Ahijah, the prophet, who predicts both the fate of the king's son (14:6-14) as well as the fate of Israel (14:15-16). The death of the child follows along with the death of the king himself (14:17-20).

Under Rehoboam, Judah also departs from Yahweh. High places are built and the Asherim are venerated (14:21-24). Shishak of Egypt advances against Judah as a result of judgment (14:25-28) and Rehoboam concludes his life as a failure according to divine standards (14:25-31).

Abijam follows Rehoboam as king of Judah (15:1-8). He fails to walk in obedience to Yahweh and dies after three years." A contrast to his reign in Judah is seen in Asa who is esteemed as one of Judah's best kings (15:9-24). He cleanses the land of idolatry, removing pagan pillars, sun images, and male cult prostitutes. He displaces the queen mother for making

an image of Asherah (15:9-15). His reign also involves a conflict with Baasha before his death (15:16-24).

Following Asa's good reign, the book discusses several of Israel's kings from Nadab to Omri (15:25-16:28). Nadab has an evil unworthy rule of two years (15:25-31). He is slain by Baasha and Baasha takes the throne (15:32-16:7). Baasha does evil in the sight of the Lord. During his reign, he wars with Asa and moves Israel's capital to Tirzah.

He is succeeded by Elah (16:8-10). Little is said concerning Elah except that he is a drunkard and reigns only two years before being assassinated by Zimri. Zimri rules for only seven days before committing suicide by burning himself to death in the palace (16:11-20).

After Zimri's tragic death, the people are divided between Tibni and Omri as their next ruler. At Tibni's death, Omri reigns over Israel (16:21-28). Politically, the man becomes well known for his capable rule. Assyrian monuments refer to Israel as the "house of Omri." Omri is also the king who removes the capital from Tirzah to Samaria where it remains until Israel's fall to Assyria. Spiritually, this king is no better than his predecessors, so the Biblical historian, assessing the spiritual and moral worth of Omri, dismisses him in a few verses.

Following the period of antagonism just described, comes the period of alliance between the two kingdoms (1 Kings 16:29; 2 Kings 8:29). The first to be discussed in this period is king Ahab of Israel (1 Kings 16:29-22:40). Ahab is a wicked, idolatrous, and apostate king (16:29-34). Under the influence of his wicked wife, Jezebel, large numbers are influenced to worship Baal and other Canaanite gods.

Baal, regarded as the storm god, is viewed as the god who controls the rain. The Biblical narrative shows Elijah going to Ahab from Yahweh to engage in conflict with this god. Elijah abruptly announces to Ahab that there will be no rain until he speaks again (17:1-2). Elijah

quickly leaves and is given water from Yahweh at the brook Cherith (17:3-7). When this brook dries up, he is miraculously fed by ravens and by a widow at Zarephath (17:8-24).

As the terrible drought is about to end, Elijah meets Obadiah and tells him to inform Ahab that he is coming to see him (18:1-15). Elijah shortly meets Ahab and calls for a contest on Mount Carmel to decide whether Yahweh or Baal should be worshipped (18:16-19). The agreement concerns the ability of Baal or Yahweh to devour previously prepared sacrifices with fire. The Canaanite prophets cry to Baal and even cut themselves, but to no avail. Elijah's turn comes. He drenches his sacrifice with water, and then in answer to his prayer, God sends fire down from heaven and consumes the sacrifice (18:20-40). The question is answered; Yahweh is God. The struggle proves Yahweh's power and Elijah runs to Jezreel to herald Yahweh's victory over Baal (18:41-46).

Jezebel, being informed of Yahweh's victory, takes steps to destroy the prophet's life. Elijah flees and reaches Beersheba (19:1-5). By divine help he comes to Horeb where he is rebuked and encouraged by the Lord (19:6-14). He is directed to go to the wilderness of Damascus, and on the way, Elisha, his coming successor, is appointed (19:15-21).

Following the incident on Mount Carmel, the narrative returns to Ahab to discuss his wars with Damascus where he gains victory at Samaria (20:1-21), and at Aphek (20:22-43). His murder of Naboth is also discussed (21:1-29), along with his tragic death (22:1-40). The incident of Naboth is very familiar to most Bible students. Desiring Naboth's beautiful vineyard (21:1-6), leads Ahab to follow the evil design of Jezebel in murdering the man to get his vineyard (21:7-16). As they stand condemned by God, the prophet Elijah, pronounces the doom of both he and his wife (21:17-29). The doom of Ahab comes, when failing to listen to the prophet Micaiah, he is killed at Ramoth-Gilead (22:29-40).

The book of 1 Kings closes by a brief narration of the reigns of Jehoshaphat and Jehoram in Judah (22:41-50), and of Ahaziah in Israel (22:51-53). Jehoshaphat is honored as a good king who walked in the ways of Asa (22:41-49). His successor, Jehoram, is merely mentioned (22:50). Ahaziah of Israel is described as an evil king who walked after Ahab his father in serving Baal (22:51-53).

The *theme* of 2 Kings is the history of the divided kingdom from the death of Ahab and Jehoshaphat to the final captivity. The book of 2 Kings continues the period of alliance (1 Kings 16:28-2 Kings 8:29). It discusses the period of renewed antagonism (2 Kings 9:1-17:41) and concludes with a narration of the surviving kingdom of Judah (2 Kings 18:1-20:21).

The period of alliance is continued through the ministry of Elijah (1:1-2:12) and Elisha (2:13-8:29). Elijah's message to king Ahaziah is recorded in chapter one. Because of his Baal worship, Elijah announces his doom (1:1-16). This is followed by a brief account of Jehoram's accession (1:17-18) and of Elijah's translation before Elisha (2:1-11). The departure of Elisha is announced (2:1-8) along with a request for a double portion of his spirit (2:9-10) and Elijah is taken in a whirlwind into heaven (2:11-12).

The double portion of Elisha's request is immediately visible upon him. The waters of the Jordan are divided by him (2:12-14), the poisoned water is disinfected (2:15-22), and the irreverence of some young men is paid for (2:23-25). This double portion of Elijah is seen in Elisha's prophetic gift also. As the Moabites revolt in Jehoram's reign (3:1-12), Elisha declares their future defeat (3:13-20). Seeing a brook that appears red, the Moabites rush to the spot thinking Israel has been defeated. At the proper time, however, Israel rises up and defeats them (3:21-27).

Following the account of the Moabite defeat, Elisha's miraculous ministry is given. He increases the widow's oil (4:1-7), raises the Shunammite woman's son (4:8-37), heals poisonous stew (4:38-41), multiplies bread for one hundred men (4:42-44), heals Naaman the leper (5:1-27), and helps a band of prophets to recover a floating ax head (6:1-7). Further miracles continue in the ministry of Elisha. The Syrian army is blinded and captured by Elisha's prayers (6:8-23), and Benhadad's siege of Samaria is repulsed by the Lord's intervention as Elisha has prophesied, (6:24-7:20).

In chapter eight, the narration includes two additional stories concerning Elisha's ministry. The story of the woman of Shunem and her help from Elisha is continued (8:1-6). Predicting a famine, he sends the woman to Philistia for seven years. When she returns, her land is restored to her by King Jehoram. A second interesting story in the same chapter concerns Hazael's coming to Elisha, and the prophet's announcement of Hazael's coming reign over Syria, as well as his Judgment on Israel (8:7-15).

Following the ministry of Elisha, the reign of Jehoram (8:16-24) and Ahaziah (8:25-29) of Judah are discussed. The evil reign of Jehoram is first given along with his wrong marriage with Ahab's daughter (8:16-19). It is during his rule that Edom and Libnah revolt against Judah (8:20-22). Ahaziah's reign is also evil according to his fathers (8:23-27). The last fading unity of Israel and Judah is recorded as they defend Ramoth-Gilead together against the Syrians (8:28-29). Jehoram of Israel is wounded in this battle.

While Jehoram lay wounded at Jezreel, Jehu is anointed by a representative of Elisha to purge the house of Ahab. Jehu proceeds at once to Jezreel. The wounded Jehoram along with Ahaziah of Judah go out to meet him. The purge begins. Jehoram is slain by Jehu (9:11-26) followed by Ahaziah (9:27-29). Jezebel is later cast out of the palace window and the dogs eat up

her flesh leaving only a few small pieces (9:30-37). The purging does not stop, but continues. Seventy sons of Ahab are slain (10:1-11), along with Ahaziah's kinsmen (10:12-17), and the worshippers of Baal (10:18-28).

Following Jehu's death, the wicked queen Athaliah seizes the throne (11:1-3). She slays all of the royal seed except Joash who is smuggled away by the sister of the dead king. Some time later, Jehoiada arranges for Joash to be crowned. Athaliah is seized and slain, and a new king begins his reign (11:4-21). The reign of Joash begins by a repairing of the temple (12:1-16). While this is proper, he turns later and bribes the Syrians by giving up some of the sacred objects of the temple (12:17-18). This is followed by an account of his assassination (12:19-21).

Jehoahaz and Jehoash of Israel continue to rule over the northern kingdom (13:1-25). Jehoahaz is brought very low by Syria. He continues, however, in idolatry (13:8-9). Jehoash gets revenge on Syria for the invasions made on Israel during his father's reign. He defeats Hazael of Syria three times, recovering the cities which he had taken from Jehoahaz (13:10-25). He is likewise an evil ruler in the sight of Yahweh. Elisha dies during his reign (13:14-21).

Amaziah's reign of Judah is a mixture of victory and defeat. He first of all puts to death the assassins of his father who had been killed by conspirators as he lay in bed wounded after a defeat from the Syrian army (14:1-6). He next defeats Edom (14:7) and following victory, engages in conflict against king Jehoash of Israel. Challenging him to war (14:8-10), he is defeated so disastrously by Jehoash that his leadership becomes discredited in Jerusalem (14:11-19a). Fleeing to Lachish, he is subsequently pursued and slain. He is carried back to Jerusalem and there buried (14:19b-20). Azariah is noted as his replacement to the throne of Judah (14:21-22).

Jeroboam II of Israel is next recounted as Israel's thirteenth king (14:23-29). He restores the border of Israel from "Hamath to the sea of the Arabah" (14:25), but his reign is one of departure from Yahweh (14:23-27). A summary is given of his recovery of Damascus and the chapter is concluded with his death (14:28-29).

In chapter fifteen, Uzziah's reign over Judah is summarized, He is smitten with leprosy for his intrusion into the priesthood (15:1-5a), and his reign is concluded as one of co-regency with his son, Jotham (15:5-7).

At the same time, things begin to move swiftly to a climax in Israel. Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam II, reigns for six months and is assassinated by Shallum, an army captain (15:8-12). Shallum reigns one month and is assassinated by Menahem (15:13-15). Menahem's reign is a brutal one (15:16-22). The horrible practice of disemboweling pregnant women is carried on in his warfare (15:16-18). Pul of Assyria invades Israel during his reign and causes her to pay tribute to Assyria at fifty shekels of silver per head (15:19-20). Menahem dies (15:21-22), and Pekahiah reigns for two years doing that which is evil in Yahweh's sight (15:23-24). He is assassinated by Pekah (15:25-26), who in turn takes the rule (15:27-31). The land of Israel is invaded by Tiglath-Pileser during his rule (15:27-29), and he too dies unnaturally by assassination at the hand of Hoshea (15:30-31).

The historian returns at this point to resume the story of Judah. He narrates the reign of Jotham (15:32-38). He does that which is right before the Lord except that he fails to remove the high places (15:32-36). Also during his reign, Rezin of Syria, and Pekah of Israel begin to come against Judah (15:37). He dies and is succeeded by Ahaz (15-38). Ahaz of Judah is a wicked king who is as idolatrous as the kings of Israel (16:1-4). When Rezin and Pekah invade Judah, he seeks help from Assyria (16:5-8), who in turn respond by smiting Damascus (16:9). Ahaz then

goes to Damascus to visit and pay homage to Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria (16:9-20). He sets up an idolatrous Assyrian altar and worships before it. This is indeed a sad day for Israel.

In Israel, the last king to reign before the Assyrian captivity is king Hoshea (17:1-41). His wicked rule is quickly evaluated (17:1-2), followed by Israel's submission before Assyria and his imprisonment (17:3-4). The people of Israel are taken captive into Assyria (17:5-6), and the reasons for their captivity are given (17:7-17). Their secret sins (17:7-9), their idolatrous worship (17:10-12), their disregard for God's Word (17:13), their hardened hearts (unbelief—17:14), and their unrestrained evil (17:15-17) have led to their judgment. Their captivity is divinely justified (17:18-23). The people of Samaria are removed to Assyria and Israel is repopulated with foreigners (17:24). A syncretistic worship (17:25-33), and a separation from pure and proper worship (17:34-41) are two tragic results of this colonization.

Judgment on Israel is now accomplished, and only the surviving kingdom of Judah is left (18:1-25:30). Hezekiah, the king of Judah, is discussed following the Assyrian captivity. The writer of 2 Kings is concerned about four events in Hezekiah's reign: his revival (18:1-6), his victory over Assyria (18:7-19:37), his illness and recovery (20:1-11), and his mistake of receiving Babylonian emissaries (20:12-21).

His revival is marked by a separation from idols (18:1-4) and a turning to the Lord (18:5-6). The writer of Kings summarizes his revival: "He removed the high places, and broke the images, and cut down the idols, and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him" (2 Kings 18:4-5).

Hezekiah also seeks to throw off the Assyrian yoke and is confronted with two invasions from Assyria. In the first invasion, Hezekiah ends up paying tribute to the king of Assyria (18:9-16). In the second invasion of Judah, Sennacherib plans to capture and destroy Jerusalem (18:17-37). Isaiah intervenes and promises victory to Hezekiah (19:1-34). His promise is fulfilled as the Lord himself defeats the Assyrians and sends them back to Nineveh where Sennacherib is later murdered by two of his sons (19:35-37).

The third incident records the illness of Hezekiah (20:1-11). He is sick to the point of death (20:1), and prays for recovery (20:2-3). The Lord grants it (20:4-7), confirming it with a sign (20:8-11). The final incident that is revealed about Hezekiah concerns the exposition of his wealth and defenses to a Babylonian embassy (20:12-19). This is rebuked by Isaiah and judgment is announced (20:14-19). Hezekiah's remaining acts and death are given and Manasseh reigns in his stead (20:20-21).

Manasseh's reign is characterized by flagrant idolatries (21:1-18). His evil reign sees a return to Baal and Asherah worship (21:1-3a), to a worship of the hosts of heaven (21:3b-4), and even to an offering of human sacrifices (21:5-6). His seducing influence on others (21:7-9) is rebuked by the Lord (21:10-15), and his death is recounted (21:16-18). Amon succeeds him, and is later assassinated by his servants (21:19-26).

The son of Josiah continues the reign (22:1-23:30). The book of the law is discovered during his reign (22:1-14), and Huldah the prophetess speaks a message to Josiah (22:15-20). Reformation follows (23:1-25). A covenant is made to obey the law (23:1-3), a complete religious purge on idolatry is set forth (23:4-20), a command is given to keep the Passover (23:21-23) and spiritistic worship ends (23:24-25). Josiah dies at Megiddo trying to help Assyria against Egypt (23:26-30).

Jehoahaz, Josiah's son, follows his father to the throne (23:31-34). He is imprisoned by Pharaoh, and Jehoiakim is set up as king by Pharaoh-Neco in his place. Jehoiakim reigns under Pharaoh until Nebuchadnezzar causes him to be his servant (23:34-24:1a). He later rebels against Nebuchadnezzar and is rebuked by the lord for his sins and evil practices (24:1b-6a). Jehoiachin reigns in his stead (24:6b-16). He also does evil in the sight of the Lord (24:6b-9) and is carried away captive to Babylon in the first deportation (24:10-16).

Judah's last king, Zedekiah, takes the throne (24:17-25:7). Being made king by Nebuchadnezzar, (24:17-19) he rebels against him (24:20), and the king of Babylon besieges Jerusalem (25:1-3). The city is soon overthrown (25:4-6) and Zedekiah is carried away captive to Babylon (25:7). Jerusalem is burned and the temple is plundered (25:8-17). The nobles are slain (25:18-21), and Gedaliah is appointed as acting governor (25:22-26). He is later assassinated (25:25-26), and the book concludes with an account of Jehoiachin's release from prison (25:27-30).

1 and 2 Kings mark the end of the "Former Prophets" in the Hebrew Scriptures. We now turn our attention to the "Latter Prophets."

The Latter Prophets

The prophets we call the “Latter Prophets” consist of the “major prophets” (longer in length), and the Twelve, the minor (shorter length) prophets. The Latter Prophets are also called “writing prophets” because the prophets preceding, such as Elijah and Elisha, spoke messages that were not written down. The Latter Prophets become the writing prophets because the oracles they spoke ended up in written texts. The larger prophetic writings (major prophets), such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, were kept independent and are found under their own names. The Twelve (minor prophets) were brought together in the Hebrew text to form one book.

I understand a Prophet to be a person, a *Nabi*’ in Hebrew, (*Nevi’im*: plural of prophets) the one who speaks for God. As we look at the Prophets, we find several themes. They may speak judgment. They call the people to obey Yahweh; if the people are committing spiritual adultery the prophets will point that out. If the people are committing injustice, that will be pointed out and judgment is announced; and if there is no repentance, God will come and judge. There is also the theme of restoration; not only will God judge, He also promises to restore them after judgment when there is repentance. These are the areas in which the Prophets act, and their verbal ministry became the written message.

As we look at the prophets of Israel, it would be helpful if we get some insight into the chronological sequence or timeframe in which the prophets prophesied. One of the mnemonic devices that I have used to help me remember the chronology is JJAHHIM—NaZ—HaJ (pronounced ja-heem—nazz—haj). This mnemonic device is to help remember the pre-exilic prophets—those prophets who prophesied before the exile of the northern kingdom of Israel by Assyria, and the exile of the southern kingdom of Judah by Babylon. “JJAHHIM” stands for Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah; “NaZ” stands for Nahum and Zephaniah; and “HaJ”

stands for Habakkuk and Jeremiah. We believe these pre-exilic prophets all prophesized, most likely in this order, before the period of captivity around 587 BC when Babylon came against Jerusalem in the southern kingdom of Judah and took them into captivity in Babylon. The prophets on which we have to put a question mark are Joel and Jonah since there is debate about when these two prophets actually should be dated, but for the sake of simplicity, we speak of the pre-exilic prophets (JAHIM—NaZ—HaJ) as prophets working and prophesying from the 8th century BC up to the time of 586 BC.

Following these prophets, we move into exile from 587 BC to 536 BC the time during which Judah was in Babylon. Babylon brought three deportations against Judah: in 606 BC, in 597 BC, and in 587 or 586 BC. It was after these deportations that the prophets of the exile, or the exilic prophets, began their ministry. Ezekiel, it is believed was taken in the second deportation around 597 BC. Conservative scholars believe that Daniel was taken around 606 BC. Many would place the exilic prophets in this order, according to when they ministered: Daniel, Ezekiel, and Obadiah. (DEO, or “Day-oh” as a mnemonic.) Although some modern scholars would date Daniel much later during the Maccabean period between the testaments, conservative scholars date Daniel during the period of exile; the earlier dating would be the more traditional time of the dating of Daniel, and is supported by the teaching of Christ in the New Testament (Matthew 24:15).

Then we have what we call the post-exilic prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, (HaZeM, or “hazz-em” as a mnemonic). Haggai and Zechariah ministered from 520 BC to around 516 BC and Malachi sometime later. As I said before, Joel and/or Jonah might also be post-exilic prophets in terms of the composition of their accounts.

The above order is the basic, rough timeline for the dating of the pre-exilic prophets, exilic prophets, and post-exilic prophets. It is important to note that they are listed above in what we believe to be the proper chronological order. That order, again here more simply: the prophets of the pre-exilic period were Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah (JJAHHIM—NaZ—HaJ) with question mark on Jonah and Joel. The exilic prophets were Ezekiel, Obadiah, and Daniel. The post-exilic prophets were Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi. This ordering is not the order in which they appear in either the Hebrew or English Bibles, this is simply the chronological order, and we are aided in remembering that chronological order by the mnemonic devices JJAHHIM NaZ HaJ, DEO, HaZeM. Please note that what now follows is the order in which these “Latter Prophets” are listed in the Hebrew Scriptures. We start with the major prophets - Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Then we have the Twelve (minor prophets) - Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. (Daniel is found later in the Hebrew Scriptures under “the Writings.”) We are going to cover each of the Latter Prophets in the order in which they appear in the Hebrew Scriptures, and give a brief summary of each.

Isaiah

The prophet Isaiah and the prophet Micah were contemporaries, and both prophesized during the reigns of the Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, all kings of the southern kingdom of Judah. Isaiah started his ministry during the reign of king Uzziah, king Jotham’s predecessor. We could date Isaiah from about 740 BC to 698 BC, although there is a debate in the academic world with reference to the composition and dating of the book of Isaiah. There are many modern scholars who believe that there were several different authors of the book, or body of work, of Isaiah.

They refer to a first Isaiah as that of Isaiah himself, comprised of chapters 1 through 39, speaking during the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. There are those who believe there is a second Isaiah, and this is felt to most likely be a prophet who lived during the time of the Babylonian exile who wrote chapters 40 through 55, which deal primarily with deliverance. The context is that of the exile which has already come to an end. The people of Israel have received double for all of their sins, and now Yahweh is ready to deliver the people and bring them back to the promised land. God is raising a deliverer in Cyrus the Persian, who in 539 BC defeated Babylon. Cyrus becomes a type of messiah that was to come and deliver God's people back to the promised land. It is because of this context of exile and deliverance that many modern scholars feel chapter 49 to 55 was written some years later than Isaiah by a "second Isaiah." Then there are those speak of a third Isaiah, writing chapters 56 to 66, and originating sometime in the post-exilic period.

Conservative scholars will hold to the traditional view, which believes that Isaiah wrote the entirety of Isaiah around the 7th century BC, and God allowed Isaiah to project himself into the period of exile for the second part of the book. I believe John 12:37-43 supports Isaiah the prophet as the author of the entire book.

In the first part of Isaiah, chapters 1 through 39, we have prophecies or oracles Isaiah gave against the southern kingdom of Judea as well as against nations surrounding Judah; Isaiah's prophetic ministry or proclamation not only had to do with Judah, but also with neighboring nations. We find some classic passages in this section. For example, Isaiah delivers a great statement of Israel's apostasy in chapter 1 as he speaks against Israel's empty religion and worship practices that are not what Yahweh desires. One of the literary forms in the Hebrew Scriptures found here is what we might call the "lawsuit" type or format in which the oracle is

delivered as if in a courtroom. Modern scholars have developed a hermeneutic or way of interpreting and understanding Scripture known as “form criticism” in which they study a particular passage through the lens of a certain literary form. The form we see here is that of a lawsuit, Yahweh is calling Israel to court, calling witnesses to the charges, and He Himself is serving as the prosecution against her. As we read Isaiah 1, it begins with something you might hear in a courtroom. “Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For Yahweh has spoken: ‘I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner’s manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand’” (Isaiah 1:2-3).

God begins to tell Israel what she has done wrong. In Isaiah 1:11-16, it is as if Yahweh is saying, “I don’t want your offerings. I am tired of all this; when you come before me, you do not bring a lifestyle that allows me to receive your worship, so do not bring your empty worship anymore.” Yahweh tells her in Isaiah 1:16b-17, “Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.” If the people will do this, Yahweh assures them: “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool” (Isaiah 1:18). He did not want their sacrifices He wanted to see justice. He wanted to see them living the lifestyle to which He had called them, and then they could approach Him with their worship.

As we move through first part of Isaiah, other classic passages appear. For example, many are familiar with Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” The immediate context is that of King Ahaz being invaded by Pekah, the son of King Remaliah of the northern kingdom of Israel and by King Rezin of Syria. Yahweh is giving a message that it will not be

long before Assyria will come in and lay waste to the land of Syria and of the northern kingdom of Israel, and as a sign of that, Yahweh explains that a young woman, who at that time is no doubt a virgin, would bear a son. Her son would still be very young by the time the invading armies of Syria and Israel would be defeated. This son will be called “Immanuel” which shows that God is with Judah during this long ordeal. The long-term context and fulfillment is that this son born to the virgin becomes an illustration used by the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 1:18-25), to explain and illustrate the biological divine miracle of the virgin birth of Jesus the Messiah. This child is called “Jesus” because He saves His people, and not only brings political deliverance but spiritual salvation, and He is literally God with us (Immanuel) as the God-Man (Matthew 1:23; 28:20).

In the second part of Isaiah, from chapters 40 through 55, the emphasis is very different from what we find in chapter 1 to 39. It is an emphasis of comfort. In chapter 40 we read the classic passage, “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins. . . . He tends his flock like a shepherd; He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.” (Isaiah 40:1-2, 11). The context is that of deliverance, and a second exodus. God is creating a new people again, creating an exodus far greater and more wonderful than the former exodus from Egypt. The messenger crying in the desert is ultimately applied to John the Baptist preparing the way for Christ’s ministry (Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:3).

There are four great servant passages in this second section of Isaiah. Isaiah 42:1-9, 49:1-13, and 50:1-11 show the Messiah as the Servant of the Lord. I believe all are fulfilled in Christ seen through New Testament lenses. Isaiah 42:1-9 shows the gentleness of Christ (Matthew

12:15-21); Isaiah 49:1-13 shows Christ's ministry as a light to the Gentiles (Luke 2:32); and Isaiah 50 speaks of Christ's suffering at His trial (Matthew 27:30). Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is known as the "Suffering Servant" passage, which so beautifully tells the story of our Lord Jesus Christ and His great vicarious suffering on behalf of our sins (Acts 8:30-35; 1 Peter 2:18-25).

In Isaiah chapters 56 to 66, we find twin themes of judgment followed by restoration. Unlike the constant consolation found in chapters 40 through 55, in this last section we have Yahweh's condemnation and judgment followed by words of deliverance and restoration, pointing to our ultimate restoration in a new heaven and new earth.

Flow of Thought—Isaiah: The *theme* of the book of Isaiah is the salvation of Messiah. The book of Isaiah divides itself into three basic sections: prophecies of condemnation (1:1-35:10), the historical parenthesis concerning Hezekiah (36:1-39:8), and prophecies of comfort (40:1-66:24).

The first section begins with prophecies concerning Judah (1:1-6:13). She is indicted by Yahweh for her sins (1:1-15) and given an invitation to repent with a fore view of her future exaltation (1:16-2:5). Her traditionalism (2:6), wealth (2:7), and idolatry are cited (2:8-9) along with an announcement of coming judgment (2:10-4:6). Her sin is pictured in a parable of a vineyard (5:1-7) and woes are pronounced upon her (5:8-23). At the end of this first section is a tremendous chapter on the cleansing and commissioning of the prophet himself (6:1-13).

Following this come the prophecies of Immanuel (7:1-12:6). The sign concerning Immanuel (7:1-25) and His deliverance (8:1-9:7) are given along with prophecies of Samaria's (9:8-10:4) and Assyria's doom (10:5-34). Chapters eleven and twelve give a summary discussion of the kingdom of Messiah. Its character (11:1-16), and the thanksgiving and joy involved in it (12:1-6) are both given.

Not only is Judah the object of God's Judgment but the Gentile nations around her are as well (13:1-23:18). Babylon (13:1-14:27), Philistia (14:28-32), Moab (15:1-16:14), Damascus and Ethiopia (17:1-18:7), Egypt (19:1-20:6), Edom (21:1-12) Arabia (21:13-17), Jerusalem (22:1-25), and Tyre (23:1-18) are all mentioned.

In the next three chapters, then, the future judgment and blessing of Israel is outlined (24:1-27:13). The judgment of the tribulation period is detailed (24:1-23) followed by the triumphs of the kingdom age (25:1-26:21), and the destruction of Israel's enemies (27:1-13). From chapters 28:1-33:24, prophecies of woe are announced against the unbelievers of Israel, and in chapters 34:1-35:10, more prophecies concerning Israel's future are given. The writer speaks of Armageddon (34:1-17), and the blessings to follow (35:1-10).

The second major section is the historical parenthesis concerning Hezekiah (36:1-39:8). His victory over the Assyrian army from the hand of Yahweh is recounted (36:1-37:38). His illness and his divine healing is presented (38:1-22), and the section closes with a narration of his foolish mistake of showing the Babylonian embassy his wealth and power (39:1-8).

The third major section concerns the prophecies of comfort spoken by Isaiah to Israel (40:1-66:24). The promise of deliverance (40:1-48:22), the person of the Deliverer (49:1-57:21), and the provision for the delivered are all discussed (58:1-66:24).

In giving the promise of deliverance (40:1-48:22), Messiah is given as the Comforter who will bring deliverance (40:1-31). Yahweh is then contrasted with lifeless idols (41:1-29), followed by an excellent description of the person of Messiah as Yahweh's servant (42:1-25), and the redemption and restoration He shall bring to Israel (43:1-28). The true God is then declared (44:1-8), and all false gods are denounced (44:9-28). Yahweh is demonstrated to be the true God from His creation and redemption (44:24-25) as well as from the coming captivity and

future restoration which He would perform (44:26-28). All of this is followed by the announcement of the downfall of Babylon, Israel's own oppressor (45:1-48:22). God's complete justice and honor is therefore upheld.

After the promise of deliverance the person of the Deliverer Himself is presented (49:1-57:21). His mission to restore Israel and enlighten the Gentiles is first stated (49:1-26). This is followed by His humiliation (50:1-11), and His consolation (51:1-52:12). Verses 52:13-53:9 give a tremendous treatment of His passion and exaltation (52:13-53:9) (53:10-12). His incarnation (52:13-15), rejection (53:1-3), vicarious sacrifice (53:4-9), resurrection (53:10-11), and inheritance (53:12) are all miraculously prophesied. The sub-section concludes with His offer of salvation to Israel (54:1-17), and to the Gentiles (55:1-56:8), and His judgment on the wicked rulers (56:9-12) and the populace (57:1-21).

The final sub-section sets forth the provision for the delivered (58:1-66:24). In a number of discourses, the acceptable worship of Israel is contrasted with the unacceptable (58:1-14). Israel's repentance and coming Redeemer is spoken of (60:1-22), the glory of Jerusalem in the kingdom age is predicted (60:1-22), the good tidings of Messiah is set down (61:1-62:12), followed by the announcement of Messiah's coming judgment on the nations (63:1-6). A prayer of Israel's confession to Yahweh is given (63:7-64:12), along with His answer of judgment on the rebellious (65:1-7, 10-12), and blessing on the repentant (65:8-10, 17-25).

The book concludes with a final summary of the entire prophecy in retrospect (66:1-24). The warning to the ungodly (66:1-4), the national rebirth of Israel (66:5-9), Jerusalem's future glory (66:10-14), judgments of Yahweh (66:15-18), the inclusion of Gentiles in the Kingdom (66:14-21), Israel's perpetuity (66:22), and the destiny of the righteous and wicked (66:23-24) are all reiterated.

Jeremiah

While being ordained a prophet in his youth, Jeremiah gave his first prophecy in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign (626 BC) and continued to prophesy during the reigns of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jehoiachin until the destruction of Jerusalem (586 BC). He prophesied then beyond the reign of Zedekiah and the fall of Judah in Egypt. These last days of prophesying in Egypt may have been for several years.

According to internal evidence with Jeremiah, the book was most likely written in several stages. An earlier edition was destroyed, and several additions followed including later prophecies edited by Jeremiah's friend and secretary, Baruch. This explains the non-chronological factor of the book far better than some of the destructive, divisive criticism of some modern-day critics.

Not only does internal evidence in Jeremiah's prophecy support and explain his authorship, but external evidence also gives support to Jeremian authorship. Daniel alludes to Jeremiah (Daniel 9:2), and the period of Jeremiah and his prophecy is confirmed in 2 Chronicles 36:21 and Ezra 1:1. Ecclesiasticus, Josephus, and the Talmud all attribute the destruction of Jerusalem to the rejection of Jeremiah's prophecies. The New Testament also both explicitly and implicitly refers to the prophecy of Jeremiah (Matthew 2:17-18; 21:13, Mark 11:17, Luke 19:46, Romans 11:27, and Hebrews 8:8-13).

After the division of the nation into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah, there were four religious declines and three revivals in Judah. The last revival occurred during the reign of king Josiah (640-609 BC) which took place after the rediscovery of the Law, from some hidden storage place within the temple. Following this revival, up to the time of the Babylonian captivity, there is nothing but political, moral, and religious decline in the

southern kingdom of Judah. It was during this period that Jeremiah was called to carry on his ministry.

Assyria had been the great power during the middle period of the divided kingdom but after the fall of Nineveh, its capital, in 612 BC, Babylon gained great power and presence in the region. In arising to this exalted position, however, Babylon contended against Egypt, also a very powerful and able empire. These two powers created great dissension in Jerusalem, as some wanted to make an alliance with Egypt and others with Babylon. The counsel of God, however, was that His people look to Him, which they did not.

When Jehoiakim was made king (609-598 BC), he was one of Jeremiah's strongest opponents and was a very wicked man. He tried repeatedly to silence the prophet, and destroyed the first book of Jeremiah's prophecies. It was during Jehoiakim's reign that Egypt was defeated by the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish (605 BC), and Babylon became the dominant world power. The first conquest of Judah occurred (606 BC), and Daniel and some other Jews were taken captive to Babylon. Jehoiakim died, and his son Jehoiachin took the throne. The reign of Jehoiachin was short. He had reigned only three months when the Babylonians again occupied Jerusalem (597 BC) and carried Jehoiachin and other deportees off to Babylon. (Jehoiachin would be released thirty-seven years later under the Persian king, Cyrus.) Zedekiah was appointed as a vassal ruler of Jerusalem by the suzerain Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah protected the prophet Jeremiah on occasions, but being a weak ruler, was not able to follow Jeremiah's prophetic utterances. When Jerusalem began to rebel against the rule of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city of Jerusalem and in 586 BC, the city was taken captive for the final time by Babylon. The city was destroyed and Zedekiah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were carried off into captivity in Babylon.

After the conquest of 586 BC, Jeremiah and many common people were left in the land under the governorship of Gedaliah. When Gedaliah was assassinated, certain Jews forced the prophet Jeremiah to accompany them as they fled to Egypt for refuge. It was in Egypt that the prophet died. Chapters 40-45 are concerned with this period of time.

The purpose of Jeremiah is to announce the inevitable judgment that is going to come against the southern kingdom of Judah. The judgment to come was to be in the form of an army out of the north—the army of Babylon who took Judah captive. Because the people had delivered themselves over to idolatry, and had forsaken the Lord, Jeremiah told them this judgment would be impossible to escape and would be in the near future. Warnings are given by word, sign, and symbol, and interspersed with warnings against various nations who were enemies of God.

