**What You Should Know from OT5- Historical Books**

Lakeside Institute of Theology

1. **Why should Christians study the Old Testament?**
   1. It is the “Scriptures” referred to by Jesus and the Apostles.
   2. The Old Testament is part of God’s Inspired revelation to us.
   3. The Old Testament is foundational to our understanding.
   4. The Old Testament is practical.
   5. The Old Testament points to Jesus Christ.
2. **What are the sections in the traditional Jewish structure of the**

**Hebrew Bible, and how many books are in each?**

* 1. The Law, or Pentateuch (*Torah*) – 5 Books.
  2. The Prophets (*Nevi’im*) – 8 Books.
  3. The Writings (*Ketuvim*) – 11 Books.

1. **What are the sections in the traditional Christian structure of the Old**

**Testament, and how many books are in each?**

* 1. The Law, or Pentateuch – 5 Books: Genesis to Deuteronomy.
  2. The Historical Books – 12 Books: Joshua to Esther.
  3. The Wisdom Books – 5 Books: Job to Song of Songs.
  4. The Prophesy Books – 17 Books: Isaiah thru Malachi.

1. **In terms of content, what is the difference between the 39 books of the**

**English Old Testament and the 24 Book of the Hebrew Bible?**

* 1. None – it is the same content, just broken up differently and in a different order.

1. **What five major themes occur in the OId Testament historical books?”**
   1. God’s Sovereignty
   2. God’s Presence
   3. God’s Promises
   4. God’s Kingdom
   5. God’s Covenant
2. **Why is it difficult to talk about the Old Testament as “history?”**
   1. While much of the Old Testament tells us about events that occurred in the distant past, and these records are very valuable, we must remember that the ancient Hebrews had a different way of looking at how history was written. Our modern idea of history – a sequential, systematic and usually objective record of events – was invented by Greek historian Herodotus in the 5th Century BC – which means almost all the Old Testament was written *before* the invention of what we think of as “history.”
3. **What are the two major events described in the Book of Joshua?**
   1. The entry and conquest of the Promised Land.
   2. The division of the Land among the tribes of Israel.
4. **Why were Joshua and Caleb the only adult men from the previous generation who were allowed to enter the Promised Land?**
   1. Besides Moses, only Joshua and Caleb believed God would give them victory in taking over the Promised Land – all other’s doubted. As a result of this lack of faith, the Israelites wandered in the desert for forty years – until all adult males that had left Egypt had died, except for Joshua and Caleb.
5. **What is the theme and purpose of the Book of Joshua?**
   1. To show that God is faithful to keep his covenant promises – as in the provision of the Promised Land.
6. **What miraculous event accompanied the crossing of the Israelites into**

**the Promised Land, and what was its significance?**

* 1. The waters of the River Jordan were rolled back, allowing the Israelites to cross on dry land. This was reminiscent of the parting of the Red Sea that allowed Moses and the Israelites to flee Egypt, and established that God intended Joshua to inherit leadership from Moses.

1. **How was the fortified city of Jericho conquered?**
   1. The army of Israel, carrying the Ark of the Covenant, walked around Jericho once per day for six days, then on the seventh day they walked around the city seven times, blew their trumpets and shouted and the Lord caused the walls of Jericho to fall down.
2. **When it came to dividing up the Promised Land among the tribes of**

**Israel, what was different about the tribe of Levi?**

* 1. The Levites had been set aside as priests, and so they were to focus on religious service and were not given a share of the land like the other tribes. Instead they received cities in which to live, and just enough pastureland for their animals.

1. **Which tribes were given permission to settle on the east side of the**

**Jordan River (the “Transjordan”), and what was the condition attached**

**to letting them settle there?**

* 1. The tribes of Rueben, Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh were allowed to settle east of the Jordan River – on the condition that they first helped the other tribes conquer the land of Canaan.

1. **What is the theme and purpose of the Book of Judges?**
   1. To clearly demonstrate Israel’s need for God, and the consequences of disobedience.
2. **Why did Israel run into trouble and need the help of judges?**
   1. They failed to complete the job of clearing the Canaanite tribes out of the Promised Land, so they were continually harassed by these tribes.
   2. They allowed themselves to be influenced by the Canaanites, especially into worshipping the Canaanite gods.
3. **Generally speaking, what were the roles and responsibilities of the “judges” in the Book of Judges?**
   1. Military leaders, heroes and champions to defeat Israel’s foes
   2. Political and (in some cases) judicial leaders
   3. God’s servants in bring the people back to obedience
4. **Who were the Judges in the Book of Judges?**
   1. Othniel
   2. Ehud
   3. Shamgar
   4. Deborah
   5. Gideon
   6. Tola
   7. Jair
   8. Jephthah
   9. Ibzan
   10. Elon
   11. Abdon
   12. Samson
5. **Who wrote the Book of Judges?**
   1. We don’t know for certain, though traditionally the author was believed to be the prophet Samuel.

