SURVEYING THE OLD TESTAMENT

DR. PAUL BENWARE
TYNDALE SEMINARY
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OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Before the books of the Old Testament are opened and analyzed, it is important that the big picture of the Bible is seen and understood. In order to do this it is essential to view:

(1) God's original plan
(2) The whole of the Old Testament scriptures.
(3) God's covenant relationship with Abraham and his descendants

+ **IN THE BEGINNING - GOD'S ORIGINAL PLAN**

(1) THE PRIVILEGE OF MAN

(2) THE PRIORITY OF MAN

(3) THE PLACE FOR MAN

+ **THE DAMAGING OF GOD'S ORIGINAL PLAN**

(1) THE DECISION BY MAN

(2) THE DECISION BY GOD

+ **THE RESTORING OF GOD'S ORIGINAL PLAN**

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<tr>
<th>THE ORIGINAL PURPOSES</th>
<th>THE RESTORED PURPOSES</th>
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<td>11) MAN IN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<td>(2) MAN ESTABLISHED AS RULER</td>
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<td>(3) MAN PLACED INTO PARADISE</td>
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AN OVERVIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament scriptures are made up of 39 books. It is important to approach the Old Testament in a way that these 39 books can be seen in relationship to one another. The "story line" of the O.T. is found in 11 books, which we refer to as the FOUNDATIONAL BOOKS. They form the chronological and historical base of the Old Testament. The other 28 books are related in one way or another to these eleven books. These 28 books fall into three categories:

(1)

(2)

(3)

THE 11 FOUNDATIONAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOUNDATIONAL BOOKS</th>
<th>KEY WORD</th>
<th>YEARS COVERED</th>
<th>KEY DATES</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. GENESIS</td>
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<td>2. EXODUS</td>
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<td>3. NUMBERS</td>
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<td>4. JOSHUA</td>
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<td>5. JUDGES</td>
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<td>6. 1 SAMUEL</td>
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<td>7.2 SAMUEL</td>
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Another significant issue in understanding the whole Old Testament is the covenant that God made with Abraham. The Abrahamic Covenant along with its three "sub-covenants" are the glue that holds the Old Testament together. In fact, it is this covenant that really binds all of the Bible together—both Old and New Testaments. Again and again in historical events, in the Law and in the messages of the poets and prophets, God’s people Israel are reminded of the commitments and covenant promises made by God. This covenant not only draws the entire Bible together but is the basis for understanding Bible prophecy.

When the chronological framework is seen and the unifying theme is observed, the Old Testament scriptures do make sense. The fragmentation is gone and the unity, pattern and progression of the Old Testament become clearer and clearer.
GOD'S COVENANTS WITH ISRAEL

OLD TESTAMENT

NEW TESTAMENT

FORMATION OF ISRAEL
THEOCRACY
MONARCHY
RESTORATION
CHURCH
KINGDOM

ADAM
NOAH
Patriarchs
Moses
Joshua

Priests
Judges
Kings

Ezra
Neh.

PROPHETS

EPHREAS

NEW TESTAMENT

KINGDOM
GOD’S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM


THE BASIC PROVISIONS OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT:
(1) PERSONAL BLESSING TO THE MAN ABRAHAM

(2) BLESSINGS FOR ABRAHAM’S DESCENDANTS

(3) UNIVERSAL BLESSINGS

THE NATURE OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT
(1) IT IS EVERLASTING
*Genesis 13:15; 17:7, 13, 19; 1 Chronicles 16:16-17; Psalm 105:9-10

(2) IT IS UNCONDITIONAL

(3) IT IS RATIFIED (Genesis 15 and Galatians 3)

THE "SUB-COVENANTS" AND THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT
(1) THE PALESTINIAN (LAND) COVENANT

(2) THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

(3) THE NEW COVENANT
I. THE BOOKS OF HEBREW POETRY

Most of Israel's poetry was written during the time of the Monarchy period. Much of it was written during the United Monarchy time which was known as the "golden age of literature" in Israel. This was a time of great peace and prosperity that provided the needed time for such writing. According to 1 Kings 4, Solomon alone wrote over 3,000 proverbs and over 1,000 songs. Although David and Solomon were the main writers during this period, there were a number of others who contributed as well. There is poetry found throughout the books of the Old Testament, but these six books are the primary location of Old Testament poetry.