Against the dark background of idolatry, threat, and the punishment of exile, there appeared some glorious Messianic prophecies which pointed to a better day. Final restoration for Israel is described after a period of great tribulation (Jeremiah 30:3-10) when Messiah, the Branch (Jeremiah 23:6), would reign.

In Jeremiah 31:31-34 we have the New Covenant in which the Lord will write the Torah on the hearts of the people and take away sins. This covenant is fulfilled in the work of Christ who is the mediator of the New Covenant by His sacrificial death. He applied this covenant to Himself at the Last Supper when He took the cup and said, “This cup represents the New Covenant in my blood” (Luke 22:20). The book of Hebrews applies this New Covenant to the redemption works of Christ (Hebrews 8-10).

Flow of Thought—Jeremiah: The *theme* of the book of Jeremiah is judgment against Judah. The book of Jeremiah may be divided into three basic sections: the prophecies before the captivity (1:1-39:18), the prophecies after the captivity (40:1-51:64), and the historical appendix.

In the first major section there are prophecies under Josiah and Jehoiakim (1:1-20:18), and prophecies which were delivered at various periods until the fall of Jerusalem (21:1-39:18). The book begins by giving the call and confirmation of Jeremiah (1:1-19). This is followed by a series of messages announcing Jerusalem's judgment. The sin of the nation is first declared. Her sin is apostasy and neglect of God (2:1-3:5). She is characterized as a stubborn ox (2:20) degenerate vine (2:21), a lustful prostitute (2:22-25), a shameless thief (2:26), a foolish idolater (2:27-28), a thankless people (2:29-32), an impudent transgressor (2:33), and a violent murderer (2:34-37).

The prophet then speaks of the devastation to come from the north (3:6-6:30). After mentioning the magnitude of Judah's apostasy (3:6-25), he proceeds to give the instrument of her Judgment (4:1-31), the various reasons for it (5:1-6:16), and the sufferings that would result from it (6:17-30).

In his third sermon the message was similar to the first although it was centered more on the religious conditions in Judah. Religionism and idolatry were condemned (7:1-10:25). After a strong rebuke of apostate religionism and its corrupting influences (7:1-34), further warnings of judgment are given (8:1-22) in which the leaders as well as the people fall under God's judgment. Jeremiah laments over the situation (9:1-26), and the sermon closes with a satire on idolatry (10:1-25), giving its folly (10:1-16) and the judgment to come upon those who worship idols (10:17-25).

In the fourth message, the prophet rebukes the people for disobeying the Palestinian covenant (11:1-13). His own life is threatened (11:14-17), but following prayer (12:1-6), the prophet pronounces the Lord's lamentation for Judah (12:7-17). This lamentation is followed by the sign of the lion-cloth (13:1-27) in which the prophet showed the ruin of the nation away from God and their predicted captivity in Babylon.

The message of drought is next recorded (14:1-22) in which the empty ritualism of the nation and their rejection by the Lord was described. Jeremiah gives intercession for the people but it is rejected and judgment becomes inevitable (15:1-21). Jeremiah himself becomes a sign of this judgment as he is not permitted to marry, nor to observe funerals or festivities (16:1-18). This is followed by another description of Judah's terrible sin (17:1-27), along with a message concerning the Sabbath as an index to loyalty or disloyalty to Yahweh.

This brings the writer to the message of the potter's house and its significance (18:1-23). As the potter had sovereign control over his pottery, so God has control over His people. This is immediately followed by another sign in which the prophet breaks an earthen vessel, thus symbolizing how the Lord would smash His idolatry-ridden people (19:1-15). As usual, with such pointed prophesying, persecution comes (20:1-18). The chief temple guard, Pashur, imprisons Jeremiah. Jeremiah strongly perseveres announcing Pashur's doom and triumphing over defeat.

The second major sub-section begins in chapter twenty-one in which prophecies are recorded which were delivered at various times until Jerusalem's fall (21:1-39:18). First of all messages are given concerning various reigning kings of Judah (21:1-22:30). Messages of judgment are delivered concerning Zedekiah (21:1-22:9), Shallum (22:10-12), Jehoiakim (22:13-19), and Jehoiachin (22:20-30). This is followed by a great Messianic prophecy in which

Messiah is exalted (23:1-8), and the false prophets are denounced for their ungodliness (23:9-15), and for their rejection of God's Word (23:16-40).

The vision of the two baskets of figs is next recorded (24:1-10) in which the good figs symbolize the best of the people carried to Babylon, and the bad figs symbolize the apostates who remain in Jerusalem to resist Babylon. The length of the captivity is then predicted (25:1-11) as well as God's future judgment on Babylon (25:12-38).

Jeremiah follows this prediction with a prediction of the destruction of the temple which was to come (26:1-6). This resulted in Jeremiah's arrest (26:7-11). God is with him and he is soon delivered to continue his prophetic ministry (26:12-24).

Not being slowed down by persecution, the prophet saddles himself with an ox yoke to symbolize the yoke of Babylon which would fall upon Jerusalem's neck (27:1-22). A false prophet, Hananiah, rebukes Jeremiah's yoke and is punished by death (28:1-17).

Following the recording of this incident, the prophet's letters of comfort to the exiles are given in which he encourages them to be peaceful and to multiply as they await their future restoration (29:1-23). Shemaiah, another false prophet, attacks Jeremiah by sending a scathing letter to Zephaniah, the new temple overseer. Jeremiah is shown the letter and writes another letter to Babylon, condemning Shemaiah and announcing his judgment (29:24-32).

In the midst of all the prophecies of judgment are prophecies of coming restoration (30:1-33:26). The day of the Lord is first described (30:1-17), along with the future deliverance and restoration of Israel (30:18-24). The joy and blessings of Israel's national homegoing is set forth (31:1-26) as well as the basis whereby it would be accomplished (31:27-40). This basis is the new covenant of Yahweh which will be based entirely on the sacrificed blood of Christ. This will

be of grace in contrast to law and will be a perpetual covenant to Israel making her an everlasting nation.

Jeremiah demonstrates his faith in Israel's future restoration by buying a field at Anathoth and hiding his deed in order to obtain it later at the time of restoration (32:1-44). This is followed by the great prophecy of the Davidic kingdom (33:1-26), in which the glory of the kingdom (33:1-14) its king (33:15-18), and the certainty of its fulfillment are all set down (33:19-26).

After this glimpse of future restoration, the prophet returns to his prophecies of coming judgment. In chapter thirty-four, Jeremiah warns Zedekiah of the coming captivity (34:1-7) and condemns him for breaking his agreement to free the Hebrew slaves (34:8-22). The message concerning the Rechabites follows (35:1-19), in which their obedience to their founder is contrasted with Israel's disobedience to Yahweh.

Opposition to Jeremiah's word is again seen. This time Jeremiah is instructed to write a scroll concerning the coming judgment and Baruch is enjoined to read it (36:1-20). It is shortly brought to king Jehoiakim who, upon hearing it, cuts and burns the roll (36:21-26). The scroll is re-written as the indestructibility of God's Word is demonstrated (36:27-32).

Coming to the close of the first section, the book sets down the personal experiences of Jeremiah during the Babylonian siege (37:1-38:28). The prophet is interviewed by Zedekiah after a brief Egyptian victory, and continues to warn of the Babylonian destruction (37:1-10). He is later charged with desertion and is placed into a dungeon (37:11-16). He is later removed to the prison court (37:17-21). Another interview with Zedekiah takes place, and again the prophet warns of the captivity, advising the king to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar (38:1-3). His appeal is again rejected and he remains in prison (38:4-13).

The judgment finally falls as the city is burned, Zedekiah's sons are killed, he is blinded and is carried in chains to Babylon (39:1-10). God does not forget his servants. Jeremiah is treated kindly and is released (39:11-14), and Ebed-Melech is rewarded for his previous concern and identification with the prophet when he was in the dungeon (39:15-18).

After giving the prophecies before the captivity, the second major section of the book begins in chapter forty in which prophecies after the captivity are recorded (40:1-51:64).

First of all, there are the prophecies which were delivered to the remaining remnant that stayed in Jerusalem (40:1-51:64). Jeremiah decides to stay in Jerusalem with Gedaliah (40:1-8), It is not long, however, before problems arise and the plot to assassinate Gedaliah is discovered (40:1-16). Falling to heed the warning concerning this plot, Gedaliah is assassinated (41:1-18).

The people are disturbed about whether to remain in the land or not, and come to Jeremiah for advice. He warns them against going to Egypt (42:1-22), but in disobedience the people go to this very place (43:1-7). In response to their action, the prophet predicts the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar (43:8-13), and rebukes the Jews in Egypt (44:1-19) warning them of the judgment they would face under Nebuchadnezzar's conquest (44:20-30). The prophet's message of comfort to Baruch in chapter forty-five concludes his prophecies prior to those delivered against the nations (45:1-5).

Beginning in chapter forty-six, the prophet gives prophecies against the nations (46:1-51:64). Prophecies are delivered against Egypt (46:1-28), Philistia and Phoenicia (47:1-7), Moab (48:1-47), Ammon (49:1-6), Edom (49:7-22), Damascus (49:23-27), Kedar and Hazor (49:28-33), Elam (49:34-39), and finally against Babylon (50:1-51:64).

The book closes with an historical appendix (52:1-34) in which the fall of Jerusalem is reiterated (52:1-30), and the liberation of Jehoiachin is briefly stated (52:31-34).

Ezekiel

Ezekiel (*Yehezkel*) means “God strengthens.” Until recently, the book of Ezekiel was not seriously questioned as to its genuineness and unity. Some modern scholars have departed from traditional views and question the validity that Ezekiel was written in its entirety by the prophet. Most of the arguments against Ezekiel authorship tend to be confusing, contradicting, subjective, and imaginative. Most traditional scholars view the book of Ezekiel as perfectly genuine, and give a number of good reasons supporting the authorship of Ezekiel. Some of these reasons are: The book contains the name of Ezekiel as its prophet. The book is clearly autobiographical and the first person singular is used throughout. The unity and similarity of thought throughout the entire book make it clear that the book is that of one mind. Finally, many of the prophecies are dated and localized in the time of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel began to prophesy in the fifth year of Jehoiachin’s captivity in the Babylonian exile of Judah in 597 BC. The last recorded date of his prophesying is in his twenty-seventh year, or in 570 BC. Ezekiel’s ministry covered twenty-two years. The background for Ezekiel’s time is the same as that of Jeremiah. The main difference between the two prophets, however, is the place of their prophesying. While Jeremiah remained in Jerusalem and prophesied until the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC, Ezekiel was taken captive in 597 BC in the second deportation. In exile in Babylon, Ezekiel’s home was at *Tel Abib*, the principal colony of the Judean exiles on the river *Chebar* (Kebbar).

From 597-586 BC, before the fall of Jerusalem, Ezekiel concentrated his message to the exiles in Babylon, reminding them that Yahweh would certainly judge the city and temple in a devastating judgment yet to come. After this occurred, he then became a consolation to the exiled Jews, by announcing a future day of restoration in which Israel would be regathered,

redeemed, and restored to their land under the magnificent reign of their king Messiah. The purpose of Ezekiel's ministry and prophecy was to communicate the fact that it was their own sinfulness that was bringing God's judgment against the people of Judah. He sets forth their personal responsibility and God's sovereignty in justness in bringing them into captivity. In addition to this, it was also his purpose to announce the inevitable judgment on the various Gentile nations surrounding Israel, and to reveal the glorious future restoration of Israel at the advent of Messiah.

Flow of Thought—Ezekiel: The *theme* of the book of Ezekiel is the captivity of the children of Israel and their glorious restoration. The book of Ezekiel may be divided into three basic divisions: prophecies against Judah and Jerusalem (1:1-24:27); prophecies against foreign nations (25:1-32:32). and prophecies of Israel's final restoration (33:1-48:35).

The book begins with a brief introduction in which the vision and commission of Ezekiel are given (1:1-3:27). The time and place for the vision is stated (1:1-3) followed by the vision itself (1:4-14). Ezekiel sees the glory of the Lord in the vision and this becomes preparatory to his commission. Having seen God's glory, the prophet is given his commission (2:1-3:27). His call (2:1-7), preparation (2:8-3:3), audience (3:4-9), mission (3:10-15), responsibility (3:16-21), and his encouragement from Yahweh (3:22-27) are all discussed.

Following this vision and commission, prophecies are uttered against Judah and Jerusalem. First of all, the overthrow of Jerusalem is predicted (4:1-7:27). This is predicted and interpreted through various symbolic signs. The sign of the tile (4:1-3), the sign of the prophet's physical position (4:4-8), the sign of famine (4:9-17), and the sign of the shaved head and divided hair (5:1-4) all speak of the coming Judgment. These signs are explained (5:5-17)

followed by a message against Israel's idolatry (6:1-14) and the announcement of the Babylonian invasion (7:1-27) as its nearness (7:1-9) and horrors (7:10-27) are expressed.

The sin of Jerusalem is next seen as Ezekiel receives visions of Jerusalem's sin and the departure of God's glory. Jerusalem's temple idolatry is first seen (8:1-18) with its idolatrous worship of the image of jealousy (8:1-6), Osiris (8:7-13), Tammuz (8:14-15), and sun worship (8:16-18). After this vision comes another setting down the Lord's punishment of idolaters by a slaying at Jerusalem.

Because of Jerusalem's disobedience, the prophet sees the glory of God departing from her (10:1-22). It goes from the cherub to the threshold (10:1-7), from the threshold to the east gate (10:8-22), and finally completely out of Jerusalem. With all of this going on, the prophet has a vision of Jerusalem's coming judgment (11:1-13). The judgment is described (11:1-13) along with a declaration of restoration to follow judgment (11:14-21). The prophet finally sees the glory of Yahweh depart from Israel becoming a sign of the inevitability of the coming judgment (11:22-25).

After predicting Jerusalem's overthrow and having described the sin of Jerusalem, the prophet speaks of the absolute certainty of Jerusalem's overthrow (12:1-24:27). This is first of all announced through signs (12:1-25). The sign of the removal of baggage (12:1-16), and the sign of trembling (12:17-20) give a visible illustration of the coming judgment.

These signs are followed by messages announcing Israel's same fate (12:21-14:23). The messages of certain (12:21-25) and imminent judgment (12:26-28), are given in addition to a message against lying prophets and prophetesses (13:1-23), and a message against Israel's idolatrous elders (14:1-23). Israel's elders were in the lowest depths of idolatry (14:1-11) and the judgment to fall on them was inevitable.

Not only are signs and plain messages used in announcing Israel's doom, but allegory is also used (15:1-17:24). The allegory of the vine is delivered first of all (15:1-8) in which Israel is pictured as a useless vine branch which is not good for anything. This is followed by the allegory of the faithless wife (16:1-63). This traces Israel's past, present, and future relation to Yahweh. Her original background (16:1-7) and former beauty (16:8-14) are seen against present infidelity (16:15-34) and divine judgment (16:35-43) due to the enormity of her iniquity (16:44-52). The allegory concludes by giving an account of Israel's future restoration (16:53-63).

The third and fourth allegories in this series are the allegory of the eagles (17:1-21) and the allegory of the cedar (17:22-24). The allegory of the eagles pictures Nebuchadnezzar's defeat of Zedekiah who has been trusting in Egyptian security, while the latter allegory sets forth the hope of Israel's future restoration through Messiah when He returns.

The announcement of judgment continues through further messages (18:1-22:31). God's justice is defended as divine dealing and individual responsibility are discussed (18:1-32). Because of this judgment, Ezekiel also gives a message of lamentation in which he laments for Israel's leaders, Jehoahaz (19:1-14), and Jehoiachin (19:5-9), as well as for Israel's land (19:10-14). The prophet then further vindicates the justice of Yahweh in dealing with Israel by reviewing her unfaithfulness (20:1-32). Her infidelity in Egypt (20:1-9), the wilderness (20:10-17), and in Canaan (20:18-49) is briefly traced.

Because of her sins, the prophet reiterates the coming judgment in his message concerning the sword (21:1-32). The Lord's sword is first seen and the sword of Nebuchadnezzar, the one who would actually be God's means of judgment, is then discussed. This message is followed by another which gives a clear indictment on Israel (22:1-31). Her sins are enumerated (22:1-12) and her judgment is enunciated (22:13-31) giving its details (22:13-22)

and recipients (22:23-31). It is all inclusive. The priests (22:23-26), princes (22:27), prophets (22:28), and people (22:29-31) are all included in it.

This major section of the book concludes by announcing its theme of judgment again by means of allegory and sign. The allegory of Oholah and Oholibah (23:1-49) give the judgment of both Samaria and Jerusalem. The sign of the boiling pot pictures the imminent destruction of Jerusalem and the horrors which would accompany it (24:1-14). Finally, the prophet was told not to mourn over his wife's death as a symbol of the coming judgment and the results it would bring. Ezekiel 24:22-23 reads: "And you will do as I have done. You will not cover the lower part of your face or eat the customary food [of mourners]. You will keep your turbans on your heads and your sandals on your feet. You will not mourn or weep but will waste away because of your sins and groan among yourselves."

The second major section of the book is next considered in which prophecies against foreign nations are given (25:1-32:32). Judgment is announced against Ammon (25:1-7), Moab (25:8-11), Edom (25:12-14), Philistia (25:15-17), Tyre (26:1-28:19) (at which time Satan's former state and fall is discussed) Sidon (28:20-26), and against Egypt (29:1-32:32). The announcement of Egypt's destruction (29:1-30:19), the instrument of her defeat (30:20-26) are both given, followed by a lamentation over her and her king (31:1-32:32). This judgment was fulfilled following Nebuchadnezzar's invasions in 572 and 568 BC.

The final major section of the book speaks of Israel's final restoration (33:1-48:35). The prophet's duty (33:1-20) and message (33:21-33) as a watchman is first given. A prophecy is then made regarding false shepherds in contrast to the True Shepherd of Israel (34:1-31). The false shepherds are indicted (34:1-6) and their judgment is stated. The work and rule of the True

Shepherd is also discussed. He will protect His people (34:11-22), rule over them (34:23-24), and bring peace to them in His reign (34:25-31).

Before discussing the actual restoration of Israel, judgment on Edom is predicted (35:1-15). The restoration of Israel to her land is next dealt with. The nations living at the latter time will be judged (36:1-7), and Israel will be returned to her land (36:8-25) as God's converted people (36:26-38). This re-gathering is further discussed in the vision of dry bones (37:1-14) and in the sign of the two sticks (37:15-28). The vision of dry bones is a picture of Israel's national and spiritual reinstatement of God's chosen people in kingdom blessing, while the sign of the two sticks speaks of the reunification of Israel and Judah (37:15-23), and the restoration of the Davidic throne (37:24-28).

In chapters 38 and 39, the remarkable prophecy of Gog and Magog is given (38:1-39:29). In this great prophecy both the attack of Gog (38:1-16) and his defeat (38:17-39:29) are discussed.

The Lord Himself will bring the defeat and He will be magnified in the victory. The victory of Yahweh will be followed by a massive burial.

From chapters forty to forty-eight, Ezekiel's vision concerns the land, Seen are the temple (40:1-43:27), the worship (43:1-46:24), and the land (4-7:1-48:35). Concerning the temple, its vision is stated (40:1-49) with specifications of the temple proper (41:1-26) and the chambers for the priests (42:1-20). The purpose for the temple is then seen (43:1-27). It will be used in providing a dwelling place for the *shekinah* glory (43:1-17), in providing a center for divine government (43:7), and sacrifice (43:18-27)

Concerning the worship, the ministers of the temple are described (44:1-31), the portion of and for the priests (45:1-6) and the prince (45:7-17) is discussed, and the discussion of worship ends with a short treatise on the actual worship of the prince and people (45:18-46:24).

The book ends by briefly treating the land. It discusses the river of the sanctuary (47:1-12), the borders of the land (47:13-23), and its division among the tribes, the priests, and Levites, and the Prince (48:1-35).

The Twelve

Hosea

Hosea is the first of the minor prophets, listed in the Hebrew Scriptures under the same title, “The Twelve.” Hosea carried out his ministry during the reign of Jeroboam II in the northern kingdom of Israel. I have often called Hosea, the “bad marriage” book because God told Hosea, “Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the Lord” (Hosea 1:2). Hosea and Gomer’s children were Jezreel (which means, “God scatters), Lo-Ruhamah (which means, “not loved”), and Lo-Ammi (which means, “not my people”). Hosea was to put Gomer away for a time, and then was to take her back some time later. This was a picture of Yahweh as a husband to Israel. God married Israel; He brought Israel to Himself as His bride. He loved her, cared for her, but Israel went away to worship other gods, and as a result, took upon the characteristics of those gods: adultery, immorality, injustice. All of the things that Yahweh had commanded His people not to do, Israel began to do. Therefore, there would be judgment and a separation, and then after Israel’s repentance, Yahweh would bring Israel back to Himself. The prophet Hosea’s marriage becomes a parable or an illustration of Yahweh and His relationship to unfaithful Israel.

In the first three chapters of Hosea, we have the personal application of the prophet and his life as it was made to Israel. In Hosea 4 through 13:8, we have God's charge and judgment against the people as a nation. In Hosea 4 we hear the charge: "Hear the word of the Lord, you Israelites, because the Lord has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: 'There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land'" (Hosea 4:1). The charge continues throughout the entire chapter. We are witnesses to a charge being leveled as in a courtroom scene. It is a lawsuit of sorts, with Hosea delivering the word of the Lord Himself, accusing Israel of swearing, lying, killing, stealing, committing adultery, breaking all kinds of boundaries, and of injustice to the poor. Mixing the charge against them with God's judgment, the prophet Hosea goes on and on in the name of Yahweh from chapter 4 to chapter 13, verse 8, exposing the social and immoral practices as well as the religious adultery of the northern kingdom of Israel.

At the end of Hosea we have a final note of restoration and blessing. "I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them. I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his roots; his young shoots will grow. His splendor will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon. Men will dwell again in his shade. He will flourish like the grain. He will blossom like a vine, and his fame will be like the wine from Lebanon" (Hosea 14:4-7). The reason for this is found in Hosea 14:4, Yahweh will love them freely because His anger has turned away from them. What a beautiful conclusion for the people of God, who, after judgment, are brought back into divine favor with Yahweh. This is the message of the book of Hosea. How true that is to believers today who have heard in 1 John 1:9, that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

In Hosea 11:1 we read, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.” In Matthew 2:15 this text is applied typologically to Christ, who is the final, perfect Israel called out of Egypt as the perfect representation of Israel.

Flow of Thought—Hosea: The *theme* of the book of Hosea is the judgment and the love of God for sinning Israel. The book of Hosea discusses God’s rejection and judgment on unfaithful Israel. The book may be divided as follows: the personal affliction of the prophet (1:1-3:5), the national reflection of the people (4:1-13:8), and the national restoration of the people (13:9-14:9).

Hosea begins with a personal history of the prophet’s own affliction over his unfaithful wife (1:1-3:5). Hosea is commanded to marry Gomer who is to later become a harlot (1:1-3a). This is to give a symbolic picture of Israel’s unfaithfulness to the Lord. From this marriage union come three children (1:3b-9): Jezreel (1:2-5), Lo-Ruhamah (1:6-7), and Lo-Ammi (1:8-9). Jezreel pointed to the approaching judgment of the Jehu dynasty because of the blood of Jezreel which Jehu shed. Lo-Ruhamah is a living reminder that Israel could no longer be pitied because of her idolatry, and Lo-Ammi gives the reason for the lack of pity and judgment. They are not to be considered as God’s people, nor He as their God because of their harlotry.

Amidst this gloomy picture of Israel’s tragic relation with Yahweh comes words of future restoration. This is for Israel (1:10-2:1). Concerning this great day the prophet writes:

Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel. Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah (1:11-2:1).

The message of judgment on Israel, however, continues in chapter two (2:2-13). Both Yahweh’s complaint (2:2-5) and chastening (2:6-13) are presented. Israel is indicted for her

shameful harlotry and warned of coming Judgment from Yahweh. A message of restoration again follows this indictment (2:14-23) as Yahweh's love for Israel (2:14-18), and His eternal betrothal with her (2:19-23) are both set forth. Out of her idolatry and harlotry, Yahweh's love restores and forgives her, and betroths her forever "in righteousness, and in justice, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies" (2:19).

In chapter three, the prophet gives a brief summary of Israel's past (3:1-3), present (3:4), and future (3:5). Israel was married and faithful to Yahweh at first, but because of her harlotry, she is seen without a king and prince. In the future, however, Israel will be cleansed from her adultery and restored under Messiah her king.

Following this personal section of the prophet's own marriage, the book concentrates on giving the national situation of Israel as the Lord's unfaithful wife (4:1-13:8). The spiritual and moral corruption of Israel is seen first of all. Her idolatry is a result of willful sinning (4:1-5), willful ignorance of the truth of God (4:6-11), and willful immoral cult practices (4:12-19). Her leaders are corrupt (5:1-7) and judgment alone awaits Ephraim (5:8-14)

Against such a dark background of sin and judgment, Israel's future repentance is foreseen (5:15-6:3). Her cry for restoration will be answered by Yahweh and she shall be restored again. Yahweh mourns over Israel (6:4-6), exposing her sins which would bring judgment (6:4-8:14). Her various crimes of murder (6:7-9), idolatry (6:10-11), adultery (7:1-4), and anarchy (7:5-7) are exposed along with Israel's disastrous foreign policy of confiding in Egypt and Assyria for help (7:8-8:3). Israel's indictment closes by a clear discussion of her perpetual idolatry.

As a result of her clear departure from Yahweh, retribution must fall upon Israel (9:1-10:15). Judgment is certain (9:1-9) because of her extreme apostasy at Gilgal (9:15-17), Bethel

(10:1-8), and Gibeah (10:9-10). The consequence of all of this apostasy is Judgment (10:11-15). Hosea thus summarizes this apostasy and its judgment: “But you have planted wickedness, you have reaped evil, you have eaten the fruit of deception. Because you have depended on your own strength and on your many warriors, the roar of battle will rise against your people, so that all your fortresses will be devastated—as Shalman devastated Beth Arbel on the day of battle, when mothers were dashed to the ground with their children” (10:13-14).

Israel’s king shall also be cut off. Hosea writes: “Thus will it happen to you, O Bethel, because your wickedness is great. When that day dawns, the king of Israel will be completely destroyed” (10:15).

God’s past love for Israel is remembered along with Israel’s past and present rejection of it (11:5-11). She is indifferent to God’s former love (11:12-12:14) and her idolatry is increased (13:1-3). Because of all this, judgment is inescapable for her (13:4-8). Yahweh says: “Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them and rip them open. Like a lion I will devour them; a wild animal will tear them apart” (13:8).

After the personal experience of the prophet and the indictment and announcement of judgment on Israel, the prophecy concludes with a discussion of Israel’s ultimate restoration (13:9-14:9). Sin is promised to be removed by redemption following Israel’s judgment (13:9-16), and a divine call is extended to Ephraim to come back to the Lord in repentance and faith (14:1-3). The book closes with a final promise of pardon and restoration (14:4-8), and with a pronouncement of Yahweh’s righteousness (14:9).

Joel

We can best remember Joel as a prophet that deals with a locust plague; think of locusts when you think about the book of Joel. In the first two chapters, he talks about a plague of locusts that has come upon the nation. In this plague, there is great weeping going on by the people and the priests because they are no longer able to worship the Lord because of the devastation upon the land by the locusts. Joel likens the locust plague to an invading army coming against the nation. Whether this was pre-exilic or post-exilic, we do not know for sure; there is debate.

However, this judgment leads to an exhortation to repentance. In verse 13 for example Joel says: “Put on sackcloth, O priests, and mourn; wail, you who minister before the altar. Come; spend the night in sackcloth, you who minister before my God; for the grain offerings and drink offerings are withheld from the house of your God. Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord” (Joel 1:13-14). After the repetition of the locusts coming as an army in Joel 2, there is again a call to repentance that seems to be a pattern: “Let the priests, who minister before the Lord, weep between the temple porch and the altar. Let them say, ‘Spare your people, O Lord’” (Joel 2:17).

Following this call to repentance, God’s response is then given in Joel 2:18 and following: “Then the Lord will be jealous for His land and take pity on His people. The Lord will reply to them: ‘I am sending you grain, new wine and oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations’” (Joel 2:18-19).

This can be seen as a pattern of this book, which is then followed by a futuristic outlook in the closing verses of chapter 2 and into chapter 3: “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on

all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved....” (Joel 2:28-32a). Here is a great promise that God is going to pour out His spirit upon the nation, God will judge the enemies of Israel, and then He will finally establish Judah and Jerusalem forever in a new Jerusalem.

The prophet concludes with that note in the final verses of this book. It is interesting that the words concerning the pouring out of the Spirit were picked up by Luke in Acts 2 who recorded Peter’s sermon at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the church. It is interesting that in early church, the women that were present at Pentecost were prophesying together with the men the great things of the Lord in fulfillment of this great anticipation of Joel. Joel chapter 2 is fulfilled in Christ’s ascension into heaven after His resurrection and His pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2).

Flow of Thought—Joel: The *theme* of the book of Joel is the Day of the Lord. The book of Joel can be divided into two basic parts: the historical section (1:1-20), and the prophetic section (2:1-3:21).

In the historical section the author discusses the locust plague and its desolation (1:1-14) as well as the desolation caused by starvation and drought (1:14-20). After calling his readers to give attention to his words (1:1-3), the prophet gives the effect of the locust plague (1:4) and follows with exhortation directed to the drunkards (1:5-7) the people themselves (1:8-10), the farmers and husbandmen (1:11-12), and finally the priests (1:13).

Following this description of the locust plague and its desolation, the prophet continues to speak of the desolation caused by starvation and drought (1:14-20). The effect on the people, the grain, and the beasts is seen which is followed by an appeal to *Yahweh* for help. The prophet declares: “To you, O Lord, I call, for fire has devoured the open pastures and flames have burned up all the trees of the field. Even the wild animals pant for you; the streams of water have dried up and fire has devoured the open pastures” (1:19-20).

The prophet leads from the historical section in chapter one into the prophetic section (2:1-3:21). Here he deals with the events of the Day of the Lord before kingdom blessings (2:1-3:17) and then concludes his book by discussing the blessings of the Lord in the kingdom (3:18-21).

In discussing the events before the Day of the Lord, the prophet speaks concerning the invader of Palestine (2:1-20), the coming of the Holy Spirit (2:28-29), the signs that are related to the Day of the Lord (2:30-31), the re-gathering of Israel (2:32-3:1), and the judgment on Gentile nations (3:2-17). He first of all discusses the Locusts invader (2:1-20) giving the time of invasion (2:1-3), the appearance and accomplishment of the invader (2:4-10), and the promised deliverance from the invader by the Lord (2:12-20). Repentance must and will precede this deliverance (2:12-17), and the deliverance will be accompanied by a restoration of blessing (2:18-27).

Second, the prophet discusses the promise of the Spirit who is to be poured out on Israel (2:28-29). The time of His outpouring, the extent of His influence, and the result of this event are all discussed. From this the writer narrates the signs that will be related to the coming of the Lord (2:30-31).

Next, the re-gathering of Israel will take place. Joel declares this: “For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem” (3:1). This re-gathering is then followed immediately by the future judgment on Gentile nations (3:2-17). The prophet gives a near view of this judgment on the surrounding nations of Israel at the time (3:2-8), followed by the far view of final judgment at Armageddon (3:9-17).

In the last few verses of the book the author concludes by writing concerning the blessings of the kingdom (3:18-21). He deals with the rejoicing and prosperity of Palestine (3:18), Israel’s deliverance from her enemies (3:19), and the final restoration of Israel with the Lord dwelling in Zion (3:20-21). The last verses beautifully describe her restoration: “Judah will be inhabited forever and Jerusalem through all generations. Their bloodguilt, which I have not pardoned, I will pardon. The Lord dwells in Zion!” (3:20-21).

Amos

The book of the prophet Amos is similar to Hosea in that Amos’ ministry occurred during the time of Jeroboam II, a king of the northern kingdom of Israel, and during the reign of Uzziah in the southern kingdom of Judah. We believe he prophesied and carried out his ministry sometime around 760 and 750 BC. As we read Amos, we read a prophet who had a tremendous passion for social justice. I have often called Amos, the “cowboy-turned-preacher,” a rustic type of fellow. Amos was a shepherd, tending flocks of sheep. It was also his task to work with the fruit of the tender, immature sycamore-fig plant. As the fruit grew on the plant, Amos’ job was to puncture it so that it could become sweet. It was out of his context of being a rustic, ranching, agricultural type of fellow that the Lord calls Amos to go north and to speak to the northern

kingdom of Israel about their injustices. It was a time when the rich were treating the poor in a very cruel way.

As we look at the first two chapters, Amos begins by addressing the nations around Israel. After talking about their injustices, Amos finally comes to the Hebrew people themselves, to Judah first and then to Israel in the north. It is almost like drawing a large circle and narrowing it down until it finally comes to that place where he must devote his time—and that is on the northern kingdom of Israel. After these first two chapters, Amos then declares Yahweh's indictment instead the entire house of Israel, especially the northern kingdom (Amos 3:1 through 9:10). In this indictment are several messages. Amos delivers three messages followed by five visions of judgments, then the book concludes with the merciful note of restoration, telling the people that God will someday have pity and restore them and bring them back to favor.

The injustice of the people of this period is expressed by Amos in very strong words. He especially addresses those that are rich and are oppressing the poor. “You who turn justice into bitterness and cast righteousness to the ground (he who made the Pleiades and Orion, who turns blackness into dawn and darkens day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land—the Lord is his name—He flashes destruction on the stronghold and brings the fortified city to ruin), you hate the one who reproves in court and despise him who tells the truth. You trample on the poor and force him to give you grain. Therefore, though you have built stone mansions, you will not live in them; though you have planted lush vineyards, you will not drink their wine. For I know how many are your offenses and how great your sins. You oppress the righteous and take bribes and you deprive the poor of justice in the courts. Therefore the prudent man keeps quiet in such times, for the times are evil” (Amos 5:7-13). In other words, Amos is telling them that they are mistreating the poor, and

religiously going about it as though nothing is wrong with their behavior—and Yahweh is not happy about it. Over and over, the theme of social justice is reiterated through Amos.

Amos delivers the word of Yahweh to the people: “I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” (Amos 5:21-24) Amos tells the people that Yahweh does not want their worship because they are not living in right relationship to their neighbors in a just or fair way; this is the message of Amos.

Amos was told by the priest of the northern kingdom of Israel to go back home, but Amos replied, “I was neither a prophet nor a prophet’s son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. But the Lord took me from tending the flock and said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’” It is as if Amos is saying, “I did not want to do this work in the first place, but it was God who called me, so I must declare His message.” I see this as a reminder for modern day prophets and preachers to be faithful to God’s divine call even when the words that must be spoken may not be received well. Amos had some unpopular words; he had to talk about women who were getting rich and spoiled by the oppression their husbands were putting upon people—especially the poor; Amos called them “cows of Bashan.” Bashan was the region east of Palestine on Mt. Samaria where the cattle would graze on fertile land and grow very fat. I am sure that Amos’ comparing of these rich women with fat cows did not win too many friends (Amos 4). Amos told them that God will judge these women, and lead them, with fishhooks piercing their skin, straight through the broken places in the walls of Samaria

after the invading army God is sending has battered down the defenses of the city. This is the message of Amos; he is the prophet of social justice.