1. **What is the theme and purpose of the Book of Ruth?**
   1. To show, through the story of a foreign woman (Ruth), the kind of faithfulness, godliness, loyalty and love that God desires for us.
2. **What was unusual about the character Ruth in the Book of Ruth?**
   1. She was not Jewish, but instead was from Moab, but she committed herself completely to her Jewish relatives and religion after marrying into a Jewish family.
3. **What was the eventual historical importance of Ruth?** 
   1. She gave birth to Obed, who was the grandfather of King David and an ancestor of Jesus.
4. **What is the theme and purpose of 1 & 2 Samuel?**
   1. The transition from a theocracy (direct rule by God) to a human monarchy, including the story of the first king (Saul) and the ascent and rule of King David – the most popular king and one of the most important figures in Jewish history.
5. **What was Samuel’s role with the people of Israel, and what was his**

**involvement in establishing the united monarchy over Israel?**

* 1. He was the last of the Judges and the first of the major prophets to Israel, bridging the period between the judges and the united monarchy. God used him to anoint and establish both Saul and David as kings over Israel.

1. **Why did God remove Saul as the first king of the united nation of**

**Israel?**

* 1. For disobedience – first in presuming to offer a sacrifice (which only the prophets or priests were allowed to do), then in not obeying God’s instructions to destroy everyone and everything captured in the battle against the Amalekites. (He also tried to blame his failings on other people.)

1. **What happened to the Philistines after they captured the Ark of the**

**Covenant from Israel, and what did they do about it?**

* 1. The Philistines took the Ark to Ashdod and placed it in the temple of their god, Dagon, only to have the image of Dagon fall over and then be broken.
  2. The Philistines of Ashdod, and later of Gath, were afflicted with tumors and/or died, so they decided to load the Ark on a wagon and send it back to the Israelites, along with tribute in the shape of five gold tumors and five gold rats.

1. **What characteristic of 2 Samuel adds a strong sense of honesty and**

**reliability to the story of King David and his rule in Israel?**

* 1. Even though David was the most popular king and one of the most important figures in Jewish history, his story is told with complete honesty – including David’s successes, failures, faithfulness, sin and repentance.

1. **Why is David considered the “Great King” in Israel’s history?**
   1. David conquered the nations and peoples surrounding Israel, enlarging the nation and bringing it peace and stability.
   2. David conquered Jerusalem from the Jebusites and established it as the capital city and the home of the Ark of the Covenant and the eventual site of God’s Temple (which was built later, under David’s son, Solomon).
   3. David, despite his faults and the sin related to Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite, was a pious man who established and led the people in right worship of the one true God of Israel.
2. **Who wrote the Books of 1 & 2 Kings?**
   1. We don’t know for certain, though traditionally the author was believed to be the prophet Jeremiah.
3. **What is the theme and purpose of the 1 & 2 Kings?**
   1. The ascent and reign of David’s son, King Solomon, who brought Israel to the peak of its national power & influence, built the Temple and palace; but then failed, leading to the kingdom being divided. Solomon’s story showed how obedience to God led to greatness, while disobedience led to righteous discipline.
4. **When God asked Solomon what gift he might desire after becoming**

**king, what did Solomon answer, and what then was God’s response?**

* 1. Solomon asked for wisdom to rule God’s people the Israelites.
  2. Pleased with Solomon’s answer (because he had not asked for himself, but for the good of the people he ruled), God agreed to grant his request for wisdom AND to give him wealth, honor and long life, which he had NOT asked for.

1. **How is it that Solomon failed God, leading to the dividing of the nation**

**of Israel into two kingdoms?**

* 1. Solomon married many foreign women (700 wives and 300 concubines), whom he allowed to continue worshipping their own foreign gods. Eventually Solomon even built altars to some of these other gods, giving official encouragement to their pagan worship.

1. **Who was Solomon’s heir, and why did the people of the north decide**

**not to follow him?**

* 1. Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, was asked by the northern tribes of Israel to lighten their burden of labor and taxation – which apparently had been quite harsh under Solomon. Instead of listening to his older counselors and agreeing to the request, Rehoboam accepted the counsel of his younger friends and threatened the people with even harsher treatment. This led to the 10 northern tribes deciding to secede and follow Jeroboam as their king.

1. **What were the two kingdoms that resulted from the division of the**

**nation of Israel?**

* 1. The Kingdom of Israel in the North, with its capital in Samaria.
  2. The Kingdom of Judah in the South, with its capital in Jerusalem.