The arrangement of these six books in our Bibles was evidently dictated by chronological considerations. The Book of Job was placed first since it is believed that the man Job lived in the time of the Patriarchs. This is followed by the Psalms (with David as the primary author), then the writings of Solomon and finally the Book of Lamentations written by the prophet Jeremiah some 400 years after David and Solomon. The order and arrangement of these books is different in different Bibles. Our English Bibles follow the order found in the Latin Vulgate. Order and arrangement is the product of various editors in the history of the transmission of the text and has nothing to do with the inspiration of these books. God inspired these six books. Men wrote under the direction of the Holy Spirit and yet He used their experiences and unique ways of expressing themselves. These books are part of the sacred text which has been given to reveal God and His purposes and to provide all that believers need for life and godliness.

(A) THE BOOK OF JOB

(B) THE PSALMS

(C) THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

(D) THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

(E) THE SONG OF SOLOMON

(F) THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH
IL THE TYPES OF HEBREW POETRY

There are different ways of categorizing Hebrew poetry. Generally the five types that are given here are the main kinds. A book might reflect several of these types within its pages.

(A) LYRIC
These are poems whose truths were designed to be accompanied by musical instruments.

(B) DIDACTIC
Some poetry was written to teach important truths. The books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes would fit into this category.

(C) PROPHETIC
These are poems whose focus is on what God will do in the future.

(D) ELEGAIC
These are dirge-like poems. The mournful Book of Lamentations is an example.

(E) DRAMATIC
Truth is communicated through plays or stories. The Song of Solomon and Job would be considered dramatic poems.

III. THE STRUCTURE OF HEBREW POETRY

Hebrew poetry possesses many devices common to other poetry, but unlike poetry that many of us are familiar with Hebrew poetry is not based on rhyme but on parallelism. In the 1700s Bishop Robert Lowth demonstrated that parallelism is the primary feature of Hebrew poetry and he identified three main types of parallelism.

(A) SYNONYMOUS PARALLELISM

(B) ANTITHETIC PARALLELISM

(C) SYNTHETIC PARALLELISM

***OTHER FEATURES OF HEBREW POETRY
IN ANCIENT ISRAEL THERE APPEARED A GROUP OF MEN, EXTENDING OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL CENTURIES, WHO RECEIVED MESSAGES FROM GOD. THESE MEN, KNOWN AS PROPHETS, RECEIVED AND WROTE DOWN THESE MESSAGES. THEY HAD A PROFOUND EFFECT ON THE NATIONAL LIFE OF ISRAEL. HOWEVER, ALL TOO OFTEN THEIR MESSAGES WERE NOT WELL RECEIVED BY THE LEADERS AND THE PEOPLE OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL. BUT THESE PROPHETS WERE VITAL TO THE WELL BEING OF THE NATION AND TO GOD’S INTENDED PURPOSES FOR THE NATION OF ISRAEL.

THE THREE PRIMARY OFFICES IN ISRAEL

GOD ESTABLISHED A NUMBER OF OFFICES/POSITIONS IN ISRAEL THAT WERE DESIGNED TO GIVE STABILITY AND DIRECTION TO HIS PEOPLE. THREE OF THOSE OFFICES WERE OF PRIMARY SIGNIFICANCE.

(1) PRIEST (Numbers 3 and 4)

(2) KING (2 Samuel 7)

(3) PROPHET (Jeremiah 7:25 and Deuteronomy 8:9-22)

THE HEBREW WORDS FOR "PROPHET"

(1) "Nabhr (Deut. 18:18; Ezo. 4:15-16; 7:1; Jer. 1:17; 15:19; 1 Kings 8:15

(2) "Ro'eh"/"Hozeh" (1 Sam. 9:9; Isa. 30:9-10)

THE ROLE OF THE PROPHET IN ISRAEL

[1]

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IN ISRAEL THERE DID ARISE THOSE WHO WERE FALSE PROPHETS. OFTEN THEY CLAIMED TO HAVE RECEIVED REVELATION FROM THE LORD (e.g. Jeremiah 23), BUT IN FACT THEIR MESSAGES CAME FROM OTHER SOURCES. SOMETIMES TWO MEN WOULD DECLARE THINGS THAT WERE OPPOSITES AND YET BOTH SAID THAT THE LORD GAVE THEM THEIR MESSAGE. THE TRUE PROPHET, OF COURSE, RECEIVED HIS MESSAGE FROM THE LORD WHILE THE FALSE PROPHET RECEIVED HIS MESSAGE FROM SATAN OR PERHAPS SIMPLY FROM HUMAN ORIGINS (OR MAYBE BOTH). BUT HOW COULD PEOPLE TELL THE TRUE FROM THE FALSE? THERE WERE SOME GUIDELINES THAT GOD GAVE TO ISRAEL TO ASSIST THEM IN DETERMINING THE TRUE PROPHET.

THE "MINOR" PROPHETS AND THE "MAJOR" PROPHETS

(1) **Volume of the book**

(2) **Scope of the book**