Yet, Amos ends on a positive note. After calling the people of Israel to listen to Yahweh, to repent of their injustices, and to do right by the poor, Amos ends with a beautiful message of hope in chapter 9. “I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them” (Amos 9:14-15). In Amos chapter 9 the tabernacle of David is to be built up again (Amos 9:11-12), and this is applied in the New Testament to the Church that Christ has established (Acts 15:14-21). After revealing sin and injustice preaching God’s judgment, Amos brings God’s encouragement. I believe preachers and pastors need to bring encouragement when there is repentance, much like Amos has done.

Flow of Thought—Amos: The *theme* of the book of Amos is impending judgment on sin. The book of Amos is divided into three basic stages of development: the declaration of the doom of nations (1:1-2:16), the declaration of the Lord’s indictment of the whole house of Jacob (3:1-9:10), and the declaration of victory for restored Israel (9:11-15). The book may be likened to a circle within a circle. The outer circle represents the nations and they are first discussed, while the inner circle represents Israel and she is discussed afterwards.

In declaring the doom of nations, judgment is pronounced on nations around Israel. Damascus (1:1-5), Gaza (1:6-8), Tyre (1:9-10), Edom (1:11-12), Ammon (1:13-15), and Moab (2:1-3) are all given as objects of God’s judgment. The procedure of dealing with these nations is to give first of all the declaration or announcement of their judgment followed by the reason for

judgment, and finally its description. Judah and Israel are also as guilty as the nations around them so judgment is pronounced against them (2:4-16).

Israel's greater privilege causes her to have a greater guilt. Considerable space is given therefore to the declaration of the Lord's indictment and judgment of Israel (3:1-9:10). This indictment and judgment is announced through three messages (3:1-6:14) and five visions (7:1-9:10).

The first message (3:1-15) sets forth Israel's great guilt and announces her coming judgment (3:1-2). Israel had failed to hear her prophets and had been a poor example to her pagan neighbors (3:3-10).

For this reason her judgment would be complete (3:11-12), concentrating on Israel's transgressions (3:13-14a), the altars of Bethel (3:14b), and the houses of ivory (3:15).

While the first message announces the coming judgment, the second message gives the reason for it. The wealthy women of Samaria are indicted for their demands upon the men for luxuries (4:1-3). Israel is then indicted for her abominable ritualism being carried on in the name of worship (4:4-5), as well as for her irresponsiveness to Yahweh's chastening (4:6-11). The chastening with famine (4:6), drought (4:7-8), plagues (4:9), pestilence (4:10), and with severe devastating judgment (4:11) all went unheeded by Israel. Irreversible judgment is now the only alternative for her (4:12-13).

The third message begins in chapter five and contains a lamentation over Israel's sin along with an invitation to seek Yahweh and live (5:1-6:14). A cry goes up for the once virgin people who have fallen (5:1-3). If they are to live, they must seek the Lord apart from the idolatry of Bethel, Gilgal, and Beersheba (5:4-15). To live, they are to seek good and hate evil. This appeal is stated by Amos: "Seek good, not evil, that you may live. Then the Lord God

Almighty will be with you, just as you say he is. Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts. Perhaps the Lord God Almighty will have mercy on the remnant of Joseph” (5:14-15).

Because of Israel’s sins, however, the Day of the Lord would come (5:16-20). Wailing would be in the streets, and it would be a day of utter darkness. This judgment is fully deserved and in order to demonstrate it, the prophet states the corruption of the people (5:21-6:6). Their empty religionism (5:21-24), their idolatry (5:25-27), their violence (6:1-3), their self-indulgence (6:4-5), and their lack of spiritual concern (6:6) make judgment inevitable (6:7-14).

The certainty of this judgment is given when the Lord swears by Himself to carry it out. “I abhor the pride of Jacob and detest his fortresses; I will deliver up the city and everything in it” (6:8). The judgment will cover all of Israel “all the way from Lebo Hamath to the valley of the Arabah” (6:14).

Not only is the Lord’s indictment and judgment of the house of Israel announced through messages, but it is also declared through five visions (7:1-9:10). These visions are: the locust plague (7:1-3), the fire (7:4-6), the plumb line followed by a brief account of Amaziah’s opposition to Amos (7:10-13), the basket of summer fruit (8:1-14), and the smitten lintel (9:1-10).

The vision of the locusts (7:1-3) point to God’s impending judgment in which He would punish Israel for her rebellion against Him. The prophet prays for God’s mercy and the judgment is averted.

The vision of the fire (7:4-6) is the prophet’s vision of a severe drought in which vegetation withers as the heat of the sun causes a consuming conflagration. Again the prophet pleads for his people and this judgment is averted.

The plumb line (7:7-9) pictures God measuring His people and finding them warped by sin. They are past correction and judgment is therefore irrevocable. The high places are to be destroyed and Yahweh is to “rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword” (7:9).

When Amos announces this prophecy against Jeroboam, he is interrupted by the sycophant priest, Amaziah, who reports Amos to the king (7:10-11). Amaziah then orders Amos to flee to Judah (7:12-13). The prophet of God responds with spiritual vitality and strength giving to Amaziah his own divine calling as a prophet (7:14-15), and the judgment which awaits him for opposing God’s prophet (7:16-17).

The fourth vision is the basket of summer fruit (8:1-14). The nation is represented as late summer fruit, ready for judgment. Because of their dishonest-money making activities (8:4-5) and their oppression of the poor (8:6), the land and people must stand the consequences of God’s judgment (8:7-14). Darkness (8:7-9), mourning (8:10), spiritual famine (8:11-13), and the destruction of idolaters (8:14) are all among these consequences.

The final vision is that of the smitten lintel (9:1-10). The lord standing beside the altar is a picture of poured out judgment. Because the altar and sacrifice is despised, the result is judgment. The sovereign, omnipotent God must punish those who spurn and reject His mercy.

While the book up to this point has been negative as far as Israel is concerned, the prophet does conclude on a very positive note as he declares the future victory of restored Israel (9:11-15). Messiah will return in glory and the Davidic kingdom will be re-established (9:11-12). Prosperity will result (9:13), as Israel will be re-gathered (9:14) and permanently restored to her land (9:15). Concerning Israel’s permanent restoration to the land, Amos ends his prophecy as follows: “‘I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them,’ says the LORD your God” (9:15).

Obadiah

The book of the prophet Obadiah (meaning “the servant or worshipper of Yahweh”) is named for the prophet. There are thirteen men in the Old Testament with this same name (1 Kings 18:3; 1 Chronicles 7:3; 8:38; 9:16; 12:9; 27:19; 2 Chronicles 34:12; Ezra 8:9; Nehemiah 10:5). but there is no evidence that the prophet Obadiah can be identified with any of the other men bearing this name. Since genealogical data is not given which would have suggested that he was of royal line, the prophet Obadiah is most likely of humble circumstances.

Among conservative scholarship, the date for the book of Obadiah is either during the reign of Jehoram in 848-841 BC (2 Chronicles 21:16-17) when Edom revolted, or during the Babylonian invasion in 586 BC (2 Kings 25) based upon Psalm 137:7 and Ezekiel 35. While the late date has its support, the earlier date also has good solid support. I believe that more concrete evidence can be given for the earlier date of 848-841 BC.

Interestingly, the background for the book actually begins in the book of Genesis with the story of Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:24-34:27). Despising his birthright, Esau flippantly bartered it away to Jacob in order to momentarily satisfy his appetite. Despising his birthright was in effect despising God. Thereafter, Esau was given the name “Edom” and from that point throughout the history of his descendants, the Edomites were in constant conflict with Israel. They rejected the permission of Moses to pass through the land (Numbers 20:14-20), they opposed King Saul (1 Samuel 14:47), fought against King David (1 Kings 11:15, 16), opposed King Solomon (1 Kings 11:14-23) and King Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:22), and they rebelled against King Jehoram (2 Chronicles 21:8). When the Philistines and Arabians were pillaging the Israelites and the city, the Edomites participated and rejoiced in their spoiling (848-841 BC), and God is ready to judge them for it.

The Edomites settled in Mt. Seir, a mountainous region south of the Dead Sea. The area of Edom extended for about 30 miles in width and 100 miles in length and was also characterized by fertile land and valleys. Petra was the capital with a narrow entrance of a twelve to twenty foot canyon between towering mountain walls of 200-250 feet high. In places, these mountain walls almost touched so that to ride beside one another in pairs for horsemen was almost impossible. The city itself was circled by a high ring of mountains, nestled far enough into these mountains, to make them practically unconquerable. The mountains were rough, rocky heights reaching as high as 4780 feet above sea level beside Petra, and the people lived in homes carved in the sides of the rock or mountain. It is little wonder with this elevated and secure position that the Edomites boasted, “Who can bring me down to the ground?” (Obadiah 3)

The purpose of Obadiah’s prophesying is to announce the destruction of Edom, and to draw a contrast between their destruction and the deliverance of Israel in the future. Edom, although in kinship with Israel, dealt treacherously with Israel, and the Lord is announcing their judgment and destruction. The prophet sets forth a cry against Edom (verses 1-4), giving the character and cause of their destruction (verses 5-14). The book then looks beyond Edom to the final judgment of all of Israel’s enemies in the Day of the Lord and to the character of Israel’s restoration to blessing in the kingdom of Christ (verses 15-21).

Flow of Thought—Obadiah: The *theme* of the book of Obadiah is the doom and downfall of Edom. The book divides nicely into two major sections: the doom of Edom (verses 1-16), and the deliverance of Israel (verses 17-21).

In the first section, the writer discusses the announcement of Edom’s doom (verses 1-9), the indictment of Edom (verses 10-14), and finally, her sentence of judgment is given along with its consequent result (verses 15-17). As the prophet announces Edom’s doom he gives the

certainty of its fulfillment (verses 1-4). These words were given in spite of Edom's natural rock protection (verse 3), and her pride (verse 4). This announcement of a sure judgment is followed by a description of the completeness of her doom (verses 5-9), giving the effects on her treasures (verses 5-6), her wise men (verses 7-8), and her mighty men (verse 9). Her treasures shall be ransacked and pillaged, her wise men destroyed, her mighty men terrified and cut down in the slaughter.

Following this announcement of judgment, Obadiah discusses the indictment of Yahweh against Edom (verses 10-14). She is indicted for her violence and hostility against Judah (verses 10-11), for her exultation over Judah's destruction (verse 12), for stealing from Judah (verse 13), for preventing Judah's fugitives from escaping their enemies (verse 14a), and for the actual apprehension and betrayal of Judah's refugees (verse 14b). Because of these evils, Edom is sentenced to God's judgment (verses 15-16).

The book concludes in the final section with God's future deliverance for Israel (verses 17-21). Israel shall be saved and shall see victory over her enemies (verses 17-18). She shall possess her land (verses 19-20) as the kingdom of the Lord will be established on Mount Zion (verse 21).

Jonah

Following the book of Obadiah, we come to the book of Jonah. There is some debate as to where in history we should place Jonah. Modern critical study tends to place Jonah in the post-exilic period and would understand the book primarily as a parable teaching God's tremendous patience and mercy upon those who are not of the covenant people, Israel.

Modern critical study sees the writer as trying to make a statement against Israelite nationalism. The thinking is that God can work in a people like the Ninevites, and so the Ninevites become a representative type for all Gentile people in whom God works when there is repentance and devotion to Him. Jonah did not want to go minister to the Ninevite Gentiles because he knew God would have mercy on them, but God forces Jonah to go. Through the experiences of the storm at sea, being thrown overboard, swallowed by the whale, and being ejected from the whale, God forces Jonah to go and preach to the Ninevites.

Those who take the conservative position understand Jonah as actual history, which is then written down at a later date, perhaps after the exile, to teach the lesson of God's willingness and desire to work with Gentiles.

In the book, the emphasis is not upon the historical detail as much as the foundational message that God loves the Gentile people and He wants to see everyone turn from evil. God will respond to all who repent and move toward Him, worship Him, and accept His call to salvation. This seems to be the emphasis of the book, and the last two verses drive home that point. Leading up to these final verses, we read that Jonah knew God would show mercy and he was not happy about God being merciful to Gentiles.

As Jonah sat down, dejected, God caused a vining plant to grow quickly and cover Jonah with shade. God then caused a worm to come and eat the plant, and Jonah is left sitting in the heat, and he becomes upset and angry. Jonah feels he has right to be angry, but God says, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?" (Jonah 4:10-11) In these final verses we find the true emphasis

of the book. Unlike Jonah's personal, narrow, selfish point of view, and his claim to know how God should respond to Gentiles, we find that God is working among the Gentiles through the Israelite people and His prophets if the Gentiles will repent and turn to Him.

Christ applies the book of Jonah to Himself when He says, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40).

Flow of Thought—Jonah: The *theme* of the book of Jonah is God's love for the Gentiles and Israel. The book of Jonah differs from the other prophetic books in that it is a biography of the prophet's own life and experience. The book traces the rebellion of the prophet (1:1-17), his reinstatement (2:1-3:10), and his rebuke from the Lord (4:1-11). The chapters might be entitled as follows: the rebellious prophet (1:1-17), the reinstated prophet (2:1-3:10), and the reproved prophet (4:1-11).

Jonah is called and commissioned by God to bring His message to Nineveh (1:1-2). Instead of obeying the Lord, Jonah immediately arises and goes in another direction to Tarshish. The passage reads:

But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa, and he found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord (1:3),

In response to this disobedience, Yahweh interposes a series of God-appointed agencies to turn the prophet back into obedience. He uses a storm (1:4-16) and a large fish (1:17) to accomplish this end. A violent storm arises as the Lord sends "out a great wind into the sea" (1:4). The ship on which Jonah is riding becomes in danger and the mariners are afraid (1:5). The

shipmaster goes to Jonah and finds him asleep (1:6). Rebuking him, the mariners cast lots to find out the cause of the storm and the lot falls on Jonah (1:7).

Excitedly they question Jonah asking him his occupation, his country, and nationality (1:8). The prophet admits that he is a Hebrew and a worshipper of the God of Heaven (1:9). The men become exceedingly afraid and ask Jonah what to do (1:10-11). The prophet asks to be cast into the sea (1:12), but the sailors refusing to try this, work on bringing the ship to safety (1:13). Finally, in desperation they cast God's man into the sea and it ceases its raging (1:14-15). The effect upon these men is sobering and they offer sacrifices and make vows (1:16).

Another God-ordained agency to bring Jonah to obedience is a large fish (1:17). This fish, prepared by the Lord, swallows Jonah and he spends three days and three nights in its belly. This becomes a type of the death of Christ who would spend three days and nights in the heart of the earth.

These divinely appointed events lead to the reinstatement of the prophet (2:1-3:10). Jonah cries because of his affliction but thanks the Lord for delivering him from physical death (2:1-3). In the midst of this, he vows to turn again to the Lord (2:4). He then continues to describe his deplorable condition in the whale. As the great fish had swallowed him and plunged through the waters carrying the prophet he could say: "The waters compassed me about, even to the soul" (2:5a—KJV). Confined in the fish's belly he said with the Psalmist: "But you brought my life up from the pit, O Lord my God" (2:5-6).

Realizing his despair and condition, the prophet turns to Yahweh and utters his prayer of help to Him (2:7-8). He vows to sacrifice unto Yahweh and recognizes that "salvation is of the Lord" (2:9). The Lord answers his prayer and delivers Jonah: "And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land" (2:10).

Following this, one of the greatest revivals in history occurs. Jonah is recommissioned to go to Nineveh. “Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: ‘Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you’ (3:1-2).

This time, instead of disobeying, Jonah obeys and leaves for Nineveh (3:3). He is to give this city forty days to repent and then judgment would fall (3:4). As he gives God’s message, the people of Nineveh believe in it and repent in sackcloth (3:5-6). Furthermore, a decree is published by the king that no man or animal could eat or drink but must cry unto the Lord and turn from their ways (3:7-8). They do this hoping for repentance from the Lord (3:9).

The Lord responds positively to their repentance and judgment is averted. The prophet writes: “When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened” (3:10).

Instead of being happy with revival, “Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry” (4:1). He is mad because God in His grace has forgiven this alien people (4:2). He even states this as the reason for his disobedience previously in going to Tarshish. The prophet goes so far as to ask the Lord for death. “Now, O Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live” (4:3).

The rebuke of the Lord quickly follows (4:4-11). The Lord orders a gourd to come up over Jonah and to provide shade for him from the hot sun (4:4-6). Jonah is very pleased. The next day God prepares a worm to attack the plant so that it withers (4:7). As the sun rises, the Lord sends a strong east wind and the sun burns Jonah until he wishes to die (4:8). When asked if it is well for him to be angry, Jonah says: “I am angry enough to die” (4:9).

The Lord then applies this illustration to the prophet by comparing Jonah's pleasure with the gourd to His own pleasure in forgiving the Ninevites and "a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left" (4:10-11).

Micah

Micah is an abbreviation of the Hebrew name, *Michayahu*, meaning "who is like Yahweh?" (Judges 17:1, 4). The ministry and prophecy of Micah was between 739-687 BC, in the days of Jotham (739-735 BC), Ahaz (735-715 BC), and Hezekiah (715-687 BC), kings of the southern kingdom of Judah. He was a contemporary of both Hosea and Isaiah, and a very close relationship is seen between Micah and Isaiah. The fact that Micah was prophesying during the reign of Hezekiah is attested by Jeremiah 26:18-19 which reads: "Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah. He told all the people of Judah, 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.'" Did Hezekiah king of Judah or anyone else in Judah put him to death? Did not Hezekiah fear the Lord and seek his favor? And did not the Lord relent, so that he did not bring the disaster he pronounced against them?"

Some critical scholars assign chapters four and five to a "Deutero-Micah" or "second Micah" of the post-exilic period, and view other portions as either interpolations or later anonymous prophecy. Hence, the critic believes the book to be one of fragmentary discourses delivered over an extended period of time by different hands. After a careful analyses of this view, there seems no real objective warrant for denying the authorship of Micah, therefore most conservative scholars support the authorship by Micah.

The main purpose of Micah's prophecy is twofold. It consists of giving God's complaint against the sin of His people and the judgment to follow; then the prophet also announces the salvation and restoration of God's people in the appearance of Messiah. Micah prophesied briefly concerning the fall of Israel (722 BC), and foretold of the same doom for Judah. Micah dealt much with social morality and rebuked the oppression of the poor as it was practiced by the rich. The social condition of the time was one of violence, oppression, and overall injustice. Wherever the religious condition of a people are perverted, the social condition will also be the same. Micah also dealt with personal religion and enumerated the sins of the people as he foretold of their judgment. Like many of the other prophets, Micah looks beyond this time of sin and judgment to a time of salvation and restoration in Messiah.

A classic text is found in Micah 6:7-8, which reads, "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." This is a beautiful statement of what the Lord desires, which is the performing of justice, to love kindness in relation to others, and to lead a humble life before the Lord.

Also, in Micah 5:1 we read of Bethlehem as the place where Messiah would come from, and in Matthew 2:5-6 this text is applied to Christ and His birthplace in Bethlehem.

Flow of Thought—Micah: The *theme* of the book of Micah is the judgment and restoration of Israel. The book of Micah has three interesting summons to listen to that might be used to divide the book. They are as follows: The people are summoned to listen (1:1-2:13), the leaders are summoned to listen (3:1-5:15), and the mountains are summoned to listen (6:1-7:20).

Within these declarations, the prophecy contains a general prediction of judgment, gives a glimpse of the coming kingdom and King, and closes with a final statement of the Lord's controversy against His people.

The declaration of the certainty of coming judgment is given (1:1-16), along with the basic causes of this judgment (2:1-11). After introducing himself (1:2), the prophet announces the Lord's coming down to earth to execute His judgment against Israel (1:2-3). In describing the severity of this judgment, he says: "The mountains melt beneath him, and the valleys split apart, like wax before the fire, like water rushing down a slope" (1:4). The cause of this judgment is idolatry (1:5).

Fearful consequences are involved in God's judgment (1:6-7) as Samaria is made "a heap of rubble" (1:6) and her foundations are laid bare. Furthermore, her idolatry will be destroyed as all of the idols are "broken to pieces," and all of images are destroyed (1:7). Because of this fearful judgment, the prophet can only lament its consequences (1:8-9). Naked and stripped of his clothing, the prophet laments the certain judgment in the Assyrian invasion. The Assyrians would come to the very gate of Jerusalem.

Micah graphically depicts this Assyrian judgment by a series of lively puns. Twelve cities which shall suffer desolation are named (1:10-15) as the Assyrian conquest is described. The prophet then turns to Israel and urges her to shave her head bald as a token of mourning for the captivity of her children (1:16).

In chapter two the causes of this coming desolation are given (2:1-11). The oppression of the poor (2:1-3), the opposition to the true prophets (2:4-6), the reception of false prophets are all reasons for judgment. The wealthy lay awake at night dreaming up ways to defraud and plunder

the poor and when morning comes they do just that (2:1). “They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them. They defraud a man of his home, a fellowman of his inheritance” (2:2).

Not only are they filled with violence in Israel, but they reject the true prophets who seek to correct them. Concerning this fact Micah writes: “‘Do not prophesy,’ their prophets say. ‘Do not prophesy about these things; disgrace will not overtake us’” (2:6). If a false prophet comes, however, and speaks lies they welcome and receive him. “If a liar and a deceiver comes and says, ‘I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer,’ he would be just like the prophet for this people!” (2:11).

Tragic is the condition of God’s people, but in spite of all her sins, the prophet sees a future deliverance for Israel (2:12-13). The true remnant would be re-gathered (2:12) and led back from their captivity by the Lord Himself “at their head” (2:13).

The Lord continues His denunciation in chapter 3 against the leaders of Israel (3:1-12). The princes are indicted for their corruption and sin (3:1-1). They are those: “who hate good and love evil; who tear the skin from my people and the flesh from their bones; who eat my people’s flesh, strip off their and break their bones in pieces; who chop them up like meat for the pan, like flesh for the pot” (3:2-3). They are thus described as wild animals tearing up their victims, and as a butcher cutting meat for boiling. Although they should seek the Lord, He will hide from them because of such evil works (3:4).

Next, the false prophets are indicted (3:5-8). Instead of leading the people into truth, they lead God’s people astray (3:5). For this reason, God will not reveal things to them and darkness shall continue (3:6-7). Micah is contrasted to these and is “filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord” in order to declare to Israel “his sin” (3:8).

The divine rebuke of Israel's leaders continues as all of them are rebuked by the Lord (3:9-11). The rulers "judge for a bribe," the priests "teach for a price," and the prophets "tell fortunes for money" (3:11). The consequent destruction of Jerusalem is inevitable. "Therefore because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets" (3:12).

In the midst of all this gloom and indictment of Israel, the prophet gives tremendous words of comfort and hope to Israel as he describes Israel's future kingdom and King (4:1-5:15). The declaration of the future kingdom is first given (4:1-5). This kingdom will be characterized by the presence of God's word (4:1-2), and by the presence of peace (4:3-4) and redemption (4:5). "The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (4:2). There shall be universal peace as nations "beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks" (4:3). The nation will be redeemed and will "walk in the name of the Lord" forever (4:5).

After describing the character of this future kingdom for Israel, the prophet sets forth the events that must transpire prior to the establishment of this kingdom. Before its establishment Israel is to be re-gathered (4:6-8) and the Babylonian captivity is to have occurred (4:9-10).

The lame and weak remnant will be reassembled into a strong nation with the Lord reigning over them in Zion (4:6-7). The people of Judah must travail in captivity in Babylon, but they shall be delivered and the Lord shall redeem them from the hand of their "enemies" (4:10). In the future, the Lord will come to His kingdom as a Victor. While many nations will be gathered against Jerusalem, the Messiah will defeat them and establish His kingdom on the earth (4:13).

Not only is Israel to have a future kingdom but a future King (5:2-15). He would be born in Bethlehem (5:2a), and would become an everlasting ruler (5:2b). While there would be a

temporary rejection of His person (5:3a), His people would turn and accept Him (5:3b). He shall shepherd Israel, and they shall dwell securely as He extends His kingdom over the earth (5:4-9). Israel's instruments of war shall be done away (5:10-11), and all idolatry shall be rooted out (5:12-15).

In chapter six, the scene changes. While Micah has preached of judgment and has pointed out the future source of comfort and hope in Messiah and His kingdom, he now proceeds to set forth the way of salvation. The Lord is in a great lawsuit against His people and the prophet describes this as a great court room scene.

The Lord begins by giving His indictment and controversy with the accused (6:1-16). The whole creation constitutes the jury and is invited to hear (6:1-2). The Lord challenges His people for forgetting His former mercies (6:3-5), and for not doing the truth (6:6-7). The lord does not want vain religionism but obedience. Micah says: "He hath showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (6:8).

Because of this disobedience, the Lord delivers His message to the wicked city (6:9-16). He utterly deplores its violence and deceit (6:10-14), and promises fruitlessness and futility. "You will plant but not harvest; you will press olives but not use oil on yourselves, you will crush grapes but not drink the wine" (6:15). The sins of Omri and Ahab bring only reproach upon those who practice them.

In chapter seven, the prophet confesses the truth of the Lord's indictment (7:1-6), and submits himself and Israel to the Lord, awaiting the fulfillment of His promises and Israel's restoration (7:7-20). The prophet admits Israel's sin as the Lord has revealed it. The sins of the people and the leaders are acknowledged (7:1-4). The situation is so bad that one cannot even

trust those of his own family. “Do not trust a neighbor; put no confidence in a friend. Even with her who lies in your embrace be careful of your words. For a son dishonors his father, a daughter rises up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man’s enemies are the members of his own household” (7:5-6).

True repentance brings hope, and this is uttered by the prophet (7:7-13). The Lord must judge His own for their sins, but He will also bring salvation and deliverance to them following His judgment. The prophet longs for the former days of close fellowship between Yahweh and His people (7:14-15), and closes his marvelous prophecy with a confidence in Israel’s restoration (7:16-20). Triumphantly, he concludes: “Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. You will be true to Jacob, and show mercy to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our fathers in days long ago” (7:18-20).

Nahum

The prophet Nahum (meaning “compassionate”) prophesied the downfall and destruction of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. The prophet describes the terrible sins of Nineveh, and then details its overthrow and destruction in very vivid, yet accurate language. Since the conquest of Thebes is regarded as in the past at Nahum 3:8, and since the city of Nineveh is yet to be destroyed, the ministry of Nahum must fall between 663 and 612 BC.

The book is a complete unit and should be regarded in totality as the work of Nahum. A few critics reject this view, and endeavor to show that Nahum 1:2 to 2:3 are the remains of an acrostic psalm which was composed after the Exile and prefixed to the already existing portion

of the book. This view is quite subjective and without any objective evidence. I believe it is best to understand Nahum 1:2 - 2:3 as that written by the prophet Nahum who prefixed it to his message in order to give the magnificent power and glory of God before announcing the specific means whereby God would demonstrate this glory and power.

Previously, the city of Nineveh had repented after the preaching of Jonah (760 BC). Following this, however, she became more and more wicked and violent, engaging in many Assyrian atrocities. In 722 BC, Assyria took the northern kingdom of Israel into captivity and transplanted foreign people into Samaria. Some years later in 701 BC, the Assyrian ruler, Sennacherib, tried to capture Jerusalem, but was miraculously defeated by Yahweh. In 663 BC, Ashurbanipal, another great Assyrian leader, died and weaker kings followed him. In 612 BC, Nineveh fell as Babylon, Media, and Scythia allied together against her to destroy the Assyrian kingdom. It was during this period of greatest strength and gradual decline that Nahum carried on his ministry. Penned around 663 BC, and certainly sometime before 612 BC, the prophecy was certainly well received by the southern kingdom of Judah who was being menaced by the great power of Assyria.

Flow of Thought—Nahum: The *theme* of the book of Nahum is the doom of Nineveh. In the book of Nahum, the prophet sets forth the judgment to come on Nineveh. The book might be outlined as follows: the declaration of Nineveh’s judgment (1:2-15), the description of Nineveh’s judgment (2:1-13), and the cause of Nineveh’s judgment (3:1-19).

The prophet introduces his book by acknowledging his burden concerning Nineveh (1:1). He then describes the nature of God who is going to judge Nineveh (1:1-8). The Lord is described as a jealous God who “takes vengeance on his foes” (1:2). While He has patience (1:3a), He “will not leave the guilty unpunished” (1:3b). His sovereignty is illustrated in His

control over nature. Nahum declares; “He rebukes the sea and dries it up; he makes all the rivers run dry. Bashan and Carmel wither and the blossoms of Lebanon fade. The mountains quake before him and the hills melt away. The earth trembles at his presence, the world and all who live in it. Who can withstand his indignation? Who can endure his fierce anger? His wrath is poured out like fire; the rocks are shattered before him” (1:4-6). Along with His sovereignty comes His anger against His enemies who do evil.

In the middle of this declaration of God’s wrath comes a different picture of the Lord to those who trust in Him. For the faithful and obedient, He is a refuge in the day of trouble. “The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him (1:7). For His enemies, however, He is to be feared. Instead of providing protection for them, He will make an end of them (1:8).

The prophet proceeds now, after describing the nature of the Judge, to describe the nature of the judgment (1:9-15). No one is to imagine that the Lord will not punish His enemies, for He will make an utter end of them and they will never afflict His people a second time (1:9). “They will be consumed like dry stubble” (1:10).

The wicked pronouncements of Rabshakeh against the Lord are recalled (1:11), and the Lord promises Nineveh’s downfall even though the whole nation should resist Him (1:12a). Never again will Israel be afflicted by them for the Lord shall break the Assyrian yoke off of His people (1:12b-13). Nineveh shall be completely destroyed. The prophet declares: “The Lord has given a command concerning you, [Nineveh]: ‘You will have no descendants to bear your name. I will destroy the carved images and cast idols that are in the temple of your gods. I will prepare your grave, for you are vile’” (1:14).

Because of this broken yoke in Assyria, the children of Israel can rejoice. Joyful news of peace is now come to Israel. Nahum challenges her: “Celebrate your festivals, O Judah, and fulfill your vows. No more will the wicked invade you; they will be completely destroyed” (1:15).

In chapter two the description of Nineveh’s judgment is clearly set down (2:1-13). First of all, in superb poetry, the prophet depicts the siege of the city (2:1-5). One to dash them in pieces (Medo-Babylonian forces) has come up against the city (2:1-2), Enemy soldiers will attack the city, chariots will rage in the streets, and shall jostle against one another, and the nobles of the city shall stumble as they run to defend the city walls.

The actual means whereby the city would be conquered is given (1:6). The river through the city would overflow and wash away part of the city walls, and according to historical records this is exactly what happened. Nineveh is pictured as defeated and her spoil being taken by the enemy (2:7-10). The prophet lucidly describes her complete devastation: “Nineveh is like a pool, and its water is draining away. ‘Stop! Stop!’ they cry, but no one turns back. Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold! The supply is endless, the wealth from all its treasures! She is pillaged, plundered, stripped! Hearts melt, knees give way, bodies tremble, every face grows pale” (2:8-10). Desolation and ruin fills the city. Where is the mighty Nineveh that has devoured so many of her enemies? (2:11-12) The city who has filled itself with the plunder of other cities now lies plundered. (2:13)

In chapter three, the cause of Nineveh’s destruction is outlined (3:1-19). Her sins are announced (3:1-7). Violence (3:1), brutality (3:2-3), and false dealings with other nations (3:4-7) have possessed her. She is described as “the bloody city, full of lies and robbery” (3:1). Multitudes have been slain by her. Nahum writes: “Charging cavalry, flashing swords and

glittering spears! Many casualties, piles of dead, bodies without number, people stumbling over the corpses. . . .” (3:3)

Her false dealings with other nations is described as she has “enslaved nations by her prostitution and peoples by her witchcraft” (3:4). Because of this the Lord will show the nations her nakedness and the kingdoms her shame (3:5). She will become a spectacle (3:6) and no mourners will mourn for her (3:7).

Like the destruction of another great city, Thebes, which sat by the Nile, Nineveh would be sacked and destroyed (3:8-11). Although Thebes was fortified by rivers and by an alliance with Ethiopia and Egypt, she was defeated. Nineveh also, regardless of her security, shall be thrown down. Nahum warns, “All your fortresses are like fig trees with their first ripe fruit; when they are shaken, the figs fall into the mouth of the eater. Look at your troops—they are all women! The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies; fire has consumed their bars” (3:12-13). Though the city prepare for the siege, destruction shall come (3:14-17).

In the concluding verses (3:18-19), the prophet dramatically addresses the king of Assyria, describing his inevitable and permanent defeat. “O king of Assyria, your shepherds slumber; your nobles lie down to rest. Your people are scattered on the mountains with no one to gather them” (3:18). When such destruction does come, all who hear will rejoice because of it (3:19).

Habakkuk

Habakkuk the prophet may have been a temple musician and a Levite. This may be implied from the psalm in Habakkuk 3:1-19, however there is no definitive proof that this was his occupation. Habakkuk probably prophesied during the reign of Josiah (640-609 BC) prior to the defeat of Nineveh (612 BC), and after the independence of Babylon (625 BC). Habakkuk's time was marked by violence, injustice, and wickedness in in the southern kingdom of Judah. There was also a general apathy toward the things of God (Habakkuk 1:2-4). Before the ministry of Habakkuk the intense wickedness in the reigns of Manasseh and Amon had taken their toll. Their idolatry and degeneracy left conditions in a deplorable state when Habakkuk wrote, and these conditions were still remaining into the reign of Josiah. Habakkuk evidently wrote prior to the revival that occurred under King Josiah. Along with the deplorable condition among God's people, the nation of power in the region was now Babylon, having gained its independence from Assyria. Babylon is to be the instrument to devastate Judah (Habakkuk 1:5-11).

There is good reason for recognizing Habakkuk as the author of the entire prophecy. The book bears his name as engaged in dialogue with God (1:1), and as one who uttered prayer to God (3:1). It is reasonable to assume that Habakkuk also recorded his dialogue and prayer. In addition, the prayer of chapter three is distinctly that of Habakkuk. That Habakkuk wrote the book instead of several different authors is strengthened by the fact that the book has unity throughout.

After being told that God would judge Judah using Babylon as His instrument of judgment, Habakkuk goes into meditation and waits for a word from the Lord. The Lord replies in Habakkuk that "the righteous will live by his faith." This great statement of "the righteous will live by faith" is used by Paul in Romans 1:17 showing the means of receiving salvation.