1. **What is the theme and purpose of the 1 & 2 Chronicles?**
   1. First Chronicles focuses on the lineage of Israelites and David – including the genealogies of the Patriarchs, the Twelve Tribes of Israel, the priests, Levites and Saul; followed by a retelling of the events of David’s kingship.
   2. Second Chronicles recounts the history of Solomon’s reign, as well as that of the kings of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, through to the Babylonia Captivity and the eventual proclamation by Cyrus the Great of Persia that allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem.
2. **Who was it that conquered and destroyed the Northern Kingdom of**

**Israel, and when?**

* 1. The Assyrian Empire, 722 BC.

1. **What is meant by the “Lost Tribes of Israel?”**
   1. When the Assyrian Empire conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 BC, the Jews of the ten northern tribes were deported or forcibly assimilated, never again to regain their Jewish identity. These ten tribes (all except Judah and Benjamin) became known as the “Lost Tribes of Israel.”
2. **What is the theme and purpose of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah?**
   1. Ezra and Nehemiah are post-exilic books, telling of the restoration of the remnant of God’s people by the return of Jews to Jerusalem – under Zerubbabel to rebuild the Temple, under Ezra to reestablish the Jewish Law, and later under Nehemiah to rebuild the city walls.
3. **For what purpose did Ezra and the exile families with him return to**

**Jerusalem?**

* 1. To reinstitute the teaching of Torah (the Law of God) to the people in Jerusalem, and to correct violations – especially intermarriage with pagan peoples.

1. **What are the “Five Megillot,” and which of the OT historical books are**

**included in them?**

* 1. The “Five Megillot” or “Five Scrolls” are five books of the Old Testament that are read publically during specific Jewish religious holiday celebrations throughout the year.
  2. The historical books that are counted among the Five Scrolls are the ***Book of Ruth*** (read during the Feast of Weeks) and the ***Book of Esther*** (read during the celebration of *Purim*).
  3. The other Megillot are the *Song of Songs* (read at Passover Sabbath), *Lamentations* (Ninth of Av, recognizing destruction of the Temple), and *Ecclesiastes* (Feast of Tabernacles).

1. **What major empires were dominant at various times during the period**

**recorded in the Old Testament historical books?**

* 1. Assyrian, 934-609 BC
  2. Babylonian, 626-539 BC
  3. Persian, 538-333 BC

1. **Who was it that conquered and destroyed the Southern Kingdom of**

**Judah, and when?**

* 1. The Babylonian Empire, between 605 and 586 BC.

1. **How many times were groups of Hebrew people deported by the**

**Babylonians, and what was noteworthy about each?**

* 1. There were THREE deportations:
     1. 605 BC – 1st Deportation, when Nebuchadnezzar first conquers Judah and takes captives back to Babylon – including young nobleman Daniel and his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (who became Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego), to make them officials in his court.
     2. 597 BC – 2nd Deportation, which included the Prophet Ezekiel.
     3. 586 BC – 3rd deportation, when the Temple and City of Jerusalem are3 destroyed.

1. **Why was the Babylonian Exile so traumatic to the Jews?** 
   1. They were left wondering if God still loved them and if they were still His special people.
   2. They were unsure how to be the people of God when the things that had most represented their election as God’s people – the Promised Land and the Temple – had been taken away or destroyed.
   3. They did not know how to worship without a Temple.
   4. They were fearful of being assimilated and losing their uniqueness as a people – as had happened to the tribes in the Northern Kingdom of Israel when Assyrian had conquered them 136 years earlier.
2. **Who defeated the Babylonian Empire?**
   1. The Persian Empire, under King Cyrus the Great.
3. **What did King Cyrus of Persia do for the Jews almost immediately?**
   1. He gave permission for the Jews to return to Jerusalem.
4. **What is the theme and purpose of the Esther?**
   1. To tell a story of how the Jewish people, even while in exile in a foreign land (Persia), still were protected and preserved by God from threat of annihilation.
5. **Where does the Book of Esther take place?**
   1. In the city of Susa, the capital of the Persian Empire.
6. **Who are the major characters in the Book of Esther?**
   1. Queen Esther, the Jewish queen of Persia.
   2. Mordecai, Esther’s cousin and guardian
   3. Haman the Agagite (an Amalekite), who conspired to have all Jews killed
   4. King Ahasuerus, (also called King Xerxes I)
7. **What happened to Haman the Agagite?**
   1. After his plot to destroy the Jews was uncovered and he was suspected of assaulting Queen Esther, Haman was hanged (or impaled) on the gallows he had built for the purpose of hanging Esther’s cousin, Mordecai.

1. **Why was the Book of Esther almost not included in the Canon of Scripture?**
   1. Because it never mentions God.