



**The
Law and
The Prophets
In
Outline**

Rev. Dr. Botros Botrosdief

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Preface

The book “*The Law and the Prophets in outline*” has one purpose: to help you get a handle on the five books of Moses and the sixteen books of the prophets of the Old Testament. Think of being in an airplane high up above the ground. When you look out the window, you can see the lay of the land. You are up above all the detail, where you can see the big picture. Up in the plane, you can see everything at once.

This is what this book does for you. It tells you about the big ideas in the Law and the Prophets. It gives you the main points of what the Law and the prophets are all about.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to Jean Ely and Joan Finlay for their great work in editing of this book.

May God be praised and His name highly exalted for all good things that come from Him.

Soli Deo Gloria- To God Be the Glory

Botros Botrosdief

Introduction to the Law and the Prophets

There are essentially two main themes in the Bible: what has gone wrong with our world and how it can be put right. Genesis tells us exactly the root of the problem, and how God promised to put it right by rescuing humanity from sinful nature; the rest of the Bible shows the details.

The first five books of the Bible are known as the Books of the Law because they contain the laws and instructions given by the Lord through Moses to the people of Israel. These books were written by Moses, except for the last portion of Deuteronomy because it tells about the death of Moses.

These five books lay the foundation for the coming of Christ in that here God chooses and brings into being the nation of Israel. As God's chosen people, Israel became the custodians of the Old Testament, the recipients of the covenants of promise, and the channel of Messiah (Romans 3:2; 9:1-5).

The book of Hebrews 1:1 tells us that "*In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets*", so let us ask some questions and understand the message of the prophets of the Old Testament.

Q1: What is the Prophet?

The root meaning of the word prophet is to announce or speak for God. There are many descriptions of a prophet in the Bible. He is called a *man of God* (1 Kings 12:22) since he

was chosen by God, a *servant of the Lord* (1 Kings 14:18) because of his faithfulness to the Lord, a *messenger of the Lord* (Isaiah 42:19) as he was sent by God, a *seer* because of his insight from God (1 Samuel 9:9), a *watchman* because of his alertness for God (Ezekiel 3:17). But the most common description is the word *prophet* itself because he was a speaker for God. The prophets did faithfully, consistently speak to the ears of God's people.

Q2: How did God speak to the Prophets?

Sometimes God spoke through *dreams* (Genesis 37) and other times in *visions* (Daniel 7). On occasion God spoke in an audible *voice* (1 Samuel 3). Sometimes He spoke through a previously *written word* (Daniel 9) or by an *angel* (Genesis 19) and at other times through *nature* (Psalm 19) or a *miracle* (Judges 6:37). But in whatever way God spoke, His servants received the message and faithfully delivered it to His people.

Q3: Where is the place of the Prophetic Books in the Bible?

The books of the prophets are placed in the third section of the Hebrew Bible which contains 24 books.

The 24 books of the Hebrew Bible are divided into three sections; the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Hebrew terms are *Torah*, *Nebhiim*, and *Kethubim*. The acronym *TeNaKh* is used to describe the three sections together.

First Section	The Law - The 5 Books of Moses
<i>Torah</i>	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.
Second Section	The Prophets - The 8 Books
<i>Nebhiim</i>	<i>Former Prophets:</i> Joshus, Judges, Samuel, Kings. <i>Latter Prophets:</i> Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve (from Hosea to Malachi).
Third Section	The Writings – The 11 Books
<i>Kethubiim</i>	Poetical Books: Psalms, Proverbs, Job. <i>Five Rolls:</i> Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Esther, Ecclesiastes. <i>Historical Books:</i> Daniel, Ezra- Nehemiah, Chronicles.

Our Lord Jesus Himself referred to the threefold division of the Old Testament. He said to His disciples, "*This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms*" (Luke 24:44).

Our Lord Jesus also referred to the books of the Old Testament as the Law and the Prophets as said "*So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets*" (Matthew 7:12).

Flavius Josephus, a first century historian and Philo of Alexandria, both of whom were Jews, affirmed this threefold division of their Hebrew Bible. They call the third section "*the Psalms*".

But when the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek, known as "*the Septuagint*" (which means seventy and is abbreviated LXX), in the third century before Christ, the books of the prophets were placed in the fourth section.

The order and structure changed and divided into 39 books. The groupings of the 39 books of the Old Testament are according to their literary character and are not in any sacred order but rather they are in a logical order.

The Hebrew Bible is named as the Old Testament in the Christian Bible. In the fourth century A.D. Jerome translated the Greek Old Testament into Latin, which is called *the Vulgate*, and adopted the division of the Septuagint. The English Bible and all translations of the Christian Bible in many languages adopted this order and structure of the Septuagint too.

But the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches **add more books to the Old Testament that are not accepted by the Jews and Protestants**. These books were put between the two Testaments in the Roman Bible, but the Eastern Orthodox keep it separated from the Bible.

These books are known as the "*Old Testament Apocrypha*" by Protestants and Jews, and "*Deuterocanonical books*," or books added to the canon, by the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

The 39 books of the LXX, or the Old Testament in the Christian Bible, are divided into four sections as it is mentioned above, for the sake of convenience as follows;

First Section	The Law - The 5 Books of Moses
	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.
Second Section	The 12 Historical Books
	Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.
Third Section	The 5 Poetry Books
	Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs.
Fourth Section	The 16 Prophets
	The 4 major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah-Lamentation, Ezekiel, Daniel. The Minor 12 Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The terms Major and Minor Prophets are derived from the size of the writings, but it has nothing to do with their importance. The Major Prophets are longer writings than the Minor Prophets.

Q4: What do Prophets have in common? How are the Prophets different from one another?