The main purpose of the book is to demonstrate the holiness and justness of God, and to encourage His faithful to live by faith. In the midst of all of this, the prophet is encouraged to trust and live by faith in God. The prophet then closes this wonderful prophecy by singing a song to the majesty of a holy and just God.

Flow of Thought—Habakkuk: The *theme* of the book of Habakkuk is faith in Yahweh dispels doubt. The book of Habakkuk is an outstanding little prophecy dealing with the problem of God's righteousness. The book may be divided into two major parts: the problem of the prophet's faith in relation to God's righteousness (1:1-2:20), and the prayer of the prophet after his problem had been solved (3:1-19).

There are two basic problems in chapters one and two that raise serious questions for the prophet. The first problem concerns Israel and her sins that were seemingly unjudged (1:1-4). This bothered the prophet since God's righteousness demanded judgment. In answering the prophet's problem the Lord shows him His coming judgment on Israel to be carried out by the Chaldeans (1:5-11). He describes the invincibility of their conquest and the defeat of Israel.

Out of this problem arises the second. The problem again centers around the righteousness of God. The problem stated is: how can a righteous God use a nation that is totally unrighteous to judge a nation more righteous than itself (1:13-2:1)? This is a challenge to Yahweh's consistency. God answers this problem by announcing judgment upon the Chaldeans as well (2:2-20). After announcing God's righteousness to the prophet (2:2-4), the reasons for the Chaldeans' judgment is given. It is because of their pride and violence (2:5-8), their covetousness (2:9-11), their tyranny (2:12-14), their debauchery (2:15-17), and their idolatry (2:18-19). This announcement of judgment and its causes is followed by the victory of a

sovereign righteous Lord. The prophet concludes the chapter by writing: “But the Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him” (2:20).

The second major section gives the prayer of the prophet after his problems had been solved (3:1-19). In this prayer the reverence of the prophet (3:2), the revelation of Yahweh (3:3-15), and the reassurance of the prophet (3:16-19) are all seen.

The reverence of the prophet is portrayed in the words: “Lord, I have heard of Your fame; I stand in awe of Your deeds, O Lord. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy” (3:2). Following this demonstration of reverence, the revelation of Yahweh is given as the prophet sees His glory (3:3-6), His greatness (3:7-12), and His grace (3:13-15). The prayer closes by giving the effect of Yahweh’s words and revelation on the prophet himself. He is seen rejoicing in Yahweh’s salvation (3:16-18), and resting in Yahweh’s strength (3:19). The book closes with a beautiful note as the prophet describes his rest in the omnipotence of Yahweh. He writes: “Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; He makes my feet like the feet of a deer, He enables me to go on the heights” (3:17-19).

Zephaniah

The book of Zephaniah is named for the author of the book, the prophet Zephaniah. In both the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate, the name appears as *Sophonias*, meaning, “He whom the Lord has hidden or protected.” This meaning carries with it the truth that the Lord will hide his true worshiper in time of judgment and will deliver him in time of danger.

Some modern critics divide the book, especially chapters two and three, assigning different sources to them. There is no sufficient reason for denying to Zephaniah any portion of his prophecy. The first verse reads, “The word of the LORD that came to Zephaniah son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, during the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah. . . .” This is the usual formula of the writing prophets, and there is no reason to doubt that Zephaniah not only received and uttered the prophecy, but also penned it. This is strengthened by the fact that the book is a neatly knit unit describing judgment followed by restoration. Furthermore, the book is in no way post-exilic, but throughout bears the mark of the early years of Josiah’s reign in Judah.

According to Zephaniah 1:1, he prophesied “during the reign of Josiah.” This would place his prophecy between 640-609 BC. It is also significant to note that the reformations under Josiah had not yet occurred since the things later abolished are still present when Zephaniah prophesied. The great reformation under Josiah occurred in 622 BC and therefore the prophecy must be between 640 and 622 BC.

In the religious and moral realm, the picture was indeed bleak when Zephaniah prophesied. The Baals were worshipped, the hosts of heaven were bowed down to, and a corrupt worship of Yahweh was being practiced. Oppression of the poor, social injustices and moral corruption, along with an apostasy from Yahweh marked Zephaniah’s time. After the extreme idolatry of Manasseh, Amon followed by building the altars of Baal, instituting planetary worship, embracing the Ammonite god, Moloch, and the child-sacrifices that accompanied the worship of Molech, and officially promulgating divination and occultism. Therefore, what is seen in the first part of Josiah’s reign and the time of Zephaniah is only a carry-over from the idolatrous past of Manasseh and Amon.

Zephaniah prophesied the day of wrath which is approaching the southern kingdom of Judah, and pointed beyond that to the final restoration and deliverance by the Messiah. While Zephaniah is primarily concerned with the approaching judgment on Judah, he also depicts the coming judgment upon the surrounding Gentile nations of Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Ethiopia, and Assyria. Following the picture of doom and judgment, the prophet gives the positive side which is the restoration and blessing that awaits God's people in the future, which will take place when Messiah is present.

Flow of Thought—Zephaniah: The *theme* of Zephaniah is the Day of the Lord. The book of Zephaniah discusses the Day of the Lord and may be divided into two basic sections: the coming judgment of the Day of the Lord (1:1-3:7), and the coming salvation of the Day of the Lord (3:8-13).

The book begins with an introduction of the prophet (1:1). His ancestry is traced back through four individuals, and his prophecy occurs “during the reign of Josiah, son of Amon, king of Judah” (1:1). As a true prophet, he utters the word of the Lord, or that which had come to him by divine revelation.

The prophet then proceeds to discuss the judgment of the Day of the Lord (1:2-3:7). He first of all speaks of a universal destruction. “‘I will sweep away everything from the face of the earth,’ says the Lord.” (1:2). From this general announcement of universal judgment, he goes into detail concerning the particular objects of His judgment. Men, beasts, birds, fish, and works of wickedness are all included in this Judgment.

This announcement of general Judgment serves as an introduction to the more specific Judgment on Judah (1:4-2:3). This judgment will be complete and will touch every area of Judah. The idolaters (1:4-5), the apostates (1:6), princes and the elite (1:7-8), the oppressors

(1:9), merchants (1:10-11), and the indifferent (1:12) will all fall under the judgment of God, Idolatry is everywhere in Judah. Its basic character is Canaanite in nature, and the service of Baal is central in it. Apostate idolatrous priests, the *Chemarim* (1:4), contaminated Judah with the worship of Baal. Stars are worshipped on the roofs of the houses, and the god of the Ammonites, Malcam (a.k.a. Molech) is venerated. The people have utterly forsaken the Lord and have turned their backs from Him. In describing the Lord's Judgment, on all of this Zephaniah quotes the Lord: ““I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all who live in Jerusalem. I will cut off from this place every remnant of Baal, the names of the pagan and the idolatrous priests—those who bow down on the roofs to worship the starry host, those who bow down and swear by the Lord and who also swear by Molech, those who turn back from following the Lord and neither seek the Lord nor inquire of him. Be silent before the Sovereign Lord, for the day of the Lord is near” (1:4-7).

Judah will be the sacrifice on this day and the nations no doubt are bidden guests for the occasion to consume Judah. The judgment will fall upon all classes including the princes and the elite (1:8a). Likewise those who dress in foreign apparel and those who violently plunder houses will feel the judgment of the Day of the Lord (1:8b-9). People shall wail over the destruction of the merchants (1:10-11) because the business of the city now ceases. Those who do not believe that God will do anything will be compelled to recognize His sovereign judgment upon them (1:12) as “their wealth will be plundered,” and their houses demolished (1:13).

Having described the execution of God's judgment on various people and things, the prophet announces the nearness of this day (1:14) and briefly discusses the terribleness of the day (1:15-18). The closeness of the Day of the Lord is announced as the prophet cries: “The great day of the lord is near—near and coming quickly” (1:14). On that day the wrath of God

will be manifested as never before. “That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. . . .” (1:15).

This day shall cause distress for cities (1:16), men (1:17), and the land (1:18). It will be “a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities” (1:16), men will be so distressed that they will “walk like blind men” (1:17), and “In the fire of His jealousy the whole world will be consumed” (1:18).

In view of this very terrible day of judgment, a call to repentance is issued (2:1-3). Judah is commanded to gather themselves together as a nation (2:1) before the decree against them is executed and they become as the chaff driven away by the wind. They are commanded, “Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord’s anger” (2:3).

The prophet continues on from announcing judgment on Judah to announcing it against the nations (2:4-15). Philistia (2:4-7), Moab and Ammon (2:8-11), Ethiopia (2:12), and Assyria (2:13-15) all fall under the judgment of God.

The destruction of the chief cities of the Philistines is given (2:4-7). Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron are all named (2:4). The Philistines will be utterly destroyed and on his land “and none will be left” (2:5). Their “land by the sea . . . will be a place for shepherds and sheep pens,” and it “will belong to the remnant of the house of Judah” (2:7).

Following Philistia, Ammon and Moab face the judgment of God. Because they have “insulted” (2:8) the people of Yahweh, they shall be made like unto Sodom and Gomorrah (2:9). God’s people shall plunder them and His remnant shall “inherit their land” (2:9). In discussing God’s severity of judgment that Edom and other coastal nations must all face, Zephaniah says:

“The Lord will be awesome to them when He destroys all the gods of the land. The nations on every shore will worship Him, everyone in his own land” (2:11).

Finally, the Ethiopians and the Assyrians will not escape God’s judgment. The Ethiopians “will be slain by my sword” (2:12), Assyria shall be destroyed, and Nineveh will be made “utterly desolate and dry as a desert” (2:13). Nineveh is to become a desert and a dwelling place for beasts and birds (2:14-15a), and “All who pass by scoff and shake their fists” (2:15b).

Leaving the nations, the prophet again turns his attention to Jerusalem. She is called a “rebellious and defiled” city (3:1). Woe is pronounced against her for her disobedience to the Lord. In describing her disobedience and the sins of her leaders the prophet declares: “Woe to the city of oppressors, rebellious and defiled! She obeys no one, she accepts no correction. She does not trust in the Lord, she does not draw near to her God. Her officials are roaring lions, her rulers are evening wolves, who leave nothing for the morning. Her prophets are arrogant; they are treacherous men. Her priests profane the sanctuary and do violence to the law” (3:1-4).

Because of this disobedience to the Lord, justness demands punishment upon the disobedient (3:5-7). The Lord reminds Jerusalem that He has judged other nations and can therefore do the same to her (3:5-6). His loving-kindness, however, manifests his desire that Jerusalem will repent, “‘Surely you will fear me and accept correction!’ Then her dwelling would not be cut off, not all my punishments come upon her” (3:7a). Instead of repenting, “they were still eager to act corruptly in all they did” (3:7b).

After discussing the judgment on Judah and the nations, the prophet now begins to deal with the coming salvation for Israel in the Day of the Lord (3:8-20). Israel’s conversion (3:8-13) and restoration (3:14-20) are briefly considered.

The conversion of Israel as a nation will be manifested following this Armageddon (3:8). At that time Israel will have the gift of “purified lips” and all Israel shall “call on the name of the Lord and serve Him shoulder to shoulder” (3:9). She will be re-gathered “from beyond the rivers of Cush (Ethiopia)” (3:10), and purified (3:11-13a). The proud shall be removed (3:11), while the poor and afflicted shall be preserved (3:12). Israel shall no more “be haughty,” and she shall dwell in perfect security and “none one will make them afraid” (3:13).

Following her conversion, Israel is pictured singing praises as a restored people (3:14). Israel’s enemies will be defeated and the Lord Himself will dwell in her midst (3:15-17). With Messiah in her midst she is exalted to a high position and is praised among all peoples of the earth (3:18-20). Zephaniah concludes his prophecy picturing this future day of Israel’s exaltation, “At that time I will gather you; at that time I will bring you home. I will give you honor and praise among all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes before your very eyes” (3:20).

Haggai

Haggai the prophet is the author of the book that bears his name. Haggai actually means “festive one.” Because of this name, it has been suggested that the prophet was born on one of the feast days of the Hebrew calendar. The beginning of the reign of Darius I (Darius Hystaspes) of Persia is well established to be in the year 522 BC. Haggai writes that he began his prophecy (according to Jewish reckoning) “In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month” (2:10), and finished “on the twenty-fourth day of the month” (2:20). Therefore, he prophesied from September 1st (English calendar), 520 BC until December 24th of that same year.

Critical scholarship contributes to Haggai the spoken words of the prophecy, but feel that a contemporary of Haggai may have recorded the main points of the prophet's messages. The brevity of these messages and the fact that the prophet speaks in the third person are arguments used to advance this view. The prophecy is a unified message as it stands, and concerning its brevity and the use of the third person, it is quite possible and reasonable that an author might use the third person and write in a succinct, condensed form.

Little is known of the man himself. He was probably born in Babylon during the exiles and returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel. He was a contemporary of Zechariah and the two labored together in challenging the people to finish the temple. Israel had been taken captive by Babylon. The captivity lasted for seventy years (Jeremiah 25:11 ff.). As predicted, following the seventy years, it had been revealed that the Lord would restore His people back to their homeland (Jeremiah 25:11, 12; Daniel 9:2). Cyrus, the great ruler of the Persian kingdom, took the throne in 559 BC. After having added Media to his realm, and having enlarged his kingdom to the Caspian, Black, and Aegean Seas, he defeated Babylon in 539 BC, which is described in Daniel 5:30-31. Cyrus became a kind ruler toward the Jews. Reversing the policies of the Babylonians and Assyrians of transporting people from their homeland, he favored allowing the displaced Jews the privilege of returning to their homeland. He announced a decree in 538 BC to permit the Jews to return to Jerusalem in order to rebuild their temple. Only around 50,000 Jews embarked on this return led by their spiritual leaders, Zerubbabel and Joshua (Ezra 1-3).

Upon their arrival, the remnant began to rebuild their devastated temple. Hard work soon brought the foundation of the new temple into being, but this short time of optimism soon turned into discouragement and temporary defeat. Due to the subtle opposition of the Samaritans (Ezra 4:23-24), the work was soon halted, and the temple foundation lay neglected for over fourteen

years. During this time, the people grew indifferent and complacent, and a general attitude of lethargy prevailed. It was at such a time that Haggai was sent to awaken the Jews from their lethargy and to spark them into finishing the temple. The effectiveness of his impact is clearly seen in the rapidity of which the temple was completed. Haggai came to them in 520 BC, and the temple was completed in 516 BC, or “in the sixth year of Darius the king” (Ezra 6:15). The purpose of Haggai’s ministry is to awaken the people to their God-appointed task of rebuilding the temple. Haggai stressed the need to obey God by renewing their efforts.

He is also a prophet who stressed proper stewardship in building the temple and spoke of a final shaping of the nations and filling the temple with glory. It is significant that Christ came to the temple as the glory of God and in Hebrews 12 there is a warning of a final shaking to be replaced by the unshakable kingdom of Christ (Hebrews 12:26-27).

Flow of Thought—Haggai: The *theme* of the book of Haggai is rebuilding the temple. The book of Haggai contains five messages delivered by the prophet to the returned exiles in order to encourage them in the rebuilding of the temple.

The first message is a message of rebuke against the negligence of God’s people in rebuilding the temple (1:1-11). The time of this message is in the second year of Darius (520 BC) on September 1st. It is addressed to the two leaders of Israel, Zerubbabel (the governor) and Joshua (the high priest) (1:1).

The people are quoted in their excuse for not rebuilding the temple. They say, “The time has not yet come for the Lord’s house to be built” (1:2). They give such an excuse because of their slothfulness and indifference. The prophet therefore speaks out against this, accusing them of building nice houses for themselves, but utterly neglecting God’s house. He asks: “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?” (1:3).

Because of their sin, unproductiveness has been a result (1:5-6). Concerning their total unfruitfulness the prophet declares: “You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it” (1:6).

The people must be made to see that rebuilding the temple is of vital importance for the nation. For this reason, the prophet gives a challenge to the people to rebuild the temple and to glorify God by doing it (1:7-8). Because they had failed to do this in the past, there are economic difficulties (1:9) and a great drought is brought upon the land. In describing this terrible judgment, Haggai writes, “Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labor of your hands” (1:10-11) The response to the prophet’s message is that the remnant of the people obey the Lord and fear Him (1:12).

The second message is one of encouragement (1:13-15), in which the Lord assures His own of His presence with them (1:12a). The people are in turn activated and do the “work on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God” (1:14). This message is given on September 24 of the same year as the first.

To exhort the people in their work, a third message is delivered by the prophet on October 21, 520 BC. (2:1-2). This second temple seems nothing as compared to the former and this causes pessimism and discouragement. In order to curb this wrong attitude, Haggai is commissioned to give the divine message he does.

The prophet first of all encourages the people by comforting them concerning the reality of God’s presence with them (2:4). God’s presence causes no need for fear or despondency

regardless of the size and splendor of the work. Furthermore, the presence of God's Spirit should take away fear. The prophet declares, "This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear" (2:5).

Not only are the people to take comfort in God's presence in the present, but they are also to be comforted in view of the millennial temple which shall arise in the future (2:6-9). This temple will appear following God's judgment of the nations (2:6-7a). Nations will come to it to worship and the glory of the Lord shall fill it (2:7b). It shall be exceedingly beautiful (2:8), and in its place peace shall reign through Messiah (2:9). In describing the glory of this millennial temple, Haggai reports, "'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the Lord Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the Lord Almighty" (2:9)

The fourth message is delivered on December 24 (2:10). By a ritual comparison of the law of cleanness and uncleanness, the prophet declares that the neglected temple has rendered all their worship as unclean. He illustrates this fact by a series of questions concerning the bearing of holy flesh and the touching of a dead body (2:11-13). He teaches the people that that which is unholy corrupts everything it touches. So they corrupt all that they do because of their sin and neglect of the Lord's house (2:14).

Following this demonstration, Haggai applies his lesson to his audience (2:15-19). Economic problems pressed the people while the temple lay in ruins (2:15-17), but since rebuilding has taken place, the Lord promises His blessing and fruitfulness (2:18-19).

In the last and final message of Haggai dated December 24th of the same year as the other messages, the prophet gives the revelation of the final overthrow of the Gentile world powers (2:20-23). He begins by revealing to his readers the destruction of the nations of the

world during the future tribulation period (2:21-22). This is just prior to the reigning of Messiah on earth. In speaking of this judgment on the nations, Yahweh says through Haggai, “Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah that I will shake the heavens and the earth. I will overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and their drivers; horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his brother” (2:21-22).

The message ends with a promise to Zerubbabel that the Lord has given him a sign of authority (2:23). In this context, it seems that Zerubbabel is a type of Christ who will be invested with all rule and authority in the future.

Zechariah

The book is named after the prophet, *Zekaryah*, meaning, “whom Yahweh remembered.” The title is fitting since the book deals with Yahweh’s remembrance of His people and the future blessings and victories to come. Zechariah was probably taken to Babylon in the exile as a very small child. His grandfather, Iddo, was a priest who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel (Nehemiah 12:1, 4, 7). Zechariah returned with this exiled group to Palestine and began to prophecy just two months after Haggai, his contemporary. According to Talmudic tradition, he was a member of the Great Synagogue and lived to be an old man. The prophet began his ministry, “In the eighth month of the second year of Darius” (1:1). This would place the beginning of his prophetic ministry in November, 520 BC, just two months after Haggai began his ministry. The last dated prophecy of Zechariah came “in the fourth year of King Darius . . . in the fourth day of the ninth month. . . .” This would mean his last dated prophecy occurred December, 518 BC, just two years later. It appears that his ministry actually extended many more

years after that last dated prophesy, and he most likely wrote chapters 9-14 after 480 BC. This would extend the prophet's ministry to some forty-five to fifty years.

Conservative scholars support Zecharian authorship. Although the Zecharian authenticity of chapters 1-8 is accepted, the remaining chapters (9-14) are contested by some modern scholars. Either they assign chapters 9-14 to an unknown pre-exilic author, or they late-date it to a post-exilic period after the time of Zechariah. Some even divide these last chapters further, assigning chapters 9-11 to a pre-exilic source or sources, and chapters 12-14 to a post-exilic time. There are a number of reasons for accepting Zechariah as the author of the entire work. The testimony of both Jewish and Christian tradition supports Zecharian authorship. There are references in the second part of the book (9-14) to the later prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. This would mark a later time which would be post-exilic. The historical background of chapters 9-14 is post-exilic. There is no mention of a reigning king in Judah or Israel which would no doubt have been mentioned if he was writing in a pre-exilic time when a king was reigning. Israel and Judah are seen as one, and the reference to Greece (9:13) is clearly post-exilic.

The historical setting for Zechariah is the same as for Haggai since both were contemporaries. As with Haggai, the purpose of Zechariah is to encourage the people to finish the temple (Ezra 4:23-5:1; 6:14; Zechariah 1:16; 4:8-9). While Haggai's message is strong in rebuke, Zechariah seems to be stronger in encouragement. Zechariah is seeking to bring about a spiritual change in the exiled remnant and by this to spur them on to the task. In encouraging his readers, the prophet gives an abundance of information dealing with the future Messiah and the events that will accompany His coming. Much of this information is given in symbolic language. He deals with Israel's future repentance and restoration, the defeat of Gentile world powers, the

nature of Christ's first advent, and the triumph of His second advent. All of this knowledge supplied great encouragement to the people and spurred them on to finish their task of rebuilding the temple.

Christological applications are seen throughout Zechariah. Joshua, son of Jehozadak becomes a type of the king/priesthood of Christ the Branch (6:9-15); the triumphal entry is seen (9:9); the value of 30 pieces of silver (11:13); the opening of a fountain of cleansing for salvation (13:1); and the feet of the Lord coming to the Mount of Olives (14:4) where Christ returns—all picture the person and work of Christ.

Flow of Thought—Zechariah: The *theme* of Zechariah is God's remembrance of Israel. The book of Zechariah begins with a brief introduction in which the prophet gives the time of his prophecy in the second year of Darius (1:1a) and his own genealogical background, (1:1b), followed by a solemn warning and call of Israel to repentance (1:2-6). He warns them of the Lord's displeasure with their fathers (1:2) and challenges them to turn unto "the Lord of hosts" (1:3). They are not to be as their forefathers who did not hearken unto the prophets of their day (1:4-6), but they are to listen and obey.

After this brief initial introduction, the book contains a series of eight visions which the prophet has experienced and recounts to his hearers (1:7-6:8). In the first vision, the prophet sees a man among the myrtle trees (1:7-17). He appears on a red horse (1:7-8) along with other horsemen. His duty is to patrol the earth which he finds at rest (1:9-11). After describing the vision the prophet records the words of the angel of the Lord who informs him of God's love for Israel and Jerusalem (1:12-14), and His anger against the nations (1:15). The message of the first vision concludes with a statement of the future restoration of Jerusalem (1:16-17). The vision

therefore signifies hope and future restoration for Israel who has been under the domination of the Gentiles.

In the second vision, the prophet sees four horns and four smiths (1:18-21). The four horns “have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem” (1:18-19), and the four artisans are four powers which shall destroy the four horns (1:20-21). The four horns signify the four great Gentile world powers which scatter Israel namely Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The four smiths symbolize the kingdoms the Lord uses to cast down these powers. Medo-Persia, Greece, & Rome became smiths and each destroyed the nation before it, while the kingdom of Messiah represents the fourth smith who will cast down Rome.

The third vision is that of the surveyor (2:1-13). The vision sets forth the glory of Jerusalem. Man is seen going to measure Jerusalem (2:1-2). An angel is immediately ordered to speak to this man concerning this city (2:3-4). Jerusalem is said to be expanded (2:4) and protected (2:5), her inhabitants regathered (2:6-7), her enemies defeated (2:8-9), and Messiah shall dwell in her midst (2:10-13). The prophet writes, “Shout and be glad, O Daughter of Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you” (2:10).

In the fourth vision, the prophet sees Joshua the high priest cleansed, symbolizing the restoration of Israel to her divinely ordained role as a high-priestly nation (3:1-10). The vision is described (3:1-5) and then applied (3:6-10). Joshua represents the nation and is before Satan, the adversary (3:1). The Lord rebukes Satan and describes His future purpose for Israel (3:2). Although attired in filthy garments (3:3), Joshua, standing for the nation, is cleansed, clothed with a “change of raiment” (3:4-5), and challenged to obey the Lord (3:6-7). The high priest and his colleagues are stated to be men who signified future events for Israel (3:8), looking forward

to that great day when Messiah, the Branch, would come. At that time the Lord “will remove the iniquity of that land in one day” (3:9), and peace shall fill the earth (3:10).

The fifth vision is that of the lampstand and the two olive trees (4:1-14). The prophet sees a seven-branched lampstand, flanked by two olive trees (4:1-3). Not understanding its significance, the prophet inquires of the Lord (4:4). The angel replies that it is to show the fact that the temple would be completed. It would be completed by divine power (4:5-6) through Zerubbabel (4:7-10).

The two olive trees are also asked about (4:11), and explained (4:12-14). These are “the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth” (4:14). Thus, these portray the two offices of King-Priest which Christ shall hold. The sixth vision is the flying scroll (5:1-4). Zechariah sees a giant scroll, flying through the air (5:1-2) which represents the curse of God against sinners (5:3-4). It will go all over the world (5:3) and be destructive to the ones on whom it falls (5:4).

In the seventh vision, the prophet sees a woman sitting in an *ephah*—the Hebrew word for a measuring basket (5:5-11). She is pictured sitting in the *ephah* (5:5-7), and is said to be wickedness personified (5:8). She is then carried by two women to the land of Shinar (Babylon) and a house is built there for her and the *ephah*.

The eighth and final vision is that of the four chariots (6:1-8). The vision is described (6:1-3) and interpreted (6:4-8). The prophet sees four chariots coming out between two mountains (6:1). The horses of the chariots are described as red (6:2a), black (6:2b), white (6:3a), and grizzled (6:3b). These four chariots represent four angelic ministers who will execute God’s judgment. After the brilliant description of the eight night visions, the actual coronation of Israel’s high priest, Joshua, takes place. Zechariah is to receive the gifts for the temple carried

from Babylon (6:9-10) and he is to make crowns out of the silver and gold received (6:11). Joshua is then to be crowned (6:11).

This actual historical coronation is a picture of the future coronation of Messiah (6:12-15). Messiah is Joshua's antitype and is called the Branch (6:12). His humanity (6:12b), His temple (6:12c-13a), His glory (6:13b), His kingship and priesthood (6:13c-14), His reconciling work of Jew and Gentile (6:15a), and the blessings He shall bring (6:15b) are all discussed. His glory and work is stated as follows:

Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both (6:13).

The eight visions of Zechariah and the symbolic coronation of Joshua are followed by four messages from the prophet (7:1-8:23). These messages begin with the phrases: "the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah" (7:1), "the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah" (7:8), "again the word of the Lord of hosts came unto me" (8:1), and "the word of the Lord of hosts came unto me" (8:18). These phrases therefore identify the four messages.

The first message discusses the problem concerning fasting (7:1-7). A delegation from Babylon sends a question to the leaders concerning whether or not they should continue to fast in the fifth month (7:1-3). This fast mourned the destruction of Jerusalem which these exiled people had been observing for seventy years. The prophet answers their question by rebuking their meaningless ritualism (7:4-6), and by urging them to obedience to the Word of God spoken by the former prophet (7:7).

In the second message the prophet sets forth the former disobedience of the people of Israel and the consequences that followed (7:8-14). This is to admonish the present generation to

obey. The Lord asked for justice and mercy (7:8-10), but the pre-exilic community failed to heed the Lord's Word (7:11). He writes:

Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in His Spirit by the former prophets; therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts (7:12).

As a consequence of their disobedience, Judgment fell (7:13-14). The Lord became deaf to their prayers (7:13), and Israel was dispersed among the nations and their land desolated (7:14).

The third message announces Israel's restoration and encourages Israel in their present task of rebuilding the temple (8:1-17). The prophet begins by telling of the future repopulation of the city of Jerusalem (8:1-6). In describing its future bustling activity, Zechariah declares: "Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with cane in hand because of his age. The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there" (8:4-5).

Not only will Jerusalem be repopulated but the remnant of Israel will be regathered to their land (8:6-7). They shall marvel at the city of Jerusalem and at the word of the Lord, and He will be "their God in truth and in righteousness" (8:8).

After these words, encouragement is given to the people to finish the temple (8:9). The Lord will bless them (8:10-12) and make them a blessing to others (8:13). The Lord tells them that He will do good unto them and the city (8:14-15) and challenges them to obedience and practical holiness of life (8:16-17).

In the fourth message the prophet sets forth the rejoicing that comes from obedience and recognizes Jerusalem as the future religious center of the world (8:18-23). Fasts will give way to

rejoicing (8:20), and many peoples and nations shall come to Jerusalem to seek Messiah (8:21-22). At that time the Jew will be recognized as the true light of Yahweh (8:23).

Beginning with chapter nine, Zechariah delivers two burdens of the word of the Lord to the people. These may be recognized as follows: the first burden (9:1-11:17), and the second burden (12:1-14:21). These two can be identified by the following two phrases: “The burden of the word of the Lord” in 9:1, and “The burden of the word of the Lord” in (12:1).

In the first burden, the prophet begins with a prophecy concerning the destruction of the nations surrounding Israel (9:1-8). Damascus (9:1), Hamath, Tyre, and Sidon (9:2-4) will all be judged along with Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron (9:5) and Ashdod (9:6-7). These judgments have been fulfilled, Verse eight is a beautiful prophecy with a twofold fulfillment. It pictures Jerusalem’s escape from Alexander’s past destruction, and is also yet prophetic of Jerusalem’s future deliverance in Messiah (9:8). Messiah’s coming is then described which has been fulfilled at His first advent (9:9). Israel is called to rejoice over His coming (9:9a), and He is described as a just Savior, “lowly, and riding upon a donkey, upon a colt, the foal of a donkey” (9:9).

From this lowly description of Messiah’s coming, the writer goes on to immediately view the blessings of His appearance at the second advent (9:10-12). He is to bring peace (9:10) and deliverance (9:11-16) He shall bless the land with fruitfulness (9:17) and rain (10:1). False shepherds will be removed (10:2-3), Israel will be victorious (10:4-5), and she shall experience the Lord’s redemption (10:6-8), and re-gathering (10:9-12).

The first burden concludes with a prophecy concerning the rejection of Christ, the true Shepherd (11:1-17). The consequences of this rejection on the land (11:1-3), and on the people are first given (11:4-6). Destruction and devastation will fall on the land. From the Lebanon

region in the north (11:1), into Bashan in Transjordan (11:2), and on into the lower Jordan Valley (11:3) this desolation shall be seen.

The character of this rejection is great (11:7-14). The prophet is called upon to literally act out a prophetic parable, picturing Israel's future rejection of Messiah. He is called to tend God's flock (11:4) who is destined for slaughter and maltreatment by their religious leaders who only become rich off of them (11:5). Because of their rejection of Him the Lord Himself will not pity them and will deliver them into the hand of a future Roman ruler (11:6).

The prophet continues to tend the flock using two staves to do it (11:7). These staves mean "Favor" and "Unity" and symbolize the Lord's final gracious efforts to reclaim Israel, The three classes of leaders (priests, scribes, and civil rulers) reject Him, however, and He in turn rejects them and the rest of the flock which has followed them (11:9). That generation in Israel is rejected by the Shepherd as they have rejected Him (11:10-11). The flock weighs His price at thirty pieces of silver (11:12) and the final severance of all relations between the Shepherd (Messiah) and His flock are acted out (11:14).

In the place of accepting the true Shepherd, Israel will accept a false shepherd (11:15-17). Zechariah therefore acts out another symbolic act which looks forward to the Anti-Christ. His acceptance by the people (11:15), his wicked character (11:16), and his final destruction are all outlined.

In the second and final burden (12:1-14:21), the prophet outlines the future deliverance and conversion of Israel (12:1-13:9), Israel's future cleansing and purification (13:1-9), and the triumphant return of Messiah (14:1-21).

While nations shall lay siege against Jerusalem (12:1-3), the Lord will deliver Israel and establish her in peace and safety (12:4-9). The Spirit will be poured out on Israel and the

crucified Messiah will be revealed to her (12:10). The result will be a national day of mourning and conversion (12:11-14) as Israel will turn to her Messiah.

In that day, a fountain shall be opened for Israel's cleansing (13:1) and the false prophets shall be overthrown (13:2-6). While Israel's true Shepherd would be smitten and the sheep scattered (13:7), she would be returned and graciously converted (13:8-9). "They will call on my name, and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they shall say, 'The Lord is our God'" (13:9).

In chapter fourteen, the book concludes with a prophecy of the triumphant return of Messiah (14:1-21). A final siege of Jerusalem just prior to His advent will occur but the Lord will intervene to deliver His people (14:1-3). His feet shall touch the Mount of Olives in that day and a great earthquake will take place (14:4-7).

He will establish Israel in the kingdom (14:9-11) and punish her enemies (14:12-15). The nations will worship Him in Jerusalem and Jerusalem will become the religious center of the world (14:16-19). All of life will be sanctified, and nothing defiling shall desecrate the Holy City and its temple.

In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and boil in them, and in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts (14:20-21).

Malachi

Malachi, the final book of “The Twelve” is also the shortest. It is named for its author, Malachi, which means, “my messenger.” This is regarded as a personal name, and not as an appellation taken from 3:1: “Behold, I will send my messenger.” Being stated as having come from Malachi, there is no reason to believe that the prophet is not the author. The book flows as a unit, and manifests itself as the work of one author.

Although there is no precise statement within the book that pinpoints the exact date, the book itself gives enough information in order to arrive at a probable date. The book was clearly written after the temple had been built and sacrifices were being offered (1:7, 10; 3:1), and it was written late enough after these events in order to allow for spiritual laxity to set in. When compared to Nehemiah, the book of Malachi shows a similar historical background (Malachi 2:10-16 with Nehemiah 10:30; 13:23-31; Malachi 3:7-12 with Nehemiah 10:32-39). It is also significant that Nehemiah was not governor at this time since a Persian governor was ruling in Jerusalem (Malachi 1:8). Nehemiah was absent at Susa in 433-432 BC, therefore it is most probable that Malachi prophesied during this period of time.

The background for Malachi was the period following the rebuilding of the temple, and the communication of the Law by Ezra. Having returned from the Babylonian captivity, rebuilt the temple, and received instruction in the Law, the people again fell into apostasy, religious indifference, and formalism. The characteristics of the period may be marked in several particulars. The priests, who were supposed to be the religious leaders, were disregarding the sanctity of the temple and the importance of its ceremonies (Nehemiah 13:1-9; Malachi 1:6-2:4). They also were giving faulty instruction in the Law of Moses, and instead of being a guide, were actually blind priests leading the blind people (Malachi 2:5-9). With this poor leadership of the

priests, the people were living unfaithful lives to the Law, engaging in immorality, idolatry, and were disregarding the prohibited intermarriage with heathen people (Nehemiah 13:23-28; Malachi 2:10-17). Due to the general apostasy of priests and people, the worship had become merely religious formalism that meant nothing to Yahweh. The people were also lax in giving their tithes and offerings to the Lord (Nehemiah 13:10-13; Malachi 3:8-12). It was into such a background that the prophet Malachi entered to be God's spokesman to call the people back to Himself. He came reproving, rebuking, and exhorting with a challenge to repent and prepare for the coming judgment of Messiah.

