

INTRODUCTION : WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The Bible is a collection of books. This means it has many writers, many literature types and spans a long period of time. The Bible is also divided into two parts called the Old and New Testament. In this series we are going to have an overview of the Old Testament. To do this, we are going to learn the main stories in the Old Testament, learn the meaning and importance of these stories and find out what Jesus or the New Testament say about these stories.

WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The Old Testament (OT) tells us the story of God and Israel before Jesus. The OT can be divided into 3 main parts. The OT is commonly known as the Law of Moses, The Prophets and the Songs. This is what Jesus called the OT in Luke 24:44. The Law of Moses is made up of the first five books of the Bible. The Songs are books like Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Job, Lamentations, Songs of Songs and Proverbs. The remaining books are the Prophets.

HOW TO READ THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The Old Testament has all kinds of literature, for example historical stories, list of names (genealogies), poetry, songs, proverbs, prophecies, commands, symbolic and so on. Because of this, the way we read and understand the OT is by knowing the style in which it was written. So, for example we don't read poetry or songs as stories. So when a song in the OT says, "the hills and the trees clap for joy", it does not mean it literally, instead it means that the creation shows God's greatness. Not knowing the type or the reason why the writer wrote the book only makes us misunderstand the meaning of the book. There will be lots of reading in these bible studies, this is to help familiarise us with the stories. So, don't worry if a lot of the sessions involved quite a bit of reading.

WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT ABOUT?

In Luke 24:26-27 Jesus says that the Old Testament stories are about Him. So, in this series we will look at exactly what the Old Testament tells us about Jesus. And also look at what this means for us.

OT OVERVIEW SERIES.

In this series we will:

1. Learn the key stories in the Old Testament.
2. Understand what these keys stories teach us about Jesus
3. Understand the theme in these stories.
4. Remembering the overview by using stories or pictures.

THE 10 BIBLE STUDIES FOR THE OT OVERVIEW SERIES ARE:

1. Creation and the Fall of humanity
2. The spread of sin and creation reboot (Flood)
3. Abraham and the Promise.
4. Moses and the Exodus.
5. David and the Kings.
6. Solomon and the Temple of God.
7. The Prophets.
8. The Exile.
9. The Writings.
10. The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

LEADER'S NOTES

WHAT'S THE MAIN POINT OF THE OT?

What's the main point of the OT?

In Luke 24:44 Jesus shows his disciples how the OT scriptures point to Him and anticipates his death and resurrection. The life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus is the greatest event in history. The OT builds up that anticipation by highlighting the unresolved problem of sin and its incompatibility with God's holiness. In other words how can God who is holy be with his sinful creatures without having to kill them because of their sin. How does God resolve the problems created by sin? So in the OT God gives us glimpses or models that help us understand how Christ eventually deals with the problem of sin. In a nutshell, here is the main point of the OT and how each study contributes to that main point.

Study 1 : Creation and the Fall of humanity.

Main point: God's creation started as good. The presence of evil is introduced but not explained. Satan leads God's creatures to sin and results in God's punishment. Sin creates a big gap between God and his creatures and the rest of the story shows us how God relates to his creatures despite this huge gap. There is a hint of a solution in Chapter 3:14-15 in the form of a human being.

Study 2. The spread of sin and creation reboot.

Main Point: The story continues and we see the spread of sin. It permeates and infects all of God's creatures. God reboots the system and chooses Noah and his family. The flood was meant to be a fresh start but creation is still infected by sin and once again it spreads.

Study 3. Abraham and the Promise.

Main Point: God chooses Abraham, a weak instrument to show his ongoing commitment to his sinful creatures. God's promise to Abraham will be the way God solves the problem created by sin and be his master plan to demonstrate His love and holiness. Jesus' future role as Saviour is taking shape.

Study 4. Moses and Exodus.

Main Point. This is a very significant episode. We are formerly introduced to the role of Prophet where Moses mediates God's words to his people. God no longer speaks to His people directly but only through his chosen prophet. God's promise is only partially fulfilled. The Exodus introduces the idea of rescue, substitution, retribution, blood sacrifice which is what Jesus achieves in his death and resurrection.

Study 5. David and the Kings.

Main Point. Up until now God is Israel's King with prophets as his spokesperson. God's promises to Abraham is being fulfilled, they are a nation and live in the promised land. Sin causes people to reject God as King and they demand for a human king. It introduces the idea of kingship and the idea of Messiah (saviour). As we see all human kings are tainted with sin and lead people to idolatry but God promises the perfect King to rule over them.

Study 6. Solomon and the temple of God.

Main point. Up until now we have not said anything about how the people worshiped God. Remember the main problem? How can sinful people worship Holy God without being killed? Before Solomon built the temple, the tabernacle represented God's presence amongst his people. The tabernacle was a portable structure. The tabernacle and all the priestly systems amplified the difficulty of making someone clean before they can worship God. The priest is the mediator between humans and God. But human priests are also tainted by sin. Jesus fulfils the role of the priest, the temple and the sacrifice.

Study 7. The Prophets.

Main Point. The prophets dominate a large section of the OT and therefore they cannot be ignored. The major role of the prophets is to mediate God's word to His people and to remind the people of their obligations to the covenant. There are not as most people wrongly think fortune teller. They warn people when they stray away from God and call them to return. Prophets are appointed by God. OT prophets are still sinful, they don't always speak God's word, and they don't always know God's will. But Jesus is God's word in the flesh.

Study 8. The Exile.

Main Point. The exile is another major event like the Exodus except it is a very bad event. There is the destruction of the temple, God's judgment and punishment and God's sovereignty as God's uses his enemies to punish his own people. Again we see the problem of sin. Amongst all this judgement there are vision of God renewing his kingdom and reviving his people.

Study 9. The Writings.

Main Point. This is a section of the OT which is not necessarily linked to Israel's history but rather is a repository of accumulated wisdom and truth.

Study 10. The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The main point. The Gospel is the ultimate realisation and fulfilment of the OT expectations. Jesus is the perfect Prophet, priest and King.