The purpose of the book is twofold: to describe the sin and apostasy of Israel (chapters 1 and 2), and to set forth the fact that there will be judgment on the one who continually sins, and blessing on the repentant and obedient (chapters 3 and 4). He concludes by admonishing his readers to be obedient to the Law of Moses.

Flow of Thought—Malachi: The *theme* of Malachi is the rebuke of apostasy and formalism. The book of Malachi sets forth the revelation of divine love (1:1-5), its rejection by God's people (1:6-2:17), and as a consequence, the revelation of divine judgment (3:1-4:6). The book ends with a brief exhortation from the prophet and an announcement of Elijah's future coming (4:4-6).

Following a brief introduction (1:1), the prophet begins his message by giving to his readers a revelation of the love of God (1:2-5). God's love is briefly stated in spite of the ungrateful and unbelieving hearts of His people. "I have loved you" (1:2a) is the Lord's words. The people have shown their utter apostasy and ingratitude with the question: "How have You loved us?" (1:2b).

The Lord answers this question with a single pivotal illustration of Jacob and Esau, and their posterity. In His sovereign purpose and love, Jacob has been chosen and loved (1:2c), while Esau has been rejected (1:3-5). Esau is viewed as a stranger from the covenant of promise, and his children have reaped God's judgment because of their sins. Thus, the Lord has loved Israel, and His election of Jacob proves it.

Instead of responding positively to this love, however, God's people have rejected it. It has been rejected by priests (1:6-2:9), and people (2:10-17) alike. The priests first of all have offered defiled sacrifices to Yahweh in their worship (1:6-9). Malachi writes: "You place defiled food on my altar. But you ask, 'How have we defiled you?' By saying that the Lord's table is contemptible. When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" (1:7-8).

The priests are also mercenary in their conduct (1:10), and profane the name of Yahweh (1:11-14). Instead of the Lord's name being exalted among the nations (1:11), it has been profaned by the polluted (1:12) and sick (1:13) offerings offered to Him. Their conduct is therefore reprehensible in view of who the Lord is (1:11).

Added to all of this, the priests have departed from God's law (2:1-9). If they would not repent, their blessings would become curses (2:1-3). They should have preserved the true Levitical character of the priesthood with faithfulness and useful service (2:4-7), but instead, they have departed from their calling (2:8) and have become contemptible before the people (2:9). In describing their disobedience and its consequence Malachi declares: "But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi," says the Lord Almighty. "So I have caused you to be despised and

humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law” (2:8-9)

Not only have the priests rejected and repudiated God’s love, but the people have also (2:10-17). As the priests are, so go the people. They have first of all rejected God’s love in intermarrying with heathen women (2:10-12). This intermarrying has resulted in idolatry (2:10-11), and all who engage in such will be judged by the Lord, including the master and scholar alike (2:12).

Not only has there been this intermarrying, but the men have divorced their covenant wives (2:13-16). The Lord severely condemns this action as the prophet says: “‘I hate divorce,’ says the Lord God of Israel, ‘and I hate a man’s covering himself with violence as well as with his garment,’ says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith” (2:16).

The people have further wearied God by their insincere religious profession, and by their unbelief in divine justice. “You have wearied the Lord with your words. ‘How have we wearied him?’ you ask. By saying, ‘All who do evil are good in the eyes of the Lord, and he is pleased with them’ or ‘Where is the God of justice?’” (2:17)

Because of this rejection of God’s love by priests and people, judgment is inevitable. The prophet therefore gives a revelation to the people of the divine judgment to come (3:1-4:6). The Judge is first of all announced (3:1-2). God’s messenger, John the Baptist, will prepare the way for Him (3:1a), and He will follow with purging judgment (3:1b-3). As a result of His judgment, proper worship will be restored (3:4), and all the disobedient ones will be thoroughly judged (3:5).

In view of this coming judgment, the prophet challenges his readers to repentance (3:7-12). “Return to me, and I will return to you” is His exhortation (3:7). They can demonstrate their repentance by discontinuing robbing God in their tithes (3:8-9), and by obediently bringing in “the whole tithe into the storehouse” (3:10a). This obedience would result in material blessings (3:10b), preservation of their crops (3:11), and prominence among the nations (3:12).

The prophet continues his challenge to repentance by giving the contrast between the righteous and the wicked. For the righteous, salvation is in store (3:13-18; 4:2). For the wicked, however, the Judgment of God is certain (4:1, 3). In describing this difference Malachi give their word from the Lord, “‘Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire,’ says the Lord Almighty. ‘Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall’” (4:1-2).

The book concludes with an exhortation to the people to “Remember the law of my servant Moses” (4:4), and with an announcement of the yet future coming of Elijah, the prophet (4:5-6). He is prophesied to come immediately “before the great and dreadful day of the Lord” (4:5), and his work of turning “the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers” is declared (4:6).

***Ketuvim* – The Writings**

We have now covered two sections of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Law (*Torah*) and the Prophets (*Nevi'im*). Now we come to the Writings, or the *Ketuvim*. In the writings there were 11 books, and are placed in the following divisions: Poetic books of Psalms, Proverbs, and Job; the Scrolls (*Megilloth*) of the Song of Solomon (or the Song of Songs), Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther; one book of prophecy—Daniel; and two (or three) historical books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles. Some scholars group Ezra and Nehemiah as Ezra-Nehemiah; some combine all three as Ezra-Nehemiah-Chronicles.

Psalms

Psalms is the book that actually begins this third section of the Writings in the Hebrew Scriptures. At times in the New Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures is referred to as the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms because the first book of this third section is the Psalter, or Psalms. The word Psalms comes from the Greek word *psalmoi* that designated music played upon or accompanied by a stringed instrument. Later, the term Psalm came simply to mean “song.” The Hebrew title of the book, *Tehillim*, comes from *hallel* which means “praises.” The *Tehillim* are songs of praise, and so the Psalms represent Israel’s hymnbook, made up of songs that were sung in worship from about 1400 BC to around 500 BC and perhaps even later than that. The Psalms written and used during this long period were brought together into the collection we have today, consisting of five books or collections. Book I (Psalms 1-41), Book II (Psalms 40-72), Book III (Psalms 73-89), Book IV (Psalms 90-106), and Book V (Psalm 107-150). At the end of each book, the final psalm concludes with a benediction to Yahweh. Many have seen in the five-book

collection a patterning after the *Torah*, or the five books of Moses. The purpose of the Psalms is to express the worship and praise of Israel to Yahweh.

Like our hymns or songs today, the Psalms were each written as Hebrew poetry. The key to understanding Hebrew poetry is that it is “parallel” in its repetition. The first line and the second line of the lyrics are often seen parallel to each other. This is not a phenomenon found only in the Hebrew Scriptures; we see such parallelism all through the ancient near east. In the Babylonian and Canaanite songs of worship, as well as in other places, we find this kind of parallelism as a form or style of poetry.

There are several types of parallelism. One is called, “synonymous parallelism.” That is where the first line is repeated, using different words in the second line, which actually gives strength to the first line. For example, Psalm 24:1 reads, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. . . .” Notice how line two is a repetition of line one. The next two lines of Psalm 24 also show synonymous parallelism: “. . . for He founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.” Another example would be Psalm 8:4, “. . . what is man that You are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?” In synonymous parallelism, the second line repeats and strengthens the preceding line.

Another form of parallelism called “antithetic parallelism” in which the second line is seen to be in contrast to the first line. In Psalm 1:6 we read, “For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.” A third form of parallelism is “synthetic parallelism” where the second line explains the first line or adds something to it. An example would be Psalm 19:7, “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.” A fourth kind of parallelism is what we call “emblematic parallelism” which is very much like metaphors or similes. In Psalm 42:1 we read,

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.” There is a beautiful emblem or illustration in line one that explains the passion of the Psalmist as his heart yearns for God. A fifth form of parallelism is “repetitive parallelism” or “iterative parallelism” which builds to a climatic highpoint, such as in Psalm 96:7, “Ascribe to the Lord, O families of nations, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts.” As you study the Psalms, begin to look for parallelism; this is the key to this beautiful form of Hebrew poetry.

Not only are the different Books of Psalms and different forms of parallelism used, Psalms also fall into different types. We have mentioned “form criticism” in biblical interpretation and hermeneutics as a scholarly approach to identifying the literary forms found in Scripture. As we look at the Psalms, we can see how they can be explained and categorized according to types. There is a form known as a “royal Psalm,” a Psalm that deals with a king—perhaps his coronation day or his wedding day. Examples of royal Psalms are 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 110, and 144.

Another Psalm type is what we might call “praise Psalms.” These Psalms begin with a call to praise and worship, and then give the reasons for praising God. For example, Psalm 33 begins with a call to praise, “Sing joyfully to the Lord, you who are righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy” (Psalm 33:1-3). This call to praise is followed with the reasons for praise: “For (because) the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.” More reasons for praise are given, but we can see the pattern used; a call to praise followed by the reasons for praise. We have a number of such praise Psalms in the Psalter, such as 33, 100, 103, 105, 111, 113, 117, 135, 136, 146, and 147.

There is a type or form of Psalm we know as a “lament Psalm.” Lament Psalms divide into two basic categories—the national lament and the individual lament. The national lament Psalm deals with the nation mourning or weeping over something in particular such as famine or a tragedy that has come against the nation. The individual lament Psalms deal with the mourning of an individual who is going through hard, trying times, pouring out their sorrow to God. Examples of national lament Psalms are 44, 60, 74, 79, 80, and 83; examples of individual lament Psalms are 3, 7, 12, 13, 22, 26, 28, 54, 56, 57, and 142.

In illustrating the form of an individual lament Psalm, look at Psalm 22. In verse 1, we find the familiar words that were used by the Lord at the time of His crucifixion: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Psalm 22 might be entitled “The Prayer of Christ Upon the Cross” as a prophetic psalm ultimately fulfilled in the crucifixion of Christ. The first few verses of the Psalm are an introductory lament. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent” (Psalm 22:1-2). The psalmist goes on to give his lament, speaking of his condition: “But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: ‘He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him since he delights in him’” (Psalm 22:6-7), viewing the mockery of the crowds at Christ’s crucifixion.

Beginning at Psalm 22:10, the psalmist begins to intensify his lament, saying: “From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother’s womb you have been my God. Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help. Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. Roaring lions tearing their prey open their mouths wide against me” (Psalm 22:10-13). The psalmist contrasts himself with his enemies who are seeking to hurt him, likening

them to wild animals are seeking to destroy him—again we can see the angry crowds around the cross. Then he begins to describe his condition in more detail. “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me. They have pierced my hands and my feet” (Psalm 22:14-16), looking ultimately at the crucifixion. We can hear in the details of this Psalm the intensely personal prayer of the Lord on the cross as He faced a very similar situation. This individual lament concludes in verses 17-18: “I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They cast lots for my clothing.” Again, we can see the details of this lament fulfilled at the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ as the guards cast lots for His garments (John 19:24).

At this point in the lament of Psalm 22—after we have the lament proper—we have the petition in which the psalmist asks Yahweh for help. “But you, O Lord, be not far off; O my Strength, come quickly to help me. Deliver my life from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dogs. Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen” (Psalm 22:19-21). The petition to Yahweh for His help typically follows the lament; after the petition comes the praise in which the psalmist declares the praise of God. “I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you” (Psalm 22:22). The psalmist speaks of his deliverance, and praises God for accomplishing it. This verse will later be applied, in Hebrews 2:12ff, in a great praise for the Father because of the resurrection and deliverance of our Lord Jesus Christ from the cross by the resurrection, to become our great pathfinder who cut the way through the thicket of death, and is our pioneer into the glory of eternal life.

In addition to types or forms of Psalms, we also have categories of Psalms. There are “ascent Psalms” sung by pilgrims as they ascending into Jerusalem to celebrate various feasts and festivals. (See Psalms 120-134.) We have what are commonly called “messianic Psalms.” These Psalms are used in the New Testament and applied to our Lord Jesus Christ. Some messianic Psalms are 2, 8, 16, 22, 45, 69, 72, 89, 110, 118, and 132. These messianic Psalms are very interesting study. They are interesting to study, first, in their own historical setting, then to see how the New Testament applies them to our Lord Jesus Christ. Psalm 110 is a classic Psalm used throughout the New Testament with application to our Lord, and deals with the resurrection and exaltation of our Lord and His high priestly ministry (Hebrews 2:13-14; 5:5-9; 7:11-25; 10:11-13), and in His present heavenly reign and ultimate victory over death (1 Corinthians 15:25-26)

Flow of Thought—Psalms: Because of the volume of Psalms, their various themes and unique structures, it seemed too burdensome to insert a detailed outline or flow of thought here in the book. Instead, I have placed a detailed outline of the Psalter at the back of the book.

Proverbs

The book of Proverbs is the study of wisdom; wisdom for the individual, the family, parent-child relationships, the proper kind of speech we must possess and use, worship, social attitudes, and much more. The Proverbs, for the most part, contain succinct, pithy statements of a very practical nature.

It is interesting that in Egypt, a text was discovered called “Instruction of Amenemope.”⁷ These wise instructions from Pharaoh Amenemope relate very closely to Proverbs 22 through 24. Comprised of very practical instructions, scholars began to realize that these sayings had to do

primarily with everyday wisdom, and the Lord allowed them to be included in the canon of His Holy Scriptures. The writing or collection of the Proverbs goes back to King Solomon, and there is no doubt that these wise sayings continued to be collected after Solomon's time by the kings and wise teachers that followed him.

In the first nine chapters, the primary composition is that of contrasting wisdom and folly. As we come to chapters 10-29, we find sharp, concise statements of wisdom. In chapters 30 and 31, we have the sayings of Agur and the sayings of King Lemuel. Agur speaks against slander, disobedience to parents, adultery, and strife, whereas King Lemuel's instructions are concerned with drunkenness and carousing. The Proverbs end with a beautiful teaching concerning the wife of noble character and virtue in Proverbs 31:10-31.

As we look at Proverbs, it is interesting that often we see wisdom personified as a virtuous woman out in the open, calling for those who want wisdom to come to her; it is pure, clean, and noble. This is contrasted with foolishness personified as a harlot found in a hidden, secret place, enticing and leading astray those who follow her. There is a beautiful passage in Proverbs 8 that deals with the eternality of wisdom; wisdom has always been with God. In Proverbs 8, we read that wisdom was put in place before the creation. "The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began. When there were no oceans, I was given birth, when there were no springs abounding with water; before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, before he made the earth of its fields or any of the dust of the world, I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked

out the foundations of the earth. Then I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind” (Proverbs 8:22-32).

We see wisdom working alongside God, almost like a child playing and being busy next to Him. Then, in verses 32-36 we read, “Now then, my sons, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not ignore it. Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the Lord. But whoever fails to find me harms himself; all who hate me love death.” Again, there is a contrast between wisdom and foolishness. Wisdom’s call is open. Wisdom was present with God before creation of the earth. Wisdom calls her followers and promises life. In this great passage of the personification of Wisdom, we see inferred the New Testament teachings of Jesus being the co-eternal, second person of the Trinity (John 1:1-5). We see Him, who is the wisdom of God, in bodily form.

The book of Proverbs is filled with very practical themes. How we conduct our lives, how we speak to others, and how we deal with everyday relationships are addressed. Many great passages in Proverbs teach us the practicality of wisdom for everyday life.

Flow of Thought—Proverbs: The *theme* of the book of Proverbs is practical wisdom. The book of Proverbs divides itself into five basic sections: the proverbs of Solomon concerning wisdom (1:1-9:18), miscellaneous sayings of Solomon (10:1-24:34), proverbs of Solomon collected by Hezekiah (25:1-29:27), the words of Agur (30:1-33), and the words of King Lemuel (31:1-31).

The first section begins with the writer’s name (1:1), his purpose (1:2-6), and the well-known statement which could serve as the theme to the entire book: “The fear of the Lord is the

beginning of knowledge” (1:7). The first section then (1:7-9:18) is basically an anthology of wise sayings in which the author discusses the subject of wisdom. The profit of wisdom (1:8), its promise (2:1-22), payment (3:1-26), primacy (4:1-9), warnings (5:1-23), allurements (8:1-36), and its contrast with folly (9:1-18) are all discussed.

In the second section (10:1-22:16), the book treats for the most part miscellaneous sayings that have to do with life and its various relations. Various contrasts in conduct are presented (10:1-22:16) with an admonition concerning wisdom (22:17-21). This is followed with a section on important sayings (22:22-24:34). Such things as friendship, debt, landmarks, diligence, being a guest, speaking, parental discipline, proper speech, drunkards, harlots, wine, envy, wisdom, proper attitudes, laziness, etc. are considered.

Following this is the third section which contains the proverbs of Solomon collected by King Hezekiah (25:1-29:27). Admonition concerning proper conduct is given along with a discussion of various sins that should not accompany one’s conduct.

In the words of Agur (30:1-33) words are spoken against slander (30:1-10), disobedience to parents (30:11-17), the adulteress (30:18-20), and against strife (30:21-33). The book closes with the words of King Lemuel (31:1-31). The evil of drunkenness is discussed (31:1-9) along with a magnificent poem which sets forth the virtuous woman and wife who deserves the praises of her children and husband.

Job

The next great book in this section of the Writings of the Hebrew Scriptures is the book of Job. Job is a classic; many have called it the “Matterhorn” of the Hebrew Scriptures. It is an outstanding book dealing with the age-old question, “why do the righteous suffer?” The writer

develops this theme in a very beautiful and challenging way for the reader. The writer's purpose is to answer the question simply: "we don't know." The traditional viewpoint was that if people suffer, it meant that God was judging them in some fashion; they had sinned, they had done wrong, therefore God was judging them and meting out some form of justice. Job is written to counter that false assumption and to teach that we just do not really know why the righteous must suffer.

Job is an interesting book in terms of its dating. It was probably written sometime between the 7th century BC to the 5th century BC. It is also a very difficult book in terms of the language. It is undoubtedly the most difficult book in the Hebrew Scriptures because of the number of Hebrew words that occur only one time in this book and nowhere else in the Hebrew Scriptures. While it may be a difficult book in terms of vocabulary, Job is written in marvelous poetry, especially beginning in chapter 3 and following through to the epilogue.

Though difficult linguistically, it is easy to follow in terms of its theme. If we were to outline the book, we would begin with the prologue in chapters 1 and 2. In this prologue, we have the characterization of Job. He is a righteousness man who does everything right. Satan ("the accuser") brings accusations against Job before the Lord. Satan acts as a prosecuting attorney against Job in the presence of God. "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face" (Job 1:9-11). God allows Job to be tested to prove that Job's faith is pure. We are told in the prologue that Job loses his wealth and his sons and daughters, and is ruined in every area of life. Ultimately, Job's own health is taken from him. At this point when Job has lost everything, we are now brought into the debate.

The reader knows why Job is suffering; he is suffering because Satan has accused him. Satan accused Job of worshipping Yahweh only because Yahweh had blessed and prospered him. Yet neither Job nor his friends were aware of this reason. The writer ingeniously allows us as the readers to see the reason while we hear the debate between Job and his friends as they argue back and forth around the traditional viewpoint of not knowing the real reason why the righteous suffer. This is irony; often we, like Job and his friends, do not know the reason for our suffering, and why terrible things happen in our lives. Now we get to know the reason, and listen to the debate as interested observers.

The debate that begins in chapter 3 is carried on through chapter 31 between Job and his three so-called friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. There are three cycles of debate. Chapters 3-14 is the first cycle; chapters 15-21 is the second cycle; and chapters 22-31 is the third cycle. Then, in chapters 32-37, we have the speeches of Elihu, speeches he makes without any of the rebuttal we witnessed in the speeches of the three friends. Then, in chapters 38-42, we find two speeches from the Almighty that serve as the climactic messages for all of the discourses. The first climactic speech is found in Job 38:1-40:2; the second climactic speech is found in Job 40:6-41:34. This is followed by the epilogue, the confession of Job, and a beautiful restoration wherein Job receives double what he had possessed before.

After the prologue, Job gives a monologue in which he bemoans the day of his birth, and even wishes that he had died before birth because of the tragedies that he has experienced. Then the three friends began to give their advice. Eliphaz suggests, from his reason his own personal and mystical experiences, that he is certain Job is suffering because of sin, and that if Job would simply repent, all would be well. Bildad, the traditionalist, suggests, like Eliphaz, that Job has sinned, and it is sin that is causing his suffering. Zophar, a legalist and a dogmatist, is the most

caustic, and tells Job that he needs to wake up to the reality that he is a sinner and that he needs to get his life straightened up. Each time they speak, Job gives his own rebuttal.

The debate increases in intensity as we come to the second and third cycle, and Job's friends become more and more accusatory in their arguments. Each time Job rebuts their comments, yet each time they speak, Job comes closer and closer to their viewpoint. Job begins to suggest that he has done nothing wrong; why should he be suffering? In reality, Job and his friends are arguing the same traditional view: sin—even if one denies having sinned—results in suffering; all four men are following the traditional perspective. Yet, in each of Job's rebuttals, we hear the weakness or incompleteness of the traditional idea. When we come to the speeches of Elihu, he does not add much to the argument except to suggest that God is testing Job to help him learn through his suffering. Elihu reiterates what the friends have said.

Finally, God steps into the picture. When God speaks, everyone is silent; when God is finished, there is no rebuttal. What God says to Job in 38:1-40:2 might be reduced to this: "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place, that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it? Can you bind the beautiful Pleiades? Can you loose the cords of Orion? Can you raise your voice to the clouds and cover yourself with a flood of water? Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!" How is it possible for man to understand all the things of the Almighty? Of course, Job has to confess his total unworthiness at the end of God's admonition; how can Job understand the mind and will of the Creator of the universe?

However, Yahweh continues to speak in his second climactic speech. In 40:7-42:34 Yahweh teaches Job by comparing the enormous strength of the "behemoth" (probably the

hippopotamus) and the “leviathan” (probably the crocodile). If no man is strong or fierce enough to tame or capture either of these two creatures, yet God provided for them and can approach them without fear, “who then is able to stand against me? Who has a claim against me that I must repay? Everything under heaven belongs to me” (Job 41:10b-11). Can Job come to understand God and His creation fully, illustrated only by these two powerful examples of the animal world? In the end, Job has to acknowledge that he is speechless; he cannot understand these things. Job confesses, “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. You asked, ‘Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?’ Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know” (Job 42:2-3). After Job has worshipped the Lord and made acceptable sacrifices to Him, he is restored and brought back into full fellowship with God. God also blesses Job’s life more abundantly than before his testing, restoring his family, his flocks, and his wealth.

The lesson of this exciting book of Job is that we really do not know the “whys” and “wherefores” of human suffering. The writer of Job, in a beautiful, poetic way drives home the point, that if we cannot understand the God of the universe and how He operates in His creative activity, we certainly cannot understand the intricate question of human suffering; it is mysteriously wrapped up in the sovereignty of God.

Flow of Thought—Job: The *theme* of the book of Job is the problem of suffering. The book of Job begins by introducing the readers to Job and the testing he is called upon to face (1:1-2:13). Job is a holy man (1:1) with great prosperity (1:2-4). He faithfully worships the Lord (1:5). In the midst of this characterization of Job, the accusation of Satan before Yahweh is given (1:6-12). He accuses Job by telling Yahweh that Job is only obedient because of his prosperity

(1:6-11). As a result of the accusation, the Lord permits the testing of Job at the hand of Satan. Satan, however, cannot take his life (1:12).

The affliction of Job follows (1:13-2:13). His wealth and family are wiped out (1:13-22), his health is taken away (2:1-8), and his wife turns against him (2:9-10). Lamentation is a natural result as Job and his friends sit in silence for seven days and seven nights without uttering a word (2:11-13).

After this introduction and background, a drama ensues between Job and his three friends (3:1-31:40). Three rounds of speeches between Job and his friends are set down along with Job's answers and defense of his own integrity.

In the first round of speeches, Job curses the day of his birth (3:1-9) and laments over his prolonged life (3:10-26). Eliphaz begins his first speech and after complimenting Job for his good life, diplomatically hints at sin as the explanation of Job's suffering (4:1-5:7). He advises Job to seek the Lord for forgiveness (5:8-27). Job, however, defends himself against Eliphaz and declares his innocence (6:1-30), lamenting about life (7:1-11) and concerning the character of God Himself (7:12-21).

Bildad's first speech gives the same reason for Job's suffering (8:1-7), appealing to tradition for his support (8:1-19). He admonishes Job to repent in order to escape further judgment (8:20-22). Job answers Bildad, declaring the invincibility of Yahweh (9:1-16), and requesting a daysman or arbiter to plead his case (9:17-35). He concludes his speech with a bitter complaint against Yahweh (10:1-17), even welcoming death (10:18-22).

Zophar, the last speaker in this round, accuses Job of iniquity (10:1-12), and exhorts him to repent in order to be restored and blessed (10:13-20). Job's answers to Zophar are with biting

sarcasm (12:1-25), and with a denunciation of their counsel (13:1-12). He describes the transitoriness of life (13:23-14:6), and is relieved only by a faint hope of immortality (14:7-22).

In the second round of debate the controversy grows more heated (15:1-21:34). In his second speech, Eliphaz rebukes Job for his arrogance (15:1-10) and irreverence (15:11-16), giving a description of the wicked (15:17-28) and their fate (15:29-35). Job replies by rejecting the speech of Eliphaz (16:1-6), and falling into a very doleful lament and accusation of God for his pitiful condition (16:7-17:16).

The second speech of Bildad is a strong reproach of Job (18:1-4), and a declaration of the fate of the wicked (18:5-21). Job answers by expressing his vexation concerning his friends (19:1-6), and Yahweh (19:7-22). He is vexed with Yahweh over his seeming injustice (19:7), lack of mercy (19:8-10), and His persecution of Job (19:11-22). In the midst of utter despair, a flash of victory is seen in Job as he speaks concerning a living Vindicator (19:23-25), and a living hope after death (19:26-29).

Zophar's second speech is a hasty reply stating that the prosperity of the wicked is short lived (20:4-28). He applies his proposition to Job classifying him with the wicked and their fate (20:29). Job replies by refuting the proposition of Zophar (21:1-26), and by rejecting his friends' counsel as pure lies (21:27-34).

The third cycle of speeches follow with more intense severity (22:1-34:37). Eliphaz, in his third speech, concludes that Job is a great sinner, guilty of avarice and cruelty (22:1-11). After speaking piously of God's omniscience and man's wickedness (22:12-20), he commands Job to repent (22:21-30). In Job's third reply, he searches for God (23:1-9) proving his faith and reverence of Him (23:10-17). He concludes his reply by giving testimony to the prosperity of the wicked and Yahweh's apparent indifference to it (24:1-25).

Bildad's third speech describes God's sovereignty (25:1-2) and omnipotence (25:3) against a description of man's sinfulness (25:4-5) and low estate (25:6). Job quickly dismisses Bildad's words as applied to him and knowingly describes God's greatness (26:6-14).

Job then gives his closing words of self-vindication (27:1-31:40). He affirms his innocence (27:1-23). He sets forth the wisdom of God and praises Him for it (28:1-28). He outlines his past honors (29:1-10), and good deeds (29:11-25) with the humiliation and pain of the present (30:1-19) along with God's silence (30:20-31). He ends his speech affirming his righteousness (31:1-34) and challenging God and man to disprove his claim (31:35-40).

At this point, Elihu, a young man listening impatiently from the sidelines, enters and speaks (32:1-37:24). In his first speech he rebukes Job for his presumptuousness (32:1-33:30), and exhorts Job to listen to him for wisdom (33:3-33). His second speech refutes Job's insinuations (34:1-30) and states that God is testing and instructing Job through affliction (34:31-37). In his third speech, Elihu acknowledges God's greatness (35:1-8) showing that affliction comes to both the righteous and wicked (35:9-16).

The fourth speech is a climax for Elihu as he gives the reason for suffering and an exhortation to Job in the midst of suffering (36:1-37:24). The reason for suffering is found in God's disciplining and teaching of man to improve him (36:1-18). Elihu then exhorts Job to acknowledge God both in His words (36:19-21) and in His power (36:22-37:16) as displayed in nature (36:22-33), in the thunderstorm (37:1-5), and in the snow and rain (37:6-16). Elihu concludes his words by emphasizing man's sinful frailty before God.

Following Elihu's speeches, the way is open for the discourses of God (38:1-42:6). In His first speech, Yahweh presents His omnipotence to Job (38:1-40:5). He is seen as Creator, Sovereign, and Protector. He is the Creator of the universe (38:5-7), the sea (38:8-11), and time

(38:12-15). He is sovereign over the deep (38:16-18), light (38:19a), darkness (38:19b-21), snow (38:22a), hail (38:22b-23), lightening (38:24-25), rain and ice (38:26-30), constellations (38:31-33), and clouds and mist (38:34-38). His role as Protector is seen in His care for animals (38:39-39:30). Job's only reply to this revelation of Yahweh's character is a confession of worthlessness (40:1-5).

In God's second discourse with Job, God's power and man's frailty are contrasted. Man's frailty is depicted in his ignorance of God's creation (40:6-41:34). Only God understands the Behemoth (40:6-24) and Leviathan (41:1-34). Only He can account for the untamable power and strength of the latter. Job's confession follows as he acknowledges God's power and wisdom (42:1-2), his own ignorance (42:3), and his sin (42:4-5). He notes that the purpose of affliction is to refine man so that he can more clearly see God's greatness and his own frailty (42:5).

The book is concluded with a closing epilogue (42:7-17). Job's three friends are rebuked (42:7-9) and Job is restored and renewed to blessing (42:10-17).

Song of Songs

The Song of Songs, or the Song of Solomon, goes back to King Solomon according to traditional scholarship. In the Jewish tradition, it is believed that Solomon wrote Song of Songs as a young man in love. He then wrote Proverbs during his middle-age years, and then wrote the book of Ecclesiastes as an older man. In modern scholarship today there are many who do not hold to that tradition. They feel that both Song of Songs as well as Ecclesiastics was written as using Solomon as the model. No matter how one might view the authorship or dating of the books, the message that is taught is the most important thing.

The Song of Songs is a fairly difficult book to understand. There are those that would see this as allegory of Yahweh's love for Israel. Later on, the Song of Songs was applied in the same way, by the early church fathers, to our Lord Jesus Christ and His love for His Bride, the Church. However, most modern scholars today believe that the Song of Songs was written as a series of love poems, written as a dialogue between the male lover and the Shulamite woman he loved. We also have the daughters of Jerusalem referred to in the series of poems. The Song of Songs may be a collection of love poems dealing with the beauty and importance of physical love and romance; this is the position that most would take today.

There are also those who see the love relationship as secondary to a drama within the narrative. The king, representing Solomon, is pursuing the Shulamite woman, but she has another love to whom she is faithful and no matter the pursuits of the king, he cannot win her. She ends up being faithful to a rustic shepherd that she loves. Those who hold to this view believe the purpose of the book is to teach faithfulness and purity of both human and divine love. However, I believe that most scholars who interpret the book believe that the writer is speaking of human, physical love and look at King Solomon as the lover and Shulamite woman as his loved one. Perhaps these poems were written prior to the wedding night and even refer to the wedding night itself.

Once we read Song of Solomon, we understand that the language of love abounds throughout. Some of the imagery is very beautiful and very striking. For example, we see that springtime is the time for love. "Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come with me. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with

me” (Song of Solomon 2:10-13). There is the talk about the lover as a gazelle or a young stag, “leaping across the mountain, bounding over the hills” (Song of Solomon 2:8-9). We have the language of spring, gardens, fruit, and animals throughout these beautiful love poems. We also have striking imagery that almost defies description. For example, read these allegorical images from chapter 4: “How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes behind your veil are doves. Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from Mount Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of sheep just shorn, coming up from the washing. Each has its twin; not one of them is alone. Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon; your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate. Your neck is like the tower of David, built with elegance; on it hang a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors” (Song of Solomon 4:1-4). The lovers use vivid images they understand as words of strength, beauty, and desire as they speak to one another. While the imagery is difficult for our modern ears, it is hard to escape the ardent romantic love being described in the Song of Songs.

God allowed this romantic poetry to be included in the biblical canon because He made us male and female, and a husband and wife must become one flesh in every area of life; showing the importance of physical love marriage helps show God’s plan for humanity. This is what many feel is the deeper meaning of Song of Solomon.

Flow of Thought—Song of Solomon: The *theme* of the book of Song of Solomon is the fidelity and sanctity of genuine love. In the first scene, a Shulamite maiden is first seen in the royal court of Solomon the king (1:1-2:7). Words are exchanged between her and the court ladies and her background is learned of (1:1-8). She is dark from having to keep the vineyards of her mother’s children. The sun has burned her. Suddenly Solomon enters and speaks his admiration concerning her (1:4-10). The ladies of the court encourage his words (1:11). The maiden,

however, thinks of her shepherd lover and thinks deeply of him (1:12-14). Solomon continues his appeal (1:15) amidst the repeated reference of the Shulamite concerning her absent lover (1:16-2:7).

In scene two, the memories and dreams of the Shulamite for her lover are given (2:8-3:5). Her pleasant memories are beautifully spoken (2:8-17) followed by a dream concerning him (3:1-5). She dreams of her lover's visiting and coming to her mother's home.

The third scene follows (3:6-4:7). Solomon has been gone from Jerusalem for a while and is seen returning (3:6). His royal pageant is described (3:7-11) followed by an expression of admiration and appeal to the Shulamite concerning his feeling for her.

The author continues the drama by citing a dream of the Shulamite concerning the coming of her shepherd lover (5:2-6:3). In the midst of her discussion of the dream (5:2-8), the court ladies ask her why her lover is more important than any other lover (5:9). She replies with a beautiful full-length portrait of her lover (5:10-16). He is so wonderfully described that the court ladies desire to seek him as a lover, and understand her feelings for him. The Shulamite concludes the scene with a beautiful statement of her love and devotion to her shepherd lover (6:2-3).

The fifth scene begins with a renewed appeal of the king for the love of the Shulamite (6:4-10). As a short conversation is carried on between the Shulamite and the court ladies (6:13), the Shulamite can only think of her shepherd lover (6:11-12). The court ladies then express their agreement about the Shulamite's beauty (7:1-5) and Solomon gives a final appeal to her (7:6-9)

At this point in the drama the lover is pictured as joined to the Shulamite, and the two are seen returning to their home together (7:10-8:4). The reunion is a happy one (7:10-8:4), and as they arrive at their home, the neighbors identify the maiden (7:5). The lover openly proposes to

her (7:6) and she expresses her love for him (7:7). The brothers agree to support the wedding if their sister, the Shulamite, has kept herself pure (8:8-9). The maiden expresses her testimony of purity (8:10-12) to the great pleasure of her lover (8:13). The scene closes with a final response from the Shulamite that is directed to her lover (8:14). “Come away, my lover, and be like a gazelle or like a young stag on the spice-laden mountains” (8:14).

Ruth

The book of Ruth is a beautiful book that takes place during the time of the Judges. We know the story of Ruth; she was a Moabite woman living in Moab when her Israelite husband died. Ruth is willing to go back to Palestine with her widowed mother-in-law, Naomi. Naomi tries to persuade her daughter-in-law to stay in Moab, Ruth delivers this brilliant statement of commitment to Naomi: “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me” (Ruth 1:16-17). What a beautiful statement of fidelity to Naomi on the part of the Ruth.

When Ruth goes back with Naomi to the promised land, she is told by Naomi to go to the fields where Boaz, a near-kinsman to her late husband is working, gleaning the fields. Ruth goes into the fields, spends the day there, and returns at night. Naomi directs Ruth to lie down at the feet of Boaz, a customary way to present herself as one that could marry Boaz, requesting marriage according to the Levirate law of kinsman-redeemer. In the ancient world at this time, if a man died leaving his wife alone, she could then marry either the deceased man’s brother or near-kinsman to continue the line of the deceased man so that his name might continue in Israel.

Ruth goes to request that Boaz take her in marriage. She goes at midnight, puts herself at his feet under the skirt of his tunic, symbolically asking him to be a husband to her. Boaz tells Ruth that there is a closer kinsman to her, and that this other man must have the opportunity to redeem her as husband. If the other man is unwilling or unable to take her in marriage, then Boaz will marry Ruth.

The next day the offer of redemption is made, and the closest kinsman renounces his right as the redeemer. As a result, Boaz redeems the property of Naomi and marries Ruth. We know the results were beautiful. Not only did Ruth become a wife to Boaz, but Boaz and Ruth make Naomi a part of their household, restoring life to Naomi as well. Boaz and Ruth have a son, Obed, who becomes the son of Jesse, the father of King David. The book of Ruth concludes with that commentary that Ruth the Moabite ends up in messianic line.

What is the purpose of the book of Ruth? Many feel it is to strengthen the need and importance of Levirate marriage. Others feel that we see a theme emerging of a non-Jew, a Moabite, becoming a part of the line of David, showing that God includes Gentiles within the covenant for those who are faithful, obedient, and loving towards Him. We also see beautiful relational love running throughout the book: of Ruth to Naomi; of Boaz to the deceased husband of Ruth; of Boaz to Ruth; and of Boaz and Ruth to Naomi. We see the fidelity of Ruth, the fidelity of Boaz, and the tremendous fidelity of these two people to one another. It is also very interesting that the Gospel of Matthew includes Ruth, along with other non-Israelite people, in the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1). We not only have Ruth the Moabite, but Tamar and Rahab, both Canaanites, and Bathsheba who was possibly a Hittite. Matthew shows that God included Gentiles because He would extend grace to the Gentiles as well. We see this inclusion of the Gentiles very vividly, not only in the book of Ruth, but also in Matthew's genealogy of

our Lord, Jesus Christ. We also see the faithfulness of Ruth not knowing the future; ending up as the great-grandmother of king David, and in the genealogy of Christ. Faith does not always see the future in God's sovereign purposes.

Flow of Thought—Ruth: The *theme* of the book of Ruth is redemption by a kinsman redeemer. The book of Ruth is a beautiful story belonging to the times of the judges. In a magnificent way it pictures the redemption that would be later wrought in Jesus Christ. Ruth can be divided into four sections according to its chapters: the emigration-Ruth deciding (1:1-22); the education—Ruth gleaning (2:1-23); the expectation—Ruth resting (3:1-18); the emancipation—Ruth rewarded (4:1-22).

In chapter one the emigration of Ruth to Bethlehem is seen. At the beginning of the chapter, the background for the story is set forth. Because of a famine in Bethlehem, Naomi's husband and family have gone to Moab (1:1-2). In Moab, both her husband and her two sons die leaving her with only two daughters-in-law (1:3-5). Thereafter Naomi decides to return to Bethlehem and she bids her two daughters-in-law to return to their mother's home. In beautiful narration, Orpah is pictured leaving but Ruth cleaves to Naomi with a magnificent testimony. Her words in verse sixteen are most descriptive of her faith and decision. She says to Naomi, "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God." The chapter closes with Ruth and Naomi returning to Bethlehem (1:19-20).

In chapter two, Ruth's educational experience in the fields of Boaz is recounted (2:1-23). She goes to the fields to glean and begins to work, gleaning after the reapers (2:1-3). Soon Boaz comes to his field and after greeting his workers asks concerning Ruth (2:4-5). He is told that she is the woman who has returned with Naomi, and upon hearing this, he blesses her because of her faithfulness to Naomi (2:6-12). He also commands his young men to let her glean among the

sheaves, permitting her to finish with a quantity of about twenty-seven pounds (2:13-17).

Following this day's work she returns to Naomi to learn that Boaz is a near kinsman. She is told by Naomi to continue in the fields of Boaz and not to go into another's (2:18-23).

Naomi instructs Ruth concerning the concept of the kinsman redeemer and gives her directions to make herself known to Boaz (3:1-5). She obeys Naomi's directions and lies down at the feet of Boaz. As he is awakened at midnight, she asks him to spread his skirt over her since he is a near kinsman (3:8-9). Boaz tells her that there is another closer kinsman and that he will give the first opportunity of redemption to him and that if he would not take his part in it, he assures her of his willingness to become the kinsman redeemer (3:10-14). Boaz gives an earnest of grain to her as a guarantee of his faithfulness to his promise (3:15-18).

In chapter four, the redemption is made and Ruth is rewarded. At the gate of the city the nearer kinsman renounces his right as redeemer when he is told that he could not legally redeem the property without also marrying Ruth (4:1-8). Boaz proceeds to redeem the property and Ruth as the representatives of the city officially sanction it (4:9-12). The results of this redemption are then given. Ruth not only becomes a wife to Boaz (4:13), but a restorer of life to Naomi (4:14-16), and a member of the Messianic line (4:17-22).

Lamentations

The book of Lamentations is a very tragic book. There are five basic sections found within the book, each dealing with the destruction of Jerusalem that occurred in 587 BC. In chapter 1, we have the description of Jerusalem's ruin. In chapter 2 is the cause of her ruin. Chapter 3 describes the cry over Jerusalem's ruin. Chapter 4 gives the description of the horrors of Jerusalem's siege and fall. Chapter 5 then is a petition for Jerusalem's restoration.

The writer is describing in these chapters the reason for the fall of the southern kingdom of Judah. She has failed God; she has departed from God and become apostate. As with the curses of the book of Deuteronomy, an enemy would come against them, and this is what happened when the Babylonians came in 587 BC. This book contains constant lamentations for the situation in which Judah finds herself, and for the judgment, she experiences from Yahweh.

However, there is a note of hope in chapter 5. After describing Israel's condition, the writer pleads for her restoration. "You, O Lord, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation. Why do you always forget us? Why do you forsake us so long? Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may return; renew our days as of old. . . ." (Lamentations 5:19-21). The Sumerian lament over the fall of Ur is written in the same type of literary form of Lamentations.⁸ The building of the acrostic in Lamentations 3 concludes with a feeling of absolute exhaustion on the part of the author, Jeremiah. He has cried all of his tears to a conclusion.

Flow of Thought—Lamentations: The *theme* of the book of Lamentations is lament over the desolation of Jerusalem. The book of Lamentations presents the mourning of the prophet Jeremiah over the fallen city of Jerusalem. In chapter one, the prophet describes the desolation that resulted from the destruction (1:1-11), and laments over it (1:12-22). In chapter two, he sets forth the Lord's punishment on the city and its ruin (2:1-10), giving the reason for her Judgment (2:11-22). The prophet then identifies himself with the chastened people and cries with them over Jerusalem's condition (3:1-66). He sorrows with them over the judgment (3:1-21), exhorts them to repentance and submission to God (3:22-51), and then gives a prayer for the vindication of Zion's enemies (3:52-66).

Following the prophet's cry over the city, he recounts the horrors of the siege and fall of Jerusalem (4:1-22). The gold and stones of the temple have been desecrated (4:1-2), terrible famine conditions stalk the city (4:3-9), and violence is seen everywhere (4:10-20). The chapter closes with a prediction of Edom's coming punishment and judgment (4:21-22).

The book concludes in chapter five with a petition for Jerusalem's restoration (5:1-22). Jerusalem's case is stated (5:1-18), and a petition is made by the faithful remnant asking for restoration to their former state.

Ecclesiastes

The next book among the *Megilloth*, or scrolls, in the Writings is Ecclesiastes. In Hebrew, the book is called *Qoheleth*, meaning "one who addresses an assembly of learners" or "teacher." The book is a wisdom book, and many believe that the author used King Solomon as the model, and Solomon in all of his wisdom becomes the *Qoheleth*, to teach all the wisdom under the sun. Traditional scholarship believes that Solomon himself is the author who best teaches from personal experience what the book recounts.

The book is understood around two basic ideas: vanity, and all that is under the sun. The idea of vanity denotes that which is fleeting, something here and then gone. Like your breath on a cold day, you see it for a moment and then it is gone; that is vanity. The other phrase that ties the book together is the phrase "under the sun." In other words, the *Qoheleth* or Teacher is looking at life under the sun as it appears here upon the earth. He is examining it, with all of the wisdom that God has given to him, to try to understand what life is all about.

To understand the book of Ecclesiastes, we must see that the great challenge of the *Qoheleth* is to fear God and keep His commandments, and in so doing, learn how to live this life.

He begins to try many things, and in each of the things he tries finds the futility and vanity of it. The book fits so well in our world today. We have the introductory prologue beginning in chapter 1 and going down to verse 11. The writer states his theme, “The words of the *Qoheleth*, son of David, king in Jerusalem. ‘Meaningless! Meaningless! (Vanity of vanities!)’ says the Teacher. ‘Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless!’” (Ecclesiastes 1:1-2) Everything is vanity, everything is transitory, and everything is meaningless and passing away. The *Qoheleth* continues, “What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun? Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises” (Ecclesiastes 1:4-5). He is illustrating the transitoriness of nature—the sun rising and setting, the wind blowing back and forth, the streams flowing to the sea and yet the sea is never full. “What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Everything is a repetition, and everything is fleeting—both very interesting themes for Ecclesiastes. The *Qoheleth* is showing the constant change, the constant repetition, and the transitory nature of life.

Recently, I passed by an elementary school and stopped for a moment to watch the children play on the jungle gym and other equipment on the playground, and I thought to myself, “I can remember when I was climbing on jungle gyms and running and playing tag. It seems that it was only yesterday; how quickly life passes.” This is the message of Ecclesiastes, everything is the same, and everything is changing. Try going back to your former high school and see how it has changed; and yet in another sense, time has stood still.

After giving this theme, *Qoheleth* begins to try different things in life, and he speaks of the futility of each endeavor of life. He tries wisdom in Ecclesiastes 1:12-18, and after trying wisdom, he tells us this really does not answer the problem because “What is twisted cannot be

straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted.” He finds that he knows things, but it is merely meaningless vanity, because he cannot straighten up what is crooked, and he cannot add a single thing to what is lacking. Therefore, he concludes that this is vanity—chasing after the wind. “For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief.”

He then moves to try pleasure: “I thought in my heart, ‘Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.’ But that also proved to be meaningless.” Notice all of the pleasures that *Qoheleth* or the Teacher tries: “I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was worthwhile for men to do under heaven during the few days of their lives. I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well—the delights of the heart of man. I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve. Everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 2:1-11). So he tried wisdom and pleasure, but both were empty—simply vanity.

He tried toil and became a workaholic, but found it meaningless. He tried advancement, but found it meaningless as well. The theme that emerges is that one should learn to enjoy the simple things of life. “A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in

his work” (Ecclesiastes 2:24). We see this theme also through chapter three as *Qoheleth* examines things, he encourages the reader to enjoy the basic simple things that life presents.

Another area that the Teacher tries is wealth, but he concludes, “Whoever loves money never has money enough whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless” (Ecclesiastes 5:10). *Qoheleth* tells us that money will not satisfy, and abundance will not make us happy. “The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep” (Ecclesiastes 5:12). A rich man has many sleepless nights because he is constantly worried about losing it.

I am reminded of the story the Rabbis have often told of the little fox that wanted to go down into the vineyard and eat lush grapes. However, there is only one way in and that is through a little hole. To go in, the little fox had to diet to become sufficiently thin to go through. Soon he was thin enough and he went through into the vineyard. He ate plenty of grapes, but then he had become a fat, little fox and he could not get back out. So, he had to diet again to become sufficiently thin to squeeze back out through the small opening. Once he got back on the other side, he looked at the vineyard and said, “Vineyard, vineyard, you are so beautiful. But, what good are you to me? As I went in, so I came out.” As we come into life with nothing, that is the way we will go out; why chase back and forth for money when that is the end?

After trying a number of things, with various themes (7:1-11:8), the Teacher writes what a life of wisdom is really about. As we come to the final chapter, *Qoheleth* gives a classic summary of old age. In light of life and its transitoriness, how are we to live life? We do not seek after pleasure for pleasure’s sake; we do not seek after wisdom for wisdom’s sake; we do not live our life being a work-alcoholic, gaining more money . . . old age is coming and life is soon going to be over. We need to live wisely. “Be happy, young man, while you are young, and let your

heart give you joy in the days of your youth. . . . Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, ‘I find no pleasure in them. . . .’” (Ecclesiastes 11:9; 12:1)

The Teacher gives us this conclusion: “Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). What he says, in summary, is simply that we should remember our Creator while we are young. We should fear God and keep His commands. We should enjoy the simple things of life and not get caught up in the rabbit-trails of pursuing pleasure, wealth, or wisdom for wisdom’s sake . . . all of it is vanity and temporary and fleeting; old age is coming. Enjoy life and enjoy God—for this is indeed all of life.

Flow of Thought—Ecclesiastes: The *theme* of the book of Ecclesiastes is the vanity of human wisdom and endeavor. The book of Ecclesiastes is a book in which Solomon views life “under the sun.” or as a “natural” mind would. He begins by stating his theme (1:1-3), “Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity” (1:2 KJV). This theme is then immediately demonstrated by Solomon as he considers the passing generations of mankind (1:1), and the various cycles of nature (1:5-7) as seen in the sun (1:5), the wind (1:6), and the rivers (1:7). He concludes his demonstration of the theme by stating the transitory nature of all things (1:8-11).

Following this, the king tries various areas in order to find lasting satisfaction, and concludes that all of his experimentations are vain (1:12-2:26). He tries wisdom (1:12-18), pleasure (2:1-3), materialism (2:4-11), wisdom and folly together (2:12-17), and human labor (2:18-23). All proves his theme; all is vanity (2:24-26).

Solomon follows his experimentations with observations on the theme (3:1-6:12). He observes philosophy first of all (3:1-22). Fatalism (3:1-18), evolutionism (3:19), universalism (3:20), agnosticism (3:21), and humanism (3:22) are each observed and it is concluded that these are vain. He further sets down the vanity of the inequalities of life (4:1-16), of human religion (5:1-7), and of riches (5:8-20). There is vanity in the pursuit of riches since these are unable to satisfy one (5:8-13), and because of its transitory existence (5:8-20). The author concludes his observations by viewing the futility of life and its vanity (6:1-12). Coming death (6:1-5) and an uncertain future (6:6-12) make life futile and vain.

After making his observations, the author gives various admonitions in view of the theme (7:1-12:7). Admonitions are given concerning honor (7:1), levity (7:2-7), cautiousness (7:8-10), proper wisdom (7:11-12), God's sovereignty (7:13-14), temperance (7:15-20), flattery (7:21-22), wicked women (7:22-29) human government (8:1-8), human falling and man's inevitable end (9:1-12), wisdom (9:13-10:15), laziness (10:16-20), investing for the future (11:7-8).

The last admonition given concerns youth (11:1-12:7), as Solomon advises them to avoid evil (11:1-10), and to remember God in view of coming old age (12:1-7). The writer's description of old age is classic. The hands begin to tremble (12:2-3a) and the legs weaken (12:3b). One's teeth are lost (12:3c) and his eyes go bad (12:3d). Sleeping habits change as one goes to bed early and arises early (12:4a). The hearing dims (12:4b), fears increase (12:5a), and the hair whitens (12:5b). The elder's strength wanes (12:5c) as well as his sexual drive (12:5d) as he nears his end (12:5e). His spinal cord is loosed (12:6a), his skull broken (12:6b), his circulation ceases (12:6c), and his heart fails to function (12:6d). The last step is death as the soul is separated from the body (12:7).

The preacher now comes to the conclusion of his theme (12:8). He writes: “‘Vanity of vanities’” (KJV), “‘Meaningless! Meaningless!’ says the Teacher. ‘Everything is meaningless!’” (12:8—NIV). Following this proven conclusion, the writer speaks concerning his continual activity (12:9-11), and gives a little advice concerning the endless task of writing (12:12a) and the tiresome task of studying (12:12b).

Finally, having viewed life in many areas and from many perspectives “‘under the sun,’” the writer concludes by giving a summation of man’s highest duty and good. He is to fear God and to keep His commandments in preparation for a future judgment (12:13-14). He writes: “‘Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil’” (12:13-14).

Esther

The last book in the scrolls (*Megilloth*) is the book of Esther. We do not know the author of this book and we are not certain of the exact dating of it, however it seems that the dating would be certainly after the exile, because the reign of Xerxes is spoken of in past tense in Esther 10:2. Many would date this book somewhere around Xerxes I between 464 BC and 425 BC.

The background to the book is very interesting. Some of the Jewish people returned to Palestine after the Persians have overthrown the Babylonians. About 50,000 Jewish people chose to return and help in the completion of the second temple. However, there were a large number of Jews who remained in Persia. The book of Esther is written around those Jews who remained. It is from this book that the Jewish feast of Purim comes to be celebrated year after year to depict the deliverance of the Jewish people from Haman’s plot to destroy them as it is described in this

book. The book displays God's providential care in a unique way. While the name of God is not mentioned anywhere in book, many have said that the finger of God is certainly seen at work in the way He cares for His people. It is a book, which deals clearly with God's providence and care.

The story takes place in the city of Susa under Xerxes the king of Persia. In the midst of a great feast, King Xerxes orders Queen Vashti to come before him so he may display her beauty to the assembled people of the feast. Because she refuses to obey the king's command, Xerxes gives the command that someone else must replace her. As the story unfolds, it is the beautiful Hebrew girl, Hadassah, also known by her Persian name, Esther, who becomes the next queen. We read in chapter two that the king loved Esther above all women, and she attained grace and favor in his sight among all the virgins. King Xerxes set a royal crown on her head, replacing Queen Vashti.

Meanwhile, a nobleman by the name of Haman was promoted to a high position, and it is recorded that all under him obeyed him and knelt down homage before him. When Mordecai, Esther's cousin and the man who had raised her, refused to bow before Haman, Haman planned an extermination of all the Jewish people in Persia. The king had even approved of the plan by giving Haman his signet ring, allowing Haman to stamp the order with the king's seal of authority.

Esther hears of the plight of her people, and Mordecai calls upon her for help. She consents and begins to plead for her people before God, asking for His care and protection. Queen Esther risks her life to approach the king without being summoned to request that the king and Haman join her for a banquet she had planned. During that banquet, Esther planned to reveal to the king Haman's plot to eradicate her people, the Jews. The king accepted Esther into his

presence, and consented to attend her banquet. At the banquet, Esther was gracious to Haman, causing him to be even more self-assured in his powerful position.

Haman left the banquet happy, but soon observed Mordecai still would not bow before him. Haman's anger against Mordecai burned more fiercely, and he had gallows built so that he could have Mordecai hanged. However, the very next day, the king required Haman to help honor Mordecai for a service he had performed previously to help save the king's life. Haman knew now that the king favored Mordecai, but before he could reverse his plans and have the gallows dismantled, Haman accompanied the king to the second of Queen Esther's banquets. On the day of the banquet, Queen Esther reveals Haman's plot to the King Xerxes. The king rises in wrath to go pace the palace garden, and upon returning, sees Haman fallen upon the couch near Queen Esther begging her for his life. In a final burst of anger, the king orders Haman's execution on the very gallows Haman had built for Mordecai. On the same day, Mordecai is set over the house of Haman and given the very job held by Haman, second only to the king. A new edict is issued to replace the one in which the Jews were marked for death; in the new edict, the Jews are guaranteed safety, and are even permitted to seek revenge against the enemies who had been plotting their destruction.

The Jewish people were saved from Haman's plot and a feast was held. It came to be known as "Purim" from the plural of "Pur" which means "lot" for it was by the casting of a "Pur" or "lot" that Haman had decided upon the day and the month in which the eradication of the Jews would be carried out. "Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Xerxes, near and far, to have them celebrate annually the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar as the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a

day of celebration. He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor” (Esther 9:20-22). Since that time, Purim has become a perpetual celebration of this great deliverance of the Jewish people.

The book of Esther then concludes with a brief summary of Mordecai’s advancement to the place of Prime Minister in Xerxes’ kingdom. “Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Xerxes, preeminent among the Jews, and held in high esteem by his many fellow Jews, because he worked for the good of his people and spoke up for the welfare of all the Jews” (Esther 10:3).

While this book never mentions God, and does not contain any religious ritual or practice, it is in the Hebrew canon because it depicts God’s providential care for His people, and His wrath against any who would seek to hurt His people. God had told Abraham, “I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse” (Genesis 12:3). Even today, there are those who seek to do harmful things to the people of God, but God’s sovereignty and providence looks out for His people and promises someday to ultimately bring them into the Church along with believing Gentiles, where they shall dwell with Jesus Christ, forever (Romans 9-11).

Flow of Thought—Esther: The *theme* of the book of Esther is God’s providence and care. The post-exilic Jews in Persia are in great danger and are heroically delivered by Esther, the queen. The grave danger of the Jews is first set down (1:1-4:17), followed by the great deliverance by Esther (5:1-10:3).

Ahasuerus (Xerxes), the king, in the midst of the feast orders his queen to display her beauty before the assembled people (1:1-9). She refuses and the king, after consulting with his wise men, deposes her (1:10-22). Plans are made to replace Vashti, and Esther is brought to the palace (2:5-14). It comes her turn to appear before the king. He is greatly pleased with her and makes her queen (2:15-20).

Along with the account of Esther's coronation is the narrating of Mordecai's saving the king's life from assassination. In the meantime, Haman is promoted to high position as grand vizier and all lesser officials are required to do obeisance to him (3:1-6). When Mordecai refuses to bow to him, Haman plots to exterminate the Jews (3:7-15). The king approves of the plot and gives Haman his signet ring, stamping the order of the extermination with authority.

Lamentation follows among the Jews as Mordecai mourns in sackcloth (4:1-3). Esther hears of the plight of her people and Mordecai calls upon her for help (4:4-11). She consents to plead for her people and submits herself to God's providential care (4:12-17). On the third day, Esther puts on her royal robes and stands before the king. He receives her, extending his golden scepter to her. She asks him to have a banquet, inviting Haman. The king responds favorably and the banquet is set (5:1-8). Chapter five concludes by describing Haman's indignation and plot against Mordecai (5:9-14).

In chapter six, the king has a book of records read to him which regards the good deed of Mordecai in saving the king's life (6:1-3). Haman is therefore forced to honor Mordecai for his previous work (6:4-11). When he tells his wife, she declares his coming doom (6:12-14). On the day of the banquet requested by Esther, the queen reveals Haman's plot to the king (7:1-6). The king rises from the feast in wrath and goes to the palace garden (7:7). Upon returning, he finds Haman falling upon the couch to dishonor Esther, and in a burst of anger gives command for his execution (7:8). Haman is then executed on the gallows he has prepared for Mordecai (7:9-10).

On the same day, Mordecai is set over the house of Haman, making him prime minister and second only to the king (8:1-2). A new edict is issued to replace the old one (8:3-17) and the Jews are permitted to get revenge on their enemies (9:1-16). This is followed by the institution of

the Feast of Purim which becomes a perpetual memorial of the deliverance of the Jews at this time (9:17-32).

Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, 1 and 2 Chronicles

We come now to the last section of The Writings: the prophetic historical books, namely Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and 1 and 2 Chronicles. As mentioned earlier in the book, Daniel is a book of prophecy, while Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles are books of history. I will reserve Daniel, the more prophetic book, to the end and start with Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

Ezra-Nehemiah

Some scholars group Ezra and Nehemiah as Ezra-Nehemiah while some combine all three as a single collection, Ezra-Nehemiah-Chronicles. The ministries of Ezra and Nehemiah occurred during the latter part of the 5th century about 450 BC to 400 BC.

The main purpose of the book of Ezra is to trace the history of Israel's return from exile in Babylon and of the rebuilding of the temple, and to show the opposition Israel encounters. It is also a book that shows how Ezra sparks revival in the land of Palestine by teaching the Law of Moses.

The book of Nehemiah overlaps with Ezra and its main purpose is to narrate the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and the establishment of Nehemiah as Governor. The book traces Nehemiah from Babylon to Jerusalem, and talks about the opposition he encounters and the reforms he instituted. Nehemiah is faithful to God's destiny for him even in the midst of opposition.

Flow of Thought—Ezra: The *theme* of Ezra is the return and restoration of the remnant to their land. Ezra sets forth the story of the rebirth of the Jewish people. This story is presented in two basic parts: the return of the exiles under Zerubbabel (1:1-6:22), and the return of the exiles under Ezra (7:1-10:44).

The return of the exiles under Zerubbabel begins with the decree of Cyrus, allowing the captive people of the nation Israel to return to Jerusalem, (1:1-4). The holy vessels are restored to the people to bring back (1:5-11), and a registration of the returning remnant is given (2:1-70). The people in general (2:1-35), the priests (2:36-39), the Levites (2:40-42), the Nethinim (2:43-54), the descendants of Solomon's servants (2:55-60), and the ones of lost genealogy are all listed (2:61-63). The total number returning is given at 49, 897 including representation from all the tribes of Israel (2:64-70).

Following their arrival at Jerusalem, the rebuilding of the temple begins (3:1-13). The altar of burnt offering is erected (3:1-3), the sacrifices are reinstated (3:4-7), and the temple foundation is re-established (3:8-13). As the foundation is laid, the people show mixed emotion. Some shout for joy, while others weep. Those who weep do so partly through joy and partly because of the new foundation which seems so small compared with the past temple of Solomon.

No sooner than the work is started, the building is intercepted by adversaries (4:1-24). The first attack of Satan is an invitation to compromise. The Samaritans, living in Jerusalem, offer to help the Jews finish the temple and to sacrifice with them. Knowing that this would create union with idolatry, the offer is rejected by Israel's leaders (4:1-2). The Samaritans retaliate (4:3-5) and send a message to the king of Persia accusing Israel of seeking rebellion against him (4:6-11). Being influenced by this slanderous charge, the king orders the work on the

temple to be suspended (4:17-24). The work thus ceases until the second year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia (4:24).

Following sixteen years of cessation of activity, the work is resumed under the prophetic ministry of Haggai and Zechariah (5:1-2). Not long after beginning again, Tatnai, the Samaritan governor, causes trouble for Israel and writes to Darius concerning whether the decree of Cyrus had actually been stated (5:6-17). Darius searches and finds the decree at his summer capital in Ecbatana (6:1-5). He immediately enforces the decree, ordering the completion of the temple (6:6-12). The temple is finally completed and dedicated to the Lord (6:13-18). The Passover is also restored along with the feast of unleavened bread (6:19-22).

The next major section of the book now begins as the return under Ezra is set forth (7:1-10:44). In the reign of Artaxerxes I, Ezra prepares himself to return to Jerusalem to teach the law of God (7:1-10). Following a decree from Artaxerxes permitting his return (7:11-26), Ezra praises the Lord for His goodness in bringing about the king's decree (7:27-28).

The preparation for his journey to Jerusalem begins (8:1-36). Ezra's companions are registered (8:1-14), ministers for the Lord's house are gathered from the Levites and Nethinim (8:15-20), and a fast is proclaimed for the Lord's protection (8:21-23). After the temple treasure is committed to the twelve priests, the journey is undertaken (8:24-31). As they arrive in Jerusalem, the treasure is deposited into the temple (8:33-35), and the king's decree is given to the governors (8:36).

Soon after his arrival, idolatry and mixed marriages of the people cause Ezra great pain (9:1-2). He goes immediately to Yahweh for intercession and confession (9:3-15). He first of all acknowledges God's grace (9:3-9), and then gives confession for the' trespasses of his people (9:10-15). Following this tremendous prayer of confession, the people are reconciled to God

(10:1-44). Foreign wives are put away (10:1-17) and a list of the repentant heads of families is given, marking the conclusion of the book (10:18-44). Priests (10:18-22), Levites (10:23), singers (10:24), and other people in Israel (10:25-44) are all listed.

Flow of Thought—Nehemiah: The *theme* of Nehemiah is the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. The book of Nehemiah deals with the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem (1:1-7:73) and the reformations of Ezra and Nehemiah (7:1-13:31) following the exile. In the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah hears of the sad state of Jerusalem (1:1-4) and prays to the Lord, making confession for Israel's sins (1:5-10) and beseeching the Lord for favor before the king (1:11).

Some time later, the king notices the sad character of Nehemiah (2:1), and asks him the reason for his sorrow (2:2). Nehemiah tells him of his people's plight and the king sends him to build Jerusalem (2:1-8). When the adversaries of Israel hear of Nehemiah, they are grieved and plan resistance (2:9-11). Nehemiah, however, proceeds to inspect the walls of Jerusalem by night (2:12-16) and urges their immediate building (2:17-18). This is followed with mocking from Israel's adversaries (2:19) of which Nehemiah quickly answers, relying upon the Lord for Israel's strength (2:20).

The repair begins and the work is distributed according to the various gates (3:1-32). Satan could not leave this construction alone, and so opposition quickly arises. Opposition by ridicule (4:1-6), by threatened attack (4:7-9), by discouragement (4:10-23), by greed (5:19), by craft (6:1-4), by intimidation (6:5-9), and opposition from a false prophet (6:10-14) are all faced by Israel. Prayer, faithfulness to the task, and a clear discerning of the attack of the adversary are all essential factors in their victory over this opposition. The wall is finished in fifty-two days

and the Lord is greatly magnified (6:15-19). In describing this magnificent work of the Lord, Nehemiah writes:

And it came to pass when all our enemies heard of this, and all the nations that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own *eyes*; for they perceived that this work was wrought by our Lord (6:16).

After the completion of the walls, the reformations of Ezra and Nehemiah take place (7:1-13:31). Before discussing these reformations, however, the writer discusses the provisions made for the defense of the city (7:1-4), and also gives a register of genealogy of those who have returned from Babylon (7:5-73).

The religious revival is then treated (8:1-10:39). After the reading and interpretation of the law, revival comes (8:1-8). There is great rejoicing among the people (8:9-12), and the Feast of Tabernacles is restored (8:13-18). This is followed by a prayer of repentance and confession (9:1-38) which results in the institution of a covenant of loyalty to the Lord (9:38-10:39). The governor (9:38-10:1), priests (10:2-8), Levites (10:9-13), and the chiefs of the people (10:14-27) sign the covenant, vowing to refuse intermarriage with Gentiles (10:28-30), to observe the Sabbath (10:31), and to be faithful stewards both in the temple ritual (10:32-36) and in the paying of priestly dues (10:37-39).

Having narrated the effect of the interpreted Word on the people, the writer stops to give a census of those dwelling in Jerusalem (11:1-12:26). He also discusses in some detail the dedication of Jerusalem's wall and what takes place in this service (12:27-47). The book is then concluded by telling the readers some additional evils that have been corrected by Nehemiah. Separation from the mixed multitude is made (13:1-3), the temple abuses are corrected (13:4-14),

Sabbath rest is restored (13:15-22), and the law against intermarriage with other peoples is enforced (13:23-31).

Chronicles

The book of Chronicles seems to be similar to Kings, but deals with a different theme than Kings. It was written after the Babylonian exile to the people coming back to repopulate the land to inform them about the temple. The emphasis, really, is to encourage the people to continue what King David had started originally, and what King Solomon had then continued in the building of the temple. There is great stress upon the faithfulness of the worship of Yahweh in the temple in order to show the continuity of the post-exilic community with the pre-exilic community.

Flow of Thought—1 and 2 Chronicles: The *theme* of 1 Chronicles is the true worship in Israel. The books of Chronicles discuss the history of Israel through David, Solomon, and the southern kingdom in an effort to re-emphasize the history of the priesthood and temple worship. The books divide themselves into four basic sections: the genealogies (1 Chron. 1:1-9:44), the reign of David (1 Chron. 10:1-29:30), the reign of Solomon (2 Chron. 1:1-9:31), and the reigns of the kings of Judah (2 Chron. 10:1-36:23).

In the first section of these books, the genealogies are given to show that the writer is dealing with God's chosen people, descending through Abraham, and destined to be the genealogical path through which Messiah would come. The line is traced from the descendants of Adam to Noah (1:1-4), through the sons of Noah (1:5-27), from Abraham to the tribes of Israel (1:28-54), and through the tribe of Judah (2:1-8:40). The line of the tribe of Judah is traced through Hezron (2:1-55), David (3:1-24), various clans of Judah (4:1-23), Simeon (4:24-34),

Reuben (5:1-10), Gad (5:11-26), Levi (6:1-8), Issachar (7:1-5), Benjamin (7:6-12), Naphtali (7:13), Manasseh (7:14-19), Ephraim (7:20-29), Asher (7:30-40), and Benjamin (8:1-40). The genealogical section is concluded as the writer traces through the inhabitants of Jerusalem following the Babylonian captivity and exile (9:1-44).

The second major section concerns the reign of David (1 Chron. 10:1-29:30). The book sets forth the coronation of David (10:1-11:9) against the background of Saul's downfall and death (10:1-14). Saul's defeat and death in the Philistine conquest (10:1-7) comes after his failure to inquire of the Lord for help (10:8-14). David's crowning quickly follows Saul's death (11:1-3), and Jerusalem becomes his new capital (11:4-9). His leadership further inspires many men who are outstanding warriors for him (11:10-12:40).

Early in his reign, David brings the ark of the covenant from Kiriath-Jearim to Jerusalem (13:1-16:43). The ark is being brought from Kiriath-Jearim to Jerusalem (13:1-8), when Uzzah touches the ark of the covenant and is instantly killed by Yahweh (13:9-14). Indignation and fear fill the heart of David (13:11-12) as the ark is left at the home of Obededom (13:13-14).

At this point in the narrative, the author stops in order to inject a note covering the family and victories of David's reign. His family is given (14:1-7) along with his victories over the Philistines at Baal-Perazim (14:8-12), and at Gibeon and Gezer (14:13-17). The author concludes this chapter concerning David's fame by saying: "And the fame of David went out into all lands; and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations" (14:17).

The journey of the ark is now resumed. Following a careful preparation (15:1-24), the joyful procession makes its way to Jerusalem with the ark (15:25-29). It finally arrives in Jerusalem (16:1a). Praise and dedication immediately follow (16:1b-36). Sacrifices are given (16:1b-3), a choir sings (16:4-6), and a psalm of thanksgiving is delivered by David (16:7-16).

He exhorts the people to remember the Lord and His covenant (16:7-16), he exalts Yahweh for His work (16:17-22), and concludes by praising Yahweh's person (16:23-36). The appointment of a tabernacle ritual and music (16:37-43) concludes the chapter dedication.

After the arrival of the ark, David desires to build a temple for it (17:1-2). Nathan blesses the king's desire and speaks to him the words of Yahweh concerning a house, throne, and kingdom (17:3-15) which he promises David. This is not just a temporal covenant but an everlasting one. With this covenant in mind, David rejoices over God's promise recognizing God's goodness (17:19-20) and requesting the Lord to fulfill His promise.

Victories come to David after the ark is returned and the covenant made. His military victories over the Philistines (18:1), Moab (18:2), Zobah (18:3-4), Damascus (18:5-11), Edom (18:12-16), Ammonites and Aramean allies (19:1-19), and Rabbah (20:4-8) are all recorded. His kingdom is fully established by these victories.

Following the narration of victories, defeat is also recorded in David's sin of the census (21:1-30). Warned by Joab not to take the census, David's pride causes him to do it (21:1-7). The Lord sends a plague as punishment, resulting in a three day pestilence (21:8-17). The plague, however, stops after David's repentance and sacrifice (21:18-30).

The writer of Chronicles returns to the discussion of the temple, setting forth David's preparation for its building (22:1-19) as well as its services (23:1-27:34). After the site for the temple is chosen (22:1), and materials for its building are gathered (22:2-5), David instructs Solomon to build it (22:6-16), and commands all the princes of Israel to help his son in its construction (22:17-19).

Along with David's preparation for its construction, preparation for its services are likewise made. The Levites are organized and their duties outlined (23:1-32), the priests are

divided into twenty-four courses (24:1-31), the singers and musicians are established who shall utter the divine mind in song (25:1-31), and finally gatekeepers, treasurers, and other functionaries are organized (26:1-32), including military and civil leaders (27:1-34).

The book of 1 Chronicles concludes by presenting David's last words and his death (28:1-29:30). In his speech before the people, after admonishing all concerning Solomon (28:1-8), he exhorts Solomon concerning his task of building the temple (28:9-20), and encourages the people to help him in this task (28:21). He further exhorts the people to give willingly for the coming temple (29:1-5). They joyfully respond (29:6-9), and David gives thanksgiving and praise for the Lord's greatness and power (29:10-16). He concludes his praise with a petition to Yahweh for the people's continued obedience (29:17-18), as well as for the obedience of Solomon his son (29:19). The book concludes with the enthronement of Solomon (29:20-25) and the death of David (29:26-30).

The *theme* of 2 Chronicles is the true worship in Israel. The second book of Chronicles is a continuation of the first. The third major section of the two books begins now as the reign of Solomon is narrated (2 Chron. 1:1-9:31). Following his accession to the throne (1:1), Solomon sacrifices to the Lord at Gibeon (1:2-6), and asks the Lord for wisdom in his reign (1:7-12). The Lord not only answers his prayer, but adds prosperity and great wealth to his request (1:13-17).

After his confirmation to the throne, Solomon's building and dedication of the temple is presented (2:1-7:22). He first of all prepares to build the temple (2:1-18). The purpose is defined (2:1), the workmen are numbered (2:2), and help from Hiram is obtained (2:3-18). The construction of the temple begins (3:1-4:22). It is built on Mount Moriah as David has appointed (3:1-2), and its measurements for every part are minutely given (3:3-17). Following the rearing of the pillars, the various furnishings are put in the temple (4:1-22). The bronze altar (4:1), the

brazen sea and laver (4:2-6), the lampstands (4:7), the tables (4:8), the courts (4:9-10), the instruments of brass (4:11-18), and the golden vessels (4:19-22) are all made and placed in it.

The building of the temple being completed, Solomon brings the ark into it (5:1-10) amidst the rejoicing of the priests and singers (5:11-13a). At that moment the glory of the Lord fills the temple. The writer of 2 Chronicles refers to this as follows:

Then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord. So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God (5:13b-14).

Following this outstanding event, Solomon's dedicatory sermon is delivered (6:1-42). After addressing the people concerning the faithfulness of Yahweh in confirming His covenant with David (6:1-11), he addresses Yahweh, invoking Him for His care (6:12-21), His justice (6:22-23), and His deliverance from defeat (6:24-25). His deliverance (6:24-39), deliverance from drought (6:26-27), famine and pestilence (6:28-33), enemies (6:34-35), and captivity (6:36-39) are all asked for. He concludes his prayer by invoking God for His help of both the priests (6:40-41) and himself as God's anointed (6:42).

The Lord answers Solomon's prayer by sending a fire from heaven which consumes the sacrifices (7:1). His divine presence is also in the temple (7:2-3). The people rejoice as they are conscious of Yahweh's presence (7:4-11), Yahweh manifests Himself to Solomon (7:12-22), and instructs him concerning blessing and judgment (7:17-22). Obedience brings blessing (7:17-18) and disobedience His judgment (7:19-22).

After the temple has been consecrated, the writer sets forth the achievements (8:1-18) and greatness of Solomon (9:1-31). His building activities (8:1-11), his religious activities (8:12-16), and his naval activities (8:17-18) are all recounted along with the visit from the Queen of Sheba

who is overwhelmed with Solomon's greatness (9:1-12). The chronicler concludes his discussion of Solomon with a brief narration of his wealth and splendor (9:13-28), and finally, his death (9:29-31).

The final section of the two books of Chronicles is now given as the reigns of the kings of Judah are discussed (10:1-36:23). The folly of Rehoboam in following the counsel of the young men to increase the burden on the people (10:1-15) leads to a division in Israel (10:16-11:4). Rehoboam is forbidden by the Lord to fight against Jeroboam I and therefore fortifies his own kingdom (11:5-12). He, however, fails Yahweh by ordaining false priests (11:13-12:1) and the result is judgment in the invasion of Shishak (12:2-12). Rehoboam dies and Abijah reigns in his stead (12:13-16).

Abijah's war with Jeroboam and victory is described (13:1-20), as well as his family (13:21-22). He is followed by Asa. His reforms are noted (14:1-5) along with his victory over Zerah (14:9-15). The prophet Azariah warns Asa to be strong (15:1-7) and further reforms take place (15:8-19). Idols are removed, the queen mother (Maacah) is removed because of her idolatry, and the dedicated objects are brought to the temple. His war with Baasha is also recounted (16:1-6), and Hanani's rebuke for his league with Syria (16:7-10). He dies of a serious foot disease and has an elaborate funeral (16:11-14).

Jehoshaphat takes the throne (17:1). He proves faithful to Yahweh (17:3-6) and promotes the teaching of the law (17:7-9). His prosperity and power are great (17:10-19). One mistake he makes, however, is his alliance with Ahab (18:1-34) which brings a stinging rebuke from Jehu the prophet (19:1-4). The writer continues to give Jehoshaphat's judicial reforms (19:5-11), and his deliverance from a Moab-Ammon invasion (20:1-30). The king stops the invasion and

receives a large spoil. His reign is summarized (20:31-34), along with his trading alliance with Ahaziah and his death (20:35-21:1).

Jehoram follows him to the throne (20:1-20). During his reign the subjugated Edomites revolt along with Libnah (21:1-11). The king apostatizes by ordaining high places and his doom is pronounced by a letter formerly written by Elijah (21:12-15). His kingdom is invaded by the Arabians and Philistines (21:16-17) and he dies of an internal disease of the intestines (21:18-20).

Ahaziah, the son of Athaliah, reigns in his stead (22:1-4) and is assassinated by Jehu while he is recovering from previous battle wounds (22:5-9). Athaliah, his wicked mother, murders all the royal seed of Judah's house and usurps the throne herself (22:10).

Joash, however, is saved and is hidden for six years (22:11-12). In the seventh year, Jehoiada places him on the throne (23:1-11) and Athaliah is executed (23:12-15). Revival continues through the ministry of Jehoiada (23:16-21) as he is a strengthening factor to the young king. The temple is even repaired by the king (24:1-14). The good influence of Jehoiada is lost however with his death, and Joash falls into apostasy (24:15-19). The king proceeds to kill God's messenger (24:20-22) and is judged by a Syrian invasion and defeat at the hands of Syria (24:23-24). Joash dies a tragic death by assassination (24:25-27).

Amaziah comes to the throne (25:1-28). Following victory over Edom (25:1-13), he falls into idolatry which results in divine wrath and Judgment (25:14-16). His error in hiring soldiers of Israel leads to war with Joash (25:17-24) and to a violent death (25:25-28).

Uzziah's reign is next recounted (26:1-23). His prosperity and greatness are described (26:1-15) in addition to his sin of intrusion into the priest's office (26:16-18), The punishment is leprosy which Uzziah has until his death (26:19-23). Jotham succeeds Uzziah (27:1-9). He

becomes mighty, building much in Jerusalem and remote districts for defense (27:1-4). The Ammonites revolt, but he defeats them and increases their, tribute (27:5-6). He dies and Ahaz comes to the throne (28:1-27). His idolatry (28:1-4) brings God's judgment from Israel and Syria (28:5-15). He compromises with Assyria for help (28:16-21) and falls into even greater idolatry, leading God's people along with him (28:22-27).

After Ahaz, Hezekiah takes the rule (29:1-32:33). He sees a great revival (29:1-19). Temple worship is restored (29:20-36), the Passover is celebrated (30:1-27), and idolatry is rooted out (31:1-21).

The reformation is followed by an account of the invasion of Assyria and her defeat (32:1-23). The king's illness and recovery is also presented (32:24-26). After these blessings from the Lord, folly is displayed as Hezekiah shows his wealth to an embassy from Babylon (32:27-31). His death follows (32:32-33).

After the good reign of Hezekiah, the evil and wicked reigns of Manasseh and Amon are given (33:1-25). Manasseh's reign is filled with idolatry (33:1-9). He is taken captive by the Assyrians for this but is later restored (33:10-13). He seeks some belated reforms, but fails to influence the people (33:14-17). He dies and Amon reigns (33:18-20). Amon's reign is also a wicked one as he follows the idolatries of Manasseh (33:21-23). He is killed by his servants as they conspire against him (33:24-25).

One of Judah's best kings, Josiah, takes the throne (34:1-2). Following reformation (34:3-7), and repair of the temple (34:8-13), a revival occurs as the law is discovered (34:14-17) and read (34:18-21). Huldah, the prophetess, gives an encouraging message (34:23-35:19) and the people covenant to obey Yahweh (34:29-32). Further reformation occurs (34:33) and the

Passover is reinstated (35:1-19). Josiah dies in a battle at Carchemish from the arrows of the Egyptians (35:20-27).

The last kings of Judah reign before captivity. Jehoahaz reigns for three months in Jerusalem and is deposed by the king of Egypt (36:1-3). Jehoiakim is made king by Pharaoh-Neco and Nebuchadnezzar later carries him captive to Babylon (36:4-7). Jehoiachin becomes king and is also carried to Babylon (36:8-10). Zedekiah is placed as king (36:11). Rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldeans overrun Jerusalem and his reign ends (36:12-13). The writer of Chronicles concludes the book of 2 Chronicles by giving the cause of captivity (36:14-16), the destruction caused by it (36:17-21), and finally, the restoration under Cyrus after the captivity in fulfillment of the word of the Lord as spoken by the prophet Jeremiah.

Daniel

The book of Daniel has been debated in terms of the composition of the book. There are those that feel that the book was written during the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes around 165 BC. Conservative scholars believe that the book was written earlier during the 6th century BC. Linguistic argument supports, I believe, the Aramaic of Daniel as a 6th century type of Aramaic. Also, Christ is recorded in Matthew 24:15 speaking of Daniel the prophet as the author of Daniel.

The book of Daniel is a very beautiful book written in what is called the “apocalyptic” style (apocalypse means “revelation”). Conservative scholars believe Daniel depicts the time of the Gentiles, beginning with the captivity of the southern kingdom of Judea under the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar and continuing up to the second coming of Jesus Christ. The book is written in apocalyptic (revelatory) imagery in which symbols are used to teach reality,

much like the New Testament book of Revelation, especially Revelation chapters 2, 7, and 8. This type of literary imagery began to show up even during the time of Zechariah during the 6th century BC; we find this type of writing in the first eight chapters of Zechariah. We also find various apocalyptic works, such as Enoch and 2nd Edras, from the 2nd century BC through the 2nd century AD. I believe that Daniel is the first of the apocalyptic writers, dating him in the 6th century BC.

In the book of Daniel, we have the Hebrew and Aramaic languages mixed together. Daniel 2:4 through chapter 7 is written in Aramaic while the rest of the book is written in Hebrew. In looking at the revelation given in Daniel, one of the main questions asked is what kingdom is the writer dealing with in chapters 2 and 7? We have the image of the man in chapter 2; we have the image of animals in chapter 7. The kingdoms of Babylon, Media-Persia, and Greece are dealt with, and many conservative theologians believe Rome is also included. All of these earthly kingdoms are eclipsed by the kingdom of Messiah, the kingdom of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The revelation in Daniel, according to conservative scholars, speaks of Jesus Christ who will ultimately come in victory to establish His kingdom as the Rock cut out of the mountain, not with human hands (chapter 2), and the Son of Man (chapter 8).

Daniel is a wonderful book dealing with the ultimate victory of God through Christ over Gentile powers, and His eternal kingdom given to the people of God. The book was certainly an encouragement for those Jews going through persecution under the Seleucid king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes around 168 BC. As written by Daniel. Daniel's ultimate application and conclusion is in the coming of Jesus Christ to bring His eternal kingdom to those who believe in Him. The New Testament book of Revelation uses Daniel quite frequently in the allusions and symbols concerning the exaltation and coming of Jesus Christ as King of kings, and Lord of lords. May

we sing with the hymn writer: “All hail the power of Jesus’ name, let angels prostrate fall. Bring forth the royal diadem and crown Him, Lord of all.”⁹

Flow of Thought—Daniel: The *theme* of the book of Daniel is the times of the Gentiles. The book of Daniel discusses the personal history of the prophet (1:1-21), the prophetic history of the Gentiles (2:1-7:28), and the prophetic history of the Jews (8:1-12:13).

The personal history of the prophet is first discussed (1:1-21). In the third year of Jehoiakim, Daniel is carried into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (1:1-2). Upon arriving in Babylon, instruction is given by the king that Daniel and other favored youths be well fed for three years and educated as the Chaldeans in order that they might stand before the king (1:3-7).

Daniel, purposing in his heart not to defile himself with the king’s food, asks for vegetables and water instead of the king’s food (1:8-13). Agreeing to this, the prince of the eunuchs gives Daniel and his friends their requested food (1:14). The Lord blesses their faithfulness and “at the end of ten days, their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the youths who did eat the portion of the king’s food” (1:15). The prince continues their diet then for three years and at the end of this time period they stand before the king (1:16-18). Because God has given them wisdom, the king finds none like them (1:19) and even found them to be “ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm” (1:20). Daniel continues in high position until the first year of king Cyrus (1:21).

From a discussion of his personal history, Daniel gives his prophetic history of the Gentiles and God’s dealing with them (2:1-7:28). In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, he has a dream which troubles him greatly (2:1-3). He calls his wise men in order to find out the interpretation of his dream (2:4). In order to assure the validity of their interpretation the king challenges them to give him both the dream and the interpretation (2:5-6). Because his wise men

are unable to state the dream, the king becomes furious and gives a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be slain (2:7-13). When Daniel hears of this decree, he quickly asks for time and prayer in order to stop this decree (2:14-18). The dream is then divinely revealed to Daniel by the Lord and he is brought before the king to utter his dream and to interpret it (2:19-30).

After acknowledging the Lord as the revealer of the dream, the prophet states the dream itself (2:31-35). He speaks of a great image with a head of gold, breast and arms of bronze, legs of iron, and feet that are partly of iron and partly of clay. The prophet then describes a great stone as rolling into the image and breaking it into pieces. This stone then becomes a great mountain.

Following this description of the king's dream, the interpretation is given (2:36-45). Five kingdoms are involved in the dream. The first is Nebuchadnezzar who is represented as the head of gold (2:36-38). He is followed by another kingdom (Media-Persia) represented by the breast and thighs (2:39a). A third kingdom (Greece) follows symbolized in the legs (2:39), and a fourth kingdom (Rome) comes after it (2:40-43). This fourth kingdom shall be divided between iron and clay, picturing its lack of solidity and quality in comparison with the former. A final kingdom is then established by the Lord Himself as the stone cut out of the mountain (Christ) breaks the image (2:44-45). The kingdom is then set up.

As a result of this interpretation, Daniel is promoted to become the ruler over the province of Babylon. Verses forty-eight and forty-nine read:

Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. Then Daniel requested of the king and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king (2:48-49).

In the next four chapters, experiences which happened while Daniel was in Babylon are recorded. In chapter three, the image of Nebuchadnezzar and the fiery furnace are discussed. The king's pride is seen as he constructs an image of himself and has everyone worship it (3:1-7). Those who will not are threatened with the fiery furnace. Daniel's three friends refuse to worship the image because of their devotion to Yahweh (3:8-18), and they are in turn cast into the fiery furnace (3:19-23). The Lord, however, is true to his own and protects them even going into the fire (3:24-25). Nebuchadnezzar therefore recognizes Yahweh in this experience (3:26-28), and makes a decree, promoting the three Hebrew young men (3:29-30). In chapter four the tree vision of Nebuchadnezzar is given (4:1-37). The king sees a great tree and the wise men are unable to interpret it (4:1-7). At last Daniel comes in and tells the dream to the king (4:8-18) and interprets it before him (4:19-27). The king is to be driven from men and made to eat grass in the field like an animal until he would recognize Yahweh. The vision was soon fulfilled as the prophet had said and Daniel is greatly humbled (4:28-33). He is later restored back in his kingdom (4:34-36), and praises and extols Yahweh for His person and works (4:37).

Chapter five recounts the fall of Babylon under Belshazzar. Belshazzar profanes the temple vessels (5:1-3) and praises the gods of gold, silver, iron, wood, and stone (5:4). In the same hour the handwriting of God appears on the wall (5:5-6). The wise men are unable to interpret the handwriting, and so Daniel interprets the writing, announcing the imminent fall and destruction and devastation of Babylon under the Medes and the Persians (5:7-29). The interpretation is shortly fulfilled.

In that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain. And Darius, the Mede, took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old (5:30-31).

In chapter six, Daniel's familiar experience in the lion's den is recounted (6:1-28). Because of Daniel's popularity and position (6:1-3), the presidents and princes plot against Daniel. Finding no fault in him (6:4), they challenge the king to make a decree that he only be worshipped for thirty days and that anyone who disobeyed the decree should be cast into the den of lions (6:5-9). Daniel continues steadfast in his devotion to Yahweh and word is told the king (6:10-15). The king then commands Daniel to be cast into the lion's den and the command is carried out (6:16-18). The Lord miraculously delivers the prophet and the king writes a decree that men should fear Daniel's God (6:19-28).

Following these more personal incidents, the prophet gives his vision of the four beasts (7:1-28). Daniel first of all describes the vision (7:1-14) and then gives its interpretation (7:15-28). The prophet sees four beasts. He sees a lion (7:1-4), a bear (7:5), a leopard (7:6), and a great mongrel beast (7:7-8). He then sees the Ancient of Days (7:9-12) in His character and work as well as the Son of Man (7:13-14).

The vision represents the same four world powers already described in chapter two (7:15-17). The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom (7:18). The fourth kingdom is then discussed in great detail in which Daniel gives its dominion (7:23) and leader (7:24-27). This leader's persecution of the saints (7:24-25) and his punishment from Yahweh (7:26) are both given. His rule will be replaced by that of Messiah and His kingdom (7:27). Daniel is troubled with all these things and keeps the matter in his heart (7:28).

After the prophetic history of the Gentiles, the prophet gives the prophetic history of the Jews (8:1-12:13). The vision of the ram and he-goat is first given (8:1-27) in which the prophet sees the future defeat of Media-Persia by the Greeks. Giving the description (8:1-14) and interpretation of the vision (8:15-21), a future prophecy concerning Antiochus is given in which

he becomes an adumbration of the future anti-Christ. Seeing this vision, Daniel faints and after a few days returns to his business.

In chapter nine, Daniel's great prophecy of Jacob's seventy weeks is recorded. Realizing that the seventy years of captivity in Babylon are about over (9:1-3). Daniel confesses the sins of Israel and petitions Yahweh to remember His people (9:15-19), While praying, Gabriel the angel, intervenes (9:20-23) and predicts concerning the yet future history of Israel (9:24-27).

The future of Israel's history covers seventy weeks or four-hundred and ninety years. The transactions of the period to be accomplished by Messiah are first delivered (9:24) followed by the basic time divisions of Israel's sixty-nine weeks (9:25-26) and the final seven year period which culminates it (9:27). The work of Messiah in his advent is given, In the remainder of the book, the final revelation of Israel's future is divinely given to Daniel. In the third year of Cyrus the king, Daniel is fasting (10:1-4) when a messenger appears with a revelation (10:5-9). His appearance is described (10:5-9), and the reason for his delay (10:10-14). The great conflict of the unseen holy and unholy angels is clearly seen in this passage. Daniel is strengthened (10:15-21) and a tremendous revelation is delivered to him.

The revelation recorded by Daniel concerns both Israel's near future (11:1-35) as well as its distant future (11:36-12:13). Israel's near future under Persia (11:1-2), Greece (11:3-4), the Ptolemies and Seleucids (10:5-20), and finally, under Antiochus Epiphanes (11:21-35) is all prophetically traced by the pen of divine inspiration.

From Israel's near view, the prophet moves on into Israel's distant future (11:36-12:13). The future world leader is first of all discussed (11:36-45). His blasphemy (11:36), lawlessness (11:37), power (11:38-39), conflicts (11:40-44), and his destruction (11:45) are all treated. A word concerning the tribulation period follows (12:1) along with the promise of a future

resurrection for both the believers and unbelievers out of Israel. The book of Daniel is concluded by the instructions to Daniel to seal the book (12:4) and by some final words spoken to Daniel from God's messenger (12:5-13).

Outline of the Psalms

Psalm 1

Theme: The Godly are distinct from the ungodly in character and in ending.

- I.THE GODLY (1:1-3)
 - A.His Character (1:1-2)
 - B.His Fruit (1:3)
- II.THE UNGODLY (1:4-6)
 - A.His Character (1:4)
 - B.His End (1:5-6)

Psalm 2

Theme: Messiah the King asks for vindication of Yahweh's enemies.

- I.THE CONFEDERATION OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH (2:1-3)
- II.THE ATTITUDE OF YAHWEH TOWARD HIS ENEMIES (2:4-6)
- III.THE VINDICATION OF MESSIAH'S ENEMIES (2:7-9)
- IV.THE EXHORTATION AND WARNING TO THE KINGS OF THE EARTH (2:10-12)

Psalm 3 -

Theme: The sufficiency of God is seen in time of testing.

- I.THE LAMENTATION OF DAVID (3:1-2)
- II.THE EXALTATION OF YAHWEH (3:3-8)
 - A.For His Protection and Concern (3:3-4)
 - B.For His Deliverance (3:5-8)

Psalm 4

Theme: The assurance of answered prayer brings its fruitful results.

- I.THE INVOCATION (4:1)
- II.THE ASSURANCE OF GOD'S ANSWER (4:2-4)
 - A.His Confidence (4:2-3)
 - B.His Warning (4:4)
- III.THE RESULTS OF ASSURANCE (4:5-8)
 - A.His Trust (4:5)
 - B.His Joy (4:6-7)
 - C.His Peace and Security (4:8)

Psalm 5

Theme: The Psalmist prays for divine protection.

- I.THE INVOCATION TO YAHWEH (5:1-2)
- II.THE EXALTATION OF YAHWEH BY THE PSALMIST (5:3)
 - A.Concerning His Goodness (5:3-4)
 - B.Concerning His Mercy and Holiness (5:7)
 - C.Concerning His Justness (5:5-6)
- III.THE PETITION OF THE PSALMIST (5:8-12)
 - A.Concerning His Own Guidance (5:8)
 - B.Concerning The Destruction of the Wicked (5:9-10)
 - C.Concerning The Blessings For The Righteous (5:11-12)
 - 1.Their Joy In Yahweh (5:11)
 - 2.Their Defense By Yahweh (5:12)

Psalm 6

Theme: Confidence in Yahweh for deliverance brings a warning to enemies.

- I.THE ADDRESS TO YAHWEH (6:1-7)
 - A.The Introduction (6:1-4)
 - 1.Introductory Invocation (6:1-2a)
 - 2.Introductory Lamentation (6:2b-3)
 - B.The Petition To Yahweh (6:4-5)
 - 1.The Request For Deliverance (6:4a)
 - 2.The Reasons For The Petition (6:4b-5)
 - a.Reason one: the mercy of Yahweh (6:4-b)
 - b.Reason two: the lack of mercy in Sheol (6:5)
 - C.The Lamentation Proper (6:6-7)
 - 1.His Tears (6:6)
 - 2.His Grief (6:7)
- II.THE WARNING TO HIS ADVERSARIES (6:8-10)
 - A.The Assertion That His Prayer Has Been Heard (6:8-9)
 - B.The Assurance That His Adversaries Will Be Ashamed (6:10)

Psalm 7

Theme: A prayer for God's righteous judgment is made.

- I.THE ADDRESS TO YAHWEH (7:1)
- II.THE LAMENTATION OF THE PSALMIST (7:2-5)
 - A.The Difficult State of the Psalmist (7:2)
 - B.The Pronounced Innocence of the Psalmist (7:3-5)
- III.THE PETITION FOR RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT (7:6-9)
 - A.The Righteous Judgment of His Own Person Requested (7:6-8)
 - B.The Request For the Wicked To Be Judged (7:9)
- IV.THE CONFIDENCE IN THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF YAHWEH (7:10-16)
 - A.The Readiness of Yahweh to Judge the Wicked (7:10-13)
 - B.The Reason for the Judgment of the Wicked (7:14-16)
- V.THE PRAISE OF YAHWEH FOR HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS (7:17)

Psalm 8

Theme: Man's proper place is in dominion over the earth.

I.THE GLORY OF GOD DESCRIBED (8:1-4)

A.His Excellent Name (8:1)

B.His Omnipotent Power (8:2)

C.His Superiority to Man (8:3-4)

II.THE POSITION OF THE SON OF MAN DESCRIBED (8:5-8b)

A.His Dominion Over the Earth Stated (8:5-6)

B.His Dominion Over The Earth Illustrated (8:7-8)

1.Over Sheep and Oxen (8:7a)

2.Over the Beasts of the Field (8:7b)

3.Over the Fowl of the Air (8:8a)

4.Over the Fish of the Sea (8:8b)

III.THE EXALTATION OF YAHWEH (8:9)

Psalm 9

Theme: Godly praise is given for victory over enemies.

I.THE PERSONAL EXULTATION OF GOD (9:1-10)

A.The Declaration of Praise (9:1-3)

B.The Reason for Praise (9:4-10)

1.His Greatness: In His Righteous Judgment (9:4-8)

a.In judging the Psalmist's cause (9:4)

b.In judging the wicked (9:5-6)

c.In judging the world (9:7-8)

2.His Grace: In Relation to the Righteous (9:9-10)

a.In His protection (9:9)

b.In His faithfulness (9:10)

II.THE CORPORATE EXULTATION OF GOD (9:11-16)

A.The Call to Praise (9:11)

B.The Cause For Praise (9:12)

C.The Petition For God's Favor (9:13-14)

1.The Petition (9:13)

2.The Basis For The Petition (9:14)

D.The Certainty of Judgment (9:15-18)

III.THE CONCLUSIONS IN A FINAL PETITION (9:19-20)

Psalm 10

Theme: A plea is made for God's intervention against the wicked one.

I.THE STATEMENT OF THE PLEA (10:1-2)

II.THE BASIS OF THE PLEA (10:3-11).

A.The Corruption of the Wicked One (10:3-10)

B.The Contempt of the Wicked One (10:11)

III.THE INVOCATION FOR INTERVENTION (10:12-15)

IV.THE CONFIDENCE IN GOD TO ANSWER (10:16-18)

Psalm 11

Theme: Faith in Yahweh is the only sure refuge in time of trouble.

- I.THE SUGGESTION OF EXPEDIENCY (11:1-3)
- II.THE SOLIDIFICATION OF FAITH IN YAHWEH (11:4-7)

Psalm 12

Theme: The confidence in God to deliver the meek.

- I.THE ADDRESS OF THE PSALMIST TO YAHWEH (12:1-4)
 - A.The Plea To Yahweh For Salvation (12:1)
 - B.The lamentation Over Flattering Tongues (12:2)
 - C.The Petition to Yahweh to Destroy Liars (12:3-4)
- II.THE ADDRESS OF YAHWEH TO THE PSALMIST: ASSURANCE OF DELIVERANCE (12:5)
- III.THE ADDRESS OF THE PSALMIST TO YAHWEH (12:6-8)
 - A.The Description of Yahweh's Words (12:6)
 - B.The Confidence In Yahweh (12:7-8)
 - 1.Confidence Expressed (12:7)
 - 2.Confidence Maintained in a Corrupt Environment (12:8)

Psalm 13

Theme: The resting place of God's elect is in Yahweh's loyal love.

- I.THE PRAYER TO YAHWEH (13:1-5a)
 - A.The Test of Waiting (13:1-2)
 - B.The Petition to Yahweh (13:3-4)
 - 1.To Hear Him (13:3)
 - 2.To Prevent His Enemies From Prevailing (13:4)
- II.THE CONFIDENCE IN YAHWEH (13:5a)
- III.THE EXULTATION OF YAHWEH (13:5b-6)

Psalm 14

Theme: In view of the depravity of the natural man around him, the Psalmist longs for Messiah's deliverance.

- I.THE DEPRAVITY OF THE NATURAL MAN (14:1-6)
- II.THE ANTICIPATION OF DELIVERANCE (14:7)

Psalm 15

Theme: The character of the Godly man is manifested by what he does.

- I.THE QUESTION: WHO ABIDES WITH GOD (15:1)
- II.THE ANSWER: THE ONE WHOSE LIFE CONFORMS TO HIS PROFESSION (15:2-5)

Psalm 16

Theme: Joy comes from trust in Yahweh.

- I.JOY IN OBEDIENCE AND DEVOTION TO YAHWEH (16:1-8)
- II.JOY IN HOPE OF DELIVERANCE BY RESURRECTION (16:9-11)

Psalm 17

Theme: The Psalmist prays for deliverance from his enemies and trusts God for the answer to his prayer.

- I.THE PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE (17:1-14)
- II.THE ASSURANCE OF DELIVERANCE (17:15)

Psalm 18

Theme: The Psalmist praises God who delivers his own.

- I.THE OPENING HYMN OF PRAISE (18:1-3)
- II.THE REASON FOR PRAISE (18:4-45)
- III.THE CONCLUDING HYMN OF PRAISE (18:46-50)

Psalm 19

Theme: The glory of God is seen in His creation and in His revelation.

- I.THE HEAVENS TESTIFYING OF GOD'S GLORY (19:1-6)
- II.THE TORAH (19:7-11)
- III.THE CONCLUDING PETITION OF THE PSALMIST (19:12-14)

Psalm 20

Theme: The Psalmist prays for help and is confident of Yahweh's deliverance.

- I.THE PRAYER FOR YAHWEH'S HELP (20:1-5)
- II.THE CONFIDENT ASSURANCE IN YAHWEH'S HELP (20:6-8)
- III.THE CONCLUDING PETITION (20:9)

Psalm 21

Theme: The rejoicing of the King over God's blessing and victory.

- I.THE FACT OF REJOICING (21:1)
- II.THE BASIS FOR REJOICING (21:2-12)
- III.THE CLOSING DOXOLOGY (21:13)

Psalm 22

Theme: The suffering Savior is delivered by the Father.

- I.HIS SUFFERING (22:1-18)
- II.HIS PLEA FOR DELIVERANCE (22:19-21)
- III.HIS PRAISE FOR DELIVERANCE (22:22-31)

Psalm 23

Theme: The Lord is a personal Shepherd and a gracious host.

- I.THE LORD AS A PERSONAL SHEPHERD (23:1-4)
- II.THE LORD AS A GRACIOUS HOST (23:5-6)

Psalm 24

Theme: The true worshippers of Yahweh welcome Messiah's coming.

- I.THE TRUE WORSHIPPER DESCRIBED (24:1-6)
- II.THE ANTICIPATED COMING OF MESSIAH TO JERUSALEM (24:7-10)

Psalm 25

Theme: The prayer of the Psalmist for Yahweh's protection and deliverance.

- I.HIS PRAYER FOR GOD'S PROTECTION (25:1-7)
- II.HIS MEDITATION ON GOD'S PERSON (25:8-10)
- III.HIS MEDITATION UPON GOD'S MAN (25:11-14)
- IV.HIS RENEWED PRAYER FOR PROTECTION FOR HIMSELF AND ISRAEL (25:15-22)

Psalm 26

Theme: The Psalmist presents his innocence and pleads for Yahweh's vindication.

- I.HIS PROCLAMATION OF INNOCENCE (26:1-7)
- II.HIS PLEA FOR YAHWEH'S VINDICATION (AND REDEMPTION) (26:8-12)

Psalm 27

Theme: Patient trust in the Lord is the basis of triumph.

- I.THE SOURCE OF THE PSALMIST'S STRENGTH (27:1)
- II.THE NATURE OF YAHWEH'S HELP (27:2-8)
- III.THE PETITION FOR YAHWEH'S HELP (27:9-13)
- IV.THE CONFIDENCE IN YAHWEH'S HELP (27:14)

Psalm 28

Theme: The Psalmist gives testimony to answered prayer.

- I.PRAYER FOR YAHWEH'S SALVATION AS HE JUDGES THE WICKED (28:1-5)
- II.PRAISE FOR YAHWEH'S ANSWER (28:6-8)
- III.PETITION FOR YAHWEH'S SALVATION OF ISRAEL (28:9)

Psalm 29

Theme: The omnipotence of God in the thunderstorm.

- I.THE CALL TO WORSHIP (29:1-2)
- II.THE REASON FOR WORSHIPPING THE OMNIPOTENT GOD (29:3-9)
- III.THE CONCLUSION: THE LORD IS KING (29:10-11)

Psalm 30

Theme: Praise is given for God's healing.

- I.THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PSALMIST'S HEALING (30:1-3)
- II.THE PRAISE FOR THE PSALMIST'S HEALING (30:4-12)

Psalm 31

Theme: The Psalmist pleads for victory over his enemies and trusts the Lord for the answer.

- I.THE PRAYER FOR YAHWEH'S DELIVERANCE (31:1-18)
- II.THE CONFIDENT TRUST IN YAHWEH'S DELIVERANCE (31:19-24)

Psalm 32

Theme: The Psalmist sets forth the blessedness of forgiveness.

- I.THE BLESSEDNESS OF FORGIVENESS (32:1-7)
 - A.The Fact of Blessedness (32:1-2)
 - B.The Reason For Blessedness (32:3-7)
- II.THE EXHORTATION TO OTHERS TO SEEK FORGIVENESS (32:8-10)
- III.THE FINAL SUMMONS TO REJOICE (32:11)

Psalm 33

Theme: Praise is rendered to the Lord for His various works.

- I.PRAISE TO HIM AS CREATOR (33:1-9)
- II.PRAISE TO HIM AS GOVERNOR (33:10-17)
- III.PRAISE TO HIM AS KEEPER OF THE RIGHTEOUS (33:18-22)

Psalm 34

Theme: Praise is rendered to the Lord for His various blessings.

- I.PRAISE FOR DELIVERANCE (34:1-10)
- II.PRAISE FOR INSTRUCTION (34:11-14)
- III.PRAISE FOR REDEMPTION (34:15-22)

Psalm 35

Theme: The Psalmist appeals for Yahweh's judgment of His enemies.

- I.THE FIRST APPEAL FOR JUDGMENT (35:1-18)
- II.THE SECOND APPEAL FOR JUDGMENT (35:19-28)

Psalm 36

Theme: The Psalmist contrasts the evilness of the wicked man, with the glory of Yahweh and gives the Lord's protection of the righteous.

- I.THE HIDEOUSNESS OF EVIL (36:1-4)
- II.THE GLORIOUSNESS OF GOD (36:5-9)
- III.THE PROTECTION AND VICTORY OF THE RIGHTEOUS (36:10-12)

Psalm 37

Theme: The Psalmist contrasts the righteous man and the wicked man.

- I.CONSULTATION FOR THE WISE (37:1-11)
- II.CONTRAST BETWEEN THE WICKED AND RIGHTEOUS (37:12-40)
 - A.In Relation to Their End (37:12-20)
 - B.In Relation to retribution (37:21-40)

Psalm 38

Theme: The saint in sufferings looks to the Lord for help.

- I.THE SAINT IN SUFFERING (38:1-9)
- II.THE SAINT LOOKING TO THE LORD FOR HELP (38:10-22)

Psalm 39

Theme: After discussing the emptiness in life, the Psalmist hopes in Yahweh.

- I.THE VANITY OF LIFE (39:1-6)
- II.THE HOPE IN THE LORD (39:7-13)

Psalm 40

Theme: The path of the obedient servant brings forth his fruit.

- I.THE PATH OF THE OBEDIENT SERVANT (40:1-12)
- II.THE FRUIT OF THE OBEDIENT SERVANT (40:13-17)

Psalm 41

Theme: The Psalmist praises God for His help and deliverance.

- I.THE MEDITATION OF THE PSALMIST UPON GOD'S DELIVERANCE (41:1-3)
- II.THE PRAYER OF THE PSALMIST FOR GOD'S DELIVERANCE (41:4-11)
- III.THE BLESSING BY THE PSALMIST FOR GOD'S DELIVERANCE (41:12-13)

Psalms 42 & 43

Theme: The Psalmist in the depths of despair prays to God for restoration from his enemies.

- I.THE DEPTHS OF HIS DESPAIR (42:1-11)
- II.THE REQUEST FOR HIS RESTORATION (43:1-5)

Psalm 44

Theme: After recalling past blessings the Psalmist sets forth present defeats and calls upon Yahweh for deliverance.

- I.THE BLESSINGS OF THE PAST (44:1-8)
- II.THE DEFEAT OF THE PRESENT (44:9-16)
- III.THE PRAYER FOR VICTORY IN THE PRESENT (44:17-26)

Psalm 45

Theme: The advent of the King in glory.

- I.THE PRAISE OF THE BRIDEGROOM (45:1-9)
- II.THE DESCRIPTION OF THE BRIDE (45:10-15)
- III.THE HOPES EXPRESSED FOR THE OFFSPRING (45:16-17)

Psalm 46

Theme: The Psalmist praises God for being a refuge, deliverer, and peacemaker.

- I.GOD AS A REFUGE (45:1-3)
- II.GOD AS A DELIVERER (46:4-7)
- III.GOD AS A PEACEMAKER (46:8-11)

Psalm 47

Theme: Messiah's presence among the redeemed is praised by them.

- I.MESSIAH'S PRESENCE AMONG THE REDEEMED (47:1-5)
- II.MESSIAH PRAISED BY THE REDEEMED (47:6-9)

Psalm 48

Theme: God's protecting care of Zion is set forth and He is exalted for His power and victory over her enemies.

- I. THE GLORY OF ZION (48:1-3)
- II. THE DEFEAT OF THE ENEMIES OF ZION (48:4-8)
- III. THE THANKSGIVING FOR ZION (48:9-14)

Psalm 49

Theme: The vanity of worldly wealth is discussed.

- I. INTRODUCTION (49:1-3)
- II. WEALTH'S VANITY (49:5-20)
 - A. In Man's Present Life (49:5-12)
 - B. In Man's Future Life (49:13-20)

Psalm 50

Theme: The Psalmist gives Yahweh's attitude toward false worship and concludes with the true worship.

- I. FALSE WORSHIP (50:1-22)
- II. TRUE WORSHIP (50:23)

Psalm 51

Theme: The writer pleads for forgiveness and renewal and then makes holy resolutions to the Lord.

- I. THE PLEA FOR FORGIVENESS (51:1-8)
- II. THE PLEA FOR RENEWAL (51:9-12)
- III. THE VOW OF CONSECRATION (51:13-17)

Psalm 52

Theme: The character and fate of the wicked is contrasted with that of the Psalmist.

- I. THE CHARACTER AND FATE OF THE WICKED MAN (52:1-7)
- II. THE CHARACTER AND FATE OF THE PSALMIST (52:8-9)

Psalm 53

Theme: Same as in Psalm 14.

- I. THE DEPRAVITY OF NATURAL MAN (53:1-6)
- II. THE ANTICIPATION OF DELIVERANCE (53:6)

Psalm 54

Theme: The Psalmist prays for deliverance in a perilous situation and then praises God for assured deliverance.

- I. PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE (54:1-3)
- II. PRAISE FOR AN ASSURED DELIVERANCE (54:4-7)

Psalm 55

Theme: The Psalmist protests to Yahweh about his enemies and then expresses his confidence in Yahweh.

- I. THE COMPLAINT OF THE PSALMIST (55:1-8)
- II. THE PRAYER FOR DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED BY THE PSALMIST (55:9-15)
- III. THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PSALMIST IN YAHWEH (55:16-23)

Psalm 56

Theme: Trust in Yahweh leads to assured deliverance.

- I. THE PSALMIST'S TRUST IN YAHWEH (56:1-9)
- II. THE PSALMIST'S ASSURANCE OF DELIVERANCE BY YAHWEH (56:10-13)

Psalm 57

Theme: Prayer to God for protection is followed by praise over anticipated protection.

- I. PRAYER FOR PROTECTION (57:1-6)
- II. PRAISE FOR ANTICIPATED PROTECTION (57:7-11)

Psalm 58

Theme: Judgment upon the wicked cannot be avoided.

- I. THE NECESSITY OF PUNISHMENT (58:1-5)
- II. THE EXECUTION OF PUNISHMENT (58:6-11)

Psalm 59

Theme: The righteous look to Yahweh for victory over their enemies.

- I. THE PRAYER FOR PROTECTION FROM ENEMIES (59:1-5)
- II. THE CONFIDENCE IN YAHWEH AGAINST ENEMIES (59:6-17)

Psalm 60

Theme: The Psalmist prays to God for help and is confident of an answer to his prayer.

- I. A LAMENT OVER PAST DISASTERS (60:1-4)
- II. AN APPEAL TO GOD TO HELP (60:5)
- III. A CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S ANSWER (60:6-8)
- IV. A TRIUMPHANT HOPE OF VICTORY (60:9-12)

Psalm 61

Theme: The Psalmist prays for himself and for the king.

- I. THE PSALMIST'S PRAYER FOR PERSONAL RESTORATION (61:1-4)
- II. THE PSALMIST'S PRAYER FOR ROYAL BLESSING (61:5-8)

Psalm 62

Theme: The security of trusting in God for deliverance is contrasted with the folly of reliance upon men.

- I. THE SECURITY OF RELIANCE UPON GOD (62:1-8)
- II. THE FOLLY OF RELIANCE UPON MEN (62:9-12)

Psalm 63

Theme: The heart that thirsts for God experiences satisfaction and victory.

- I. THE LONGING OF THE HEART FOR GOD (63:1-8)
- II. THE ANTICIPATED DESTRUCTION OF ENEMIES (63:9-11)

Psalm 64

Theme: The fate of the wicked is set down.

- I. THE TERRIBLENESS OF THE WICKED (64:1-6)
- II. THE JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED (64:7-9)
- III. THE REJOICING OF THE GODLY REMNANT (64:10)

Psalm 65

Theme: The Psalmist gives thanksgiving for God's dealings with the children of men.

- I. EXULTATION OF GOD FOR HIS FAVOR (65:1-5)
- II. EXULTATION OF GOD FOR HIS POWER (65:6-8)
- III. EXULTATION OF GOD FOR HIS HARVEST (65:9-13)

Psalm 66

Theme: The Psalmist praises God for His deliverances.

- I. A REHEARSAL OF GOD'S DELIVERANCES (66:1-7)
- II. AN ADORATION FOR GOD'S DELIVERANCES (66:8-20)

Psalm 67

Theme: Praise is given to God for His blessings.

- I. THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S BLESSINGS (67:1-2)
- II. THE PRAISE FOR GOD'S BLESSINGS (67:3-4)
- III. THE HOPE OF CONTINUED BLESSINGS (67:5-7)

Psalm 68

Theme: The exultation of Yahweh in some of His various works and roles.

- I. GOD AS LEADER (68:1-6)
- II. GOD AS DELIVERER (68:7-18)
- III. GOD AS SAVIOR (68:19-23)
- IV. GOD AS KING (68:24-27)
- V. GOD AS LORD (68:28-35)

Psalm 69

Theme: The Psalmist prays for deliverance and for retribution upon his enemies.

- I. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PSALMIST'S CONDITION (69:1-12)
- II. THE PETITION FOR YAHWEH'S DELIVERANCE (69:13-18)
- III. THE PETITION FOR YAHWEH'S VENGEANCE ON ENEMIES (69:19-28)
- IV. THE VOW OF PRAISE BY THE PSALMIST (69:29-36)

Psalm 70

Theme: Israel prays for the righteous.

- I. THE PLEA FOR HELP (70:1-3)
- II. THE PETITION FOR THE RIGHTEOUS (70:4)
- III. THE RENEWED PLEA FOR HELP (70:5)

Psalm 71

Theme: The assurance of an aged saint is given.

- I. HIS ASSURANCE IN GOD (71:1-13)
- II. HIS HOPE IN GOD (71:14-21)
- III. HIS VOW OF PRAISE (71:22-24)

Psalm 72

Theme: Messiah's kingdom has been taught.

- I. THE INVESTITURE OF THE KING (72:1)
- II. THE CHARACTER OF THE KINGDOM (72:2-7)
- III. THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE KINGDOM (72:8-20)

Psalm 73

Theme: The ultimate judgment of the wicked.

- I. THE QUESTION: CONCERNING THE WICKED PROSPERING AND THE GODLY SUFFERING (73:1-14)
- II. THE ANSWER: CONCERNING GOD'S HOLINESS AND ULTIMATE JUDGMENT (73:15-28)

Psalm 74

Theme: The people complain to Yahweh about their enemies and pray for His divine intervention.

- I. THE COMPLAINT OF THE PEOPLE (74:1-3)
- II. THE CHARACTER OF THE PROBLEM (74:4-9)
- III. THE PRAYER FOR DIVINE INTERVENTION (74:10-23)

Psalm 75

Theme: Divine intervention of Yahweh leads to a declaration of praise by the people.

- I. THE INVOCATION OF ISRAEL (75:1)
- II. THE RESPONSE OF GOD (75:2-8)
- III. THE DECLARATION OF PRAISE (75:9-10)

Psalm 76

Theme: The divine government of Messiah is set up.

- I. THE REIGN OF MESSIAH AND ITS DECLARATION (76:1-3)
- II. THE CHARACTER OF MESSIAH (76:4-10)
- III. THE CALL TO REVERENCE MESSIAH (76:11-12)

Psalm 77

Theme: The Psalmist changes from sorrow to victory as he recalls Yahweh's past deliverances.

- I. THE EXPRESSION OF THE PSALMIST'S SORROW (77:1-9)
- II. THE BASIS OF THE PSALMIST'S VICTORY OVER HIS SORROW (77:10-20)

Psalm 78

Theme: God is traced at work through the history of Israel.

- I. ISRAEL'S HISTORY PRIOR TO EGYPT (78:1-11)
- II. ISRAEL'S HISTORY IN THE WILDERNESS (78:12-39)
- III. ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT INTO CANAAN (78:40-55)
- IV. ISRAEL'S APOSTASY IN THE LAND (78:56-64)
- V. ISRAEL'S HISTORY IN DAVID (78:65-72)

Psalm 79

Theme: The Psalmist prays for judgment upon Jerusalem's enemies.

- I. THE LAMENT OF JERUSALEM (79:1-4)
- II. THE PETITION FOR JUDGMENT ON ENEMIES (79:5-12)
- III. THE VOW OF PRAISE (79:13)

Psalm 80

Theme: A cry for restoration of Israel is given to Yahweh who represents various figures in the Psalm.

- I. YAHWEH AS THE SHEPHERD (80:1-7)
- II. YAHWEH AS THE VINE (80:8-13)
- III. YAHWEH AS THE HUSBANDMAN (80:14-19)

Psalm 81

Theme: The Psalmist summons his readers to proper worship against the background of past restoration.

- I. THE SIMMONS TO THE FESTIVAL (81:1-5)
- II. THE BASIS FOR THE FESTIVAL (81:6-16)

Psalm 82

Theme: Yahweh is set forth as the just and sovereign judge.

- I. YAHWEH AS THE JUST JUDGE (82:1-7)
- II. YAHWEH AS THE SOVEREIGN JUDGE (82:8)

Psalm 83

Theme: The Psalmist prays for victory over Israel's enemies.

- I. THE PRESENTATION OF ENEMIES (83:1-8)
- II. THE PRAYER FOR THE DEFEAT OF ENEMIES (83:9-18)

Psalm 84

Theme: The Psalm presents the Joy of worship in the house of God.

- I. THE DESIRE FOR GOD'S SANCTUARY (84:1-4)
- II. THE JOURNEY TO GOD'S SANCTUARY (84:5-8)
- III. THE JOY OF WORSHIP IN GOD'S SANCTUARY (84:9-12)

Psalm 85

Theme: The promised blessings for the returned exiles are presented.

- I. THE PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE (85:1-7)
- II. THE PROMISE OF DIVINE BLESSINGS FOR THE PEOPLE (85:8-13)

Psalm 86

Theme: The Psalmist prays to God for help and confidently trusts God for the answer.

- I. THE PLEA TO GOD FOR HELP (86:1-5)
- II. THE CONFIDENT HOPE IN GOD FOR HELP (86:6-10)

Psalm 87

Theme: Zion is honored for her glory and blessedness.

- I. THE GLORIES OF ZION (87:1-6)
- II. THE REJOICING IN ZION (87:7)

Psalm 88

Theme: The Psalmist laments concerning darkness and despair.

- I. THE APPEAL AND COMPLAINT OF THE PSALMIST (88:1-2)
- II. THE URGENCY AND DESPERATION OF THE PSALMIST (88:9-18)

Psalm 89

Theme: The Psalm is a confirmation and exposition of the Davidic covenant.

- I. THE BASIS OF THE COVENANT (89:1-4)
- II. THE GLORY OF THE LORD IN RELATION TO THE COVENANT (89:5-18)
- III. THE WARNING AGAINST DISOBEDIENCE IN RELATION TO THE BLESSING OF THE COVENANT (89:19-37)
- IV. THE PRAYER OF A REMNANT FOR A RENEWAL OF THE BLESSINGS OF THE COVENANT (89:38-52)

Psalm 90

Theme: Man's fallen condition is presented along with a prayer for God's intervention.

- I. THE PRESENTATION OF MAN'S FRAILTY BECAUSE OF SIN (90:1-10)
- II. THE PETITION FOR GOD'S INTERVENTION FOR MAN (90:11-17)

Psalm 91

Theme: The man who depends on God is secure and protected.

- I. THE DECLARATION OF DEPENDENCE UPON GOD (91:1-2)
- II. THE RESULTS OF DEPENDENCE UPON GOD (91:3-16)

Psalm 92

Theme: The Psalmist gives both the delight and basis of praise.

I.THE DELIGHT OF PRAISE (92:1-7)

II.THE BASIS OF PRAISE (92:8-15)

Psalm 93

Theme: The majesty and holiness of the Lord's future reign are clearly seen.

I.THE MAJESTY OF THE LORD'S REIGN (93:1-4)

II.THE HOLINESS OF THE LORD'S REIGN (93:5)

Psalm 94

Theme: The Psalmist appeals for Yahweh's righteous judgment to be executed.

I.THE APPEAL FOR GOD'S RIGHTEOUS VENGEANCE TO BE EXECUTED (94:1-11)

II.THE CONFIDENCE THAT GOD'S RIGHTEOUS VENGEANCE WILL BE EXECUTED (94:12-23)

Psalm 95

Theme: The Psalmist invites thanksgiving to the Lord, along with an exhortation against disobedience.

I.AN INVITATION TO AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GOD'S MERCIES (95:1-7a)

II.AN EXHORTATION AGAINST DISOBEDIENCE (95:7b-11)

Psalm 96

Theme: The Psalm praises God's greatness and glory.

I.THE GREATNESS OF YAHWEH AS GOD (96:1-7)

II.THE GLORY OF YAHWEH AS THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE (96:8-13)

Psalm 97

Theme: The Psalmist declares the Lord's coming and reign and gives the results of both.

I.THE DECLARATION OF THE LORD'S COMING AND REIGN (97:1)

II.THE RESULTS OF THE LORD'S COMING AND REIGN (97:2-12)

Psalm 98

Theme: All nature is called to praise the Lord who is a Deliverer, King, and Judge.

I.THE LORD AS DELIVERER (98:1-3)

II.THE LORD AS KING (98:4-6)

III.THE LORD AS JUDGE (98:7-9)

Psalm 99

Theme: Praise is called for due to the sovereignty and holiness of God.

I.THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD (99:1-2)

II.THE HOLINESS OF GOD (99:3-9)

Psalm 100

Theme: The redemption and goodness of the Lord bring forth praise and worship.

- I. WORSHIP WROUGHT FROM THE LORD'S REDEMPTION (100:1-3)
- II. WORSHIP WROUGHT FROM THE LORD'S GOODNESS (100:4-5)

Psalm 101

Theme: The true king's character and rule is given.

- I. THE TRUE KING'S CHARACTER (101:1-3)
- II. THE TRUE KING'S RULE (101:4-8)

Psalm 102

Theme: The afflicted Psalmist pours out his lament before the Lord.

- I. THE SUFFERING OF THE PSALMIST (102:1-11)
- II. THE RESTORATION OF THE NATION (102:12-22)
- III. THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PSALMIST (102:23-28)

Psalm 103

Theme: The Psalm is a hymn of praise for God's salvation, love, and kingdom.

- I. PRAISE FOR THE LORD'S FULL SALVATION (103:1-7)
- II. PRAISE FOR THE LORD'S LOVE (103:8-18)
- III. PRAISE FOR THE LORD'S ESTABLISHED KINGDOM (103:19-22)

Psalm 104

Theme: Praise is given to God as the Creator.

- I. GOD'S FORMATION OF THE EARTH (104:1-9)
- II. GOD'S PROVISION FOR HIS CREATURES (104:10-18)
- III. GOD'S ORDERING OF THE HEAVENS (104:19-23)
- IV. GOD'S PROVIDENCE AND GLORY (104:24-35)

Psalm 105

Theme: The Psalmist traces Israel's history showing God's faithfulness to Israel.

- I. THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL FROM THE TIME OF THE PATRIARCHS THROUGH THE WILDERNESS (105:1-41)
- II. THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL IN THE HOLY LAND (105:42-45)

Psalm 106

Theme: The history of Israel's unfaithfulness is presented.

- I. ISRAEL'S UNFAITHFULNESS TO YAHWEH FROM EGYPT THROUGH THE WILDERNESS (106:1-33)
- II. ISRAEL'S UNFAITHFULNESS TO YAHWEH IN THE HOLY LAND (106:34-45)
- III. ISRAEL IN CAPTIVITY PRAYS FOR DELIVERANCE (106:46-48)

Psalm 107

Theme: Praise is given to the Lord for His restoration and deliverance of Israel.

- I.THE DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL BY THE LORD (107:1-32)
- II.THE PRAISE OF THE LORD FOR HIS DELIVERANCE (107:33-43)

Psalm 108

Theme: The Psalmist praises God for His mercy and truth and prays to God for deliverance from enemies.

- I.THE CALL TO PRAISE BECAUSE OF GOD'S MERCY AND TRUTH (108:1-5)
- II.THE CALL TO THE LORD FOR HELP IN DEFEATING ENEMIES (108:6-12)
- III.THE CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD'S HELP (108:13)

Psalm 109

Theme: The Psalmist prays for vengeance on God's adversaries and deliverance for believers.

- I.APPEAL FOR HELP (109:1-5)
- II.APPEAL FOR RETRIBUTION (109:6-20)
- III.APPEAL FOR DELIVERANCE (109:21-31)

Psalm 110

Theme: The Psalm presents the Lord as the King-Priest and Judge.

- I.MESSIAH'S EXALTATION (110:1)
- II.MESSIAH'S ETERNAL PRIESTHOOD (110:2-4)
- III.MESSIAH'S FUTURE JUDGMENT (110:5-7)

Psalm 111

Theme: The Psalmist praises God's works and goodness.

- I.THE GREATNESS OF GOD'S WORKS (111:1-4)
- II.THE TRUTH OF GOD'S GOODNESS (111:5-10)

Psalm 112

Theme: The Psalm praises the righteous, God-fearing man.

- I.THE BLESSEDNESS OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN (112:1-3)
- II.THE CHARACTER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN (112:4-6)
- III.THE ETERNITY OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN (112:7-10)

Psalm 113

Theme: The character and works of the Lord are praised.

- I.THE CHARACTER OF THE LORD IS PRAISED (113:1-6)
- II.THE WORKS OF THE LORD ARE PRAISED (113:7-9)

Psalm 114

Theme: Yahweh is praised concerning the Exodus and future coming.

- I.THE PAST HISTORY OF ISRAEL IN THE EXODUS (114:1-6)
- II.THE FUTURE MESSIAH'S COMING TO ISRAEL (114:7-8)

Psalm 115

Theme: The work of God is clearly set forth.

- I.THE PERSON OF MESSIAH (115:1-8)
 - A.His Character (115:1-3)
 - B.His Contrast With Idols (115:4-8)
- II.THE TRUST IN MESSIAH (115:9-18)

Psalm 116

Theme: The Psalmist praises God for deliverance.

- I.THE PSALMIST'S PRAISE FOR DELIVERANCE (116:1-11)
- II.THE PSALMIST'S EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE (116:12-19)

Psalm 117

Theme: The Psalm sets forth the universal praise of God in the kingdom.

- I.THE UNIVERSAL PRAISE IN THE KINGDOM (117:1)
- II.THE REASON FOR THE PRAISE (117:2)

Psalm 118

Theme: The deliverance of Yahweh forms a basis of praise.

- I.THE CALL TO PRAISE (113:1-4)
- II.THE DELIVERANCE OF GOD AS THE BASIS OF PRAISE (118:5-21)
- III.THE REJECTION AND LATER EXALTATION OF MESSIAH (118:22-29)

Psalm 119

Theme: Praise for God's Word is given.

- I.THE BLESSING OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD (119:1-8)
- II.THE CLEANSING OF GOD'S WORD (119:9-16)
- III.THE DELIGHT IN GOD'S WORD (119:17-24)
- IV.THE TRUTH AND GOODNESS OF GOD'S WORD (119:25-40)
- V.THE SALVATION FROM GOD'S WORD (119:41-48)
- VI.THE COMFORT OF GOD'S WORD (119:49-88)
- VII.THE ETERNALITY OF GOD'S WORD (119:89-96)
- VIII.THE WISDOM OF GOD'S WORD (119:97-104)
- IX.THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD (119:105-136)
- X.THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD'S WORD (119:137-160)
- XI.THE PEACE FOUND IN GOD'S WORD (119:161-168)
- XII.THE ILLUMINATION IN GOD'S WORD (119:169-176)

Psalm 120

Theme: The Psalm discusses the suffering of the Godly.

- I.A CRY FOR DELIVERANCE AND RETRIBUTION (120:1-4)
- II.A LAMENTATION FOR PEACE (120:5-7)

Psalm 121

Theme: The Lord is the source of help for the traveler.

- I. THE SOURCE OF HELP FOR THE TRAVELER (121:1-3)
- II. THE PROMISE OF PROTECTION FOR THE TRAVELER (121:4-8)

Psalm 122

Theme: Jerusalem is exalted and peace is prayed for her.

- I. THE EXALTATION OF JERUSALEM (122:1-5)
- II. THE PETITION FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM (122:6-9)

Psalm 123

Theme: The Psalmist looks to the Lord for mercy and petitions Him for it.

- I. THE ANTICIPATION OF THE LORD'S MERCY (123:1-2)
- II. THE PETITION FOR THE LORD'S MERCY (123:3-4)

Psalm 124

Theme: The Lord delivers His own and is praised for it.

- I. THE FACT OF GOD'S DELIVERANCE (124:1-5)
- II. THE PRAISE TO GOD FOR DELIVERANCE (124:6-8)

Psalm 125

Theme: The Psalmist discusses the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked.

- I. THE REWARD OF THE RIGHTEOUS (125:1-4)
- II. THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED (125:5)

Psalm 126

Theme: The Psalmist describes the joy of past favors and then petitions God for final restoration.

- I. THE JOY OF PAST FAVORS (126:1-3).
- II. THE PRAYER FOR FINAL RESTORATION (126:4-6)

Psalm 127

Theme: Children are God's heritage to a faithful man.

- I. THE DEPENDENCE OF A FAITHFUL MAN ON GOD (127:1-2)
- II. THE HERITAGE OF A FAITHFUL MAN (127:3-5)

Psalm 128

Theme: The blessings of the God-fearing man.

- I. THE BLESSING OF CHILDREN FOR THE GOD-FEARING MAN (128:1-3)
- II. THE BLESSING OF LONGEVITY FOR THE GOD-FEARING MAN (128:4-6)

Psalm 129

Theme: Suffering Israel pleads to the Lord for present victory over her enemies.

- I. THE PAST PROTECTION OF GOD (129:1-4)
- II. THE PRESENT PETITION FOR VICTORY (129:5-8)

Psalm 130

Theme: The Psalmist waits for Yahweh's forgiveness and exalts Him for His mercy.

I.EXPECTATION OF THE LORD'S FORGIVENESS (130:1-7)

II.EXALTATION OF THE LORD'S MERCY (130:8)

Psalm 131

Theme: The subjected and humble Psalmist gives a prayer for Israel's hope.

I.THE SUBMISSION OF THE PSALMIST (131:1-2)

II.THE DESIRE FOR ISRAEL (131:3)

Psalm 132

Theme: The Davidic covenant will be realized in Messiah at the second advent.

I.THE CONCERN OF DAVID FOR GOD'S HOUSE (132:1-10)

II.THE COVENANT WITH DAVID (132:11-12)

III.THE COMPLETION OF THE COVENANT BY MESSIAH (132:13-18)

Psalm 133

Theme: The blessedness of brotherly unity is stated and illustrated.

I.THE BLESSING OF UNITY STATED (133:1)

II.THE BLESSING OF UNITY ILLUSTRATED (133:2-3)

Psalm 134

Theme: The priests praise the Lord and bless the congregation.

I.THE PRAISE OF THE PRIESTS (134:1)

II.THE BLESSING OF THE CONGREGATION (134:2-3)

Psalm 135

Theme: Yahweh is praised for His greatness over idols.

I.THE CALL TO PRAISE (135:1-4)

II.THE BASIS OF PRAISE (135:5-18)

A.The Greatness of Yahweh (135:5-14)

B.The Impotency of Idols (135:15-18)

III.THE RENEWED CALL TO PRAISE (135:19-21)

Psalm 136

Theme: The Lord's enduring mercy to Israel is set forth.

I.THE MERCY OF THE LORD IN CREATION (136:1-9)

II.THE MERCY OF THE LORD IN ISRAEL'S REDEMPTION (136:10-15)

III.THE" MERCY OF THE LORD IN THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS (136:16)

IV.THE MERCY OF THE LORD IN THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN (136:17-22)

V.THE SUMMATION OF GOD'S MERCY (136:23-26)

Psalm 137

Theme: The song of the captives in remembering Jerusalem.

- I.THE SORROW OF THE EXILED IN REMEMBERING JERUSALEM (137:1-3)
- II.THE LOVE OF THE EXILED FOR JERUSALEM (137:4-9)
 - A.Love Stated (137:4-6)
 - B.Love Vindicated (137:7-9)

Psalm 138

Theme: Praise is given for answered prayer along with the assurances of Yahweh's future help.

- I.THE PRAISE FOR ANSWERED PRAYER (138:1-6)
- II.THE ASSURANCE OF FUTURE HELP (138:7-8)

Psalm 139

Theme: The Lord is seen in His attributes and greatness.

- I.THE OMNISCIENCE OF THE LORD (139:1-6)
- II.THE OMNIPRESENCE OF THE LORD (139:7-12)
- III.THE GREATNESS OF THE LORD (139:13-18)
- IV.THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LORD (139:19-24)

Psalm 140

Theme: The Psalmist appeals to the Lord for help and trusts in Him for it.

- I.THE APPEAL TO THE LORD FOR HELP (140:1-11)
- II.THE CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD FOR HELP (140:12-13)

Psalm 141

Theme: The Psalmist prays for strength and deliverance from sinners.

- I.THE PETITION OF THE PSALMIST FOR STRENGTH AND DELIVERANCE FROM SINNERS (141:1-7)
- II.THE PLACE OF THE PSALMIST'S TRUST (141:8-10)

Psalm 142

Theme: The Psalmist prays for deliverance and trusts the Lord for it.

- I.THE PRAYER OF THE PSALMIST FOR DELIVERANCE (142:1-7a)
- II.THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PSALMIST IN DELIVERANCE (142:7b)

Psalm 143

Theme: The Psalmist prays for God's help and action against his enemies.

- I.THE PRAYER FOR HELP (143:1-6)
- II.THE PLEA FOR ACTION (143:7-12)

Psalm 144

Theme: A statement of trust in Yahweh leads to petition for present deliverance.

- I.THE STATEMENT OF TRUST IN YAHWEH (144:1-4)
- II.THE PETITION FOR PRESENT DELIVERANCE FROM YAHWEH (144:5-8)
- III.THE VOW OF FUTURE PRAISE OF YAHWEH (144:9-15)

Psalm 145

Theme: Praise is given to Yahweh for His greatness.

- I. PRAISE OF YAHWEH'S GREATNESS AND GOODNESS (145:1-7)
- II. PRAISE OF YAHWEH'S GRACE (145:8-9)
- III. PRAISE OF YAHWEH'S KINGDOM (145:10-13)
- IV. PRAISE OF YAHWEH'S CARE FOR HIS OWN (145:14-21)

Psalm 146

Theme: The Psalmist praises the power of God over against the powerlessness of man.

- I. THE DECLARATION OF PRAISE (146:1-2)
- II. THE IMPOTENCY OF MAN (146:3-4)
- III. THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD (146:5-10)

Psalm 147

Theme: The Lord is praised for His goodness, providence over nature, and care for Jerusalem.

- I. PRAISE FOR THE LORD'S GOODNESS (147:1-6)
- II. PRAISE FOR THE LORD'S PROVIDENCE OVER NATURE (147:7-11)
- III. PRAISE FOR THE LORD'S CARE FOR JERUSALEM (147:12-20)

Psalm 148

Theme: Both heaven and earth praise God.

- I. THE PRAISE OF GOD FROM HEAVEN (148:1-6)
- II. THE PRAISE OF GOD FROM EARTH (148:7-12)

Psalm 149

Theme: God is praised by the children of Zion for redemption.

- I. THE DECLARATION OF PRAISE TO THE LORD (149:1-3)
- II. THE REASON OF PRAISE TO THE LORD (149:4)
- III. THE RENEWED DECLARATION OF PRAISE TO THE LORD (149:5-9)

Psalm 150

Theme: The summation of God's praise is given.

- I. THE PLACE OF GOD'S PRAISE (150:1)
- II. THE REASON FOR GOD'S PRAISE (150:2)
- III. THE INSTRUMENTS IN GOD'S PRAISE (150:3-5)
- IV. THE WHOLE WORLD CALLED TO GOD'S PRAISE (150:6)

Endnotes

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- 1 James Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 60-98. 42
- 2 *Ibid.*, 60. 42
- 3 *Ibid.*, 104-106. 43
- 4 *Ibid.*, 68. 53
- 5 *Ibid.*, 101. 71
- 6 *Ibid.*, 288. 126
- 7 *Ibid.*, 421-424. 228
- 8 *Ibid.*, 445-463. 247
- 9 Edward Perronet, "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name," *Favorite Hymns of Praise*, 88. 274

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Dr. Staats has been a professor and pastor for many years, serving at various schools and in numerous pastorates.

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- ¹ James Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 60-98. 42
- ² *Ibid.*, 60. 42
- ³ *Ibid.*, 104-106. 43
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 68. 53
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 101. 71
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 288. 126
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 421-424. 228
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 445-463. 247
- ⁹ Edward Perronet, "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name," *Favorite Hymns of Praise*, 88. 274