First of all, the prophets firmly *asserted* that God was speaking through them. They repeatedly *affirmed* that God had chosen Israel – *the messianic instrument*- for a covenant relationship. They sadly *reported* that the majority of Israel had sinned against God and that special covenant relationship. They passionately *warned* of God’s purifying judgment. The

prophets consistently *promised* that God would bring renewal and hope on the other side of judgment.

Secondly, there were two kinds of prophets, the non-writing prophets, and the writing prophets.

The non-writing prophets, do not have books in the Bible named after them: **Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, Elisha**. They are major characters in the stories in the two books of Samuel and the two books of Kings. No written record of these prophets exists outside of these books.

The writing prophets each has a book in the Bible named after them: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

What the prophets said, showed and wrote, was at God's command. Habakkuk was told by God, "*Write the vision; make it plain upon tablets*" (Habakkuk 2:2). Jeremiah, likewise, was commanded, "*Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you*" (Jeremiah 30:2).

Q5: What is the significance of the prophetic books?

The basic message of prophecy is messianic, centring on Jesus Christ as He said, "*It is written of me in the scroll of the book*" (Hebrews 10:7) and "*Everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled*" (Luke 24:44).

The apostle Peter declared “*To Him all the prophets bear witness*” (Acts 10:43), and in the book of Revelation 19:10 we read, “*For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of the prophecy*”.

Israel was the channel through which the Messiah was to come, and much of the prophets’ message was directed generally to the life of the messianic nation to prepare them to receive the Messiah who would come to deliver the world from the curse of sins.

The prophets served two primary roles:

1. They were reformers in a day of apostasy, and
2. They were reminders in a day of prosperity.

The message of all prophets was to show God at work in human history, to reveal that history is His story.

Q6: What is the chronological order of the writing prophets?

There are 10 prophets who spoke and wrote to God’s people before their captivity, 3 during their captivity and 3 after they returned from their captivity. The chronological order is as follows;

1. Jonah – 820-804 BC – spoke to the Assyrians
2. Amos – 810-785 BC – spoke to the northern kingdom
3. Joel – 800 BC – spoke to the southern kingdom
4. Hosea – 785-725 BC – spoke to the northern kingdom
5. Micah – 749-722 BC – spoke to the northern kingdom

6. Isaiah – 740-681 BC – spoke to the southern kingdom

722 BC – The Assyrian Captivity of Israel

7. Nahum – 661-612 BC – spoke to the Assyrians

8. Zephaniah – 630 BC – spoke to the southern kingdom

9. Jeremiah – 625-582 BC – spoke to the southern kingdom

10. Habakkuk – 610-599 BC – spoke to the southern kingdom

605, 597, 586 BC – The Babylonian captivity of Judah

11. Daniel – 605-534 BC – spoke to captives in Babylon

12. Ezekiel – 592-570 BC – spoke to captives in Israel

13. Obadiah – 585 BC – spoke to the Edomites

539 BC – The return from captivity and Israel again became one nation

14. Haggai – 520 BC – spoke to the returned exiles

15. Zechariah 518 BC – spoke to the returned exiles

16. Malachi – 430-400 BC – spoke to the returned exiles

Q7: Why did the prophets do unusual things?

The Prophets sometimes did strange things because God commanded them to do it. The prophet Ahijah illustrated the division of the kingdom of Israel by tearing a garment into twelve pieces (1 Kings 11). Hosea dramatically illustrated God's unfailing love by a marriage to an unfaithful wife

(Hosea chapters 1-3). The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel illustrated the captivity before it happened in the following odd acts; for 3 years, Isaiah embarrassed people by walking the streets dressed like a prisoner of war (Isaiah 20). Jeremiah carried a yoke on his shoulders (Jeremiah 28). Ezekiel acted like a little boy “played war” and built a brick model of Jerusalem being besieged by the enemy (Ezekiel 4).

These acts were “*action sermons*” and “*acts of mercy*” in hopes that Israel would wake up and listen to God and repent and escape His judgment. But they did not heed His voice, and God sadly said in Psalm 81:13-14, “*If my people would only listen to me, if Israel would only follow my ways, how quickly I would subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes!*” And God said Again in Isaiah 48:18, “*If only you had paid attention to my commands; your peace would have been like a river, your well-being like the waves of the sea. Your descendants would have been like the sand, your children like its numberless grains; their name would never be blotted out nor destroyed from before me*”.

Q8: What are the three most sins that God commands Israel to repent from?

These are the most three sins that God demands Israel to repent from;

1. **Idolatry:** Jeremiah 7:8-10, 30-31; 8:1-2; 19:3-5, 13.
2. **Immorality:** Jeremiah 5:1-3; 25-29.
3. **False prophecies:** Jeremiah 7:3-11; 14:11-16; 23:25-40

Part One

The Five Books of the Law

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

1. Notes on the Book of Genesis

Q1: What is the Theme and Purpose of Genesis?

Reading Genesis is almost like reading a novel. It is mostly narrative history and biography. It tells of important events in the lives of important people such as Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Ishmael, Esau and Jacob, Joseph and his brothers.

Genesis speaks of the most important truth about God's creation. It also speaks of Man, created in the image of God, his fall, and the initial steps taken for his redemption by a divine covenant with the first promise of the Messiah who would come from Abraham's Seed, the Seed of the woman. Through Him God has promised to bless all nations of the earth (Genesis 3:15; 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 22:18; Galatians 3:16). Genesis opens with Paradise Lost, and the plan of Salvation instituted, and the book of Revelation closes with Paradise Regained (Revelation 21-22).

Q2: What is the Key word to understand Genesis?

The word "**Beginning**" (Genesis 1:1) is the key to understand the Book of Genesis. Genesis not only means 'beginning', but it is the book of beginnings. The book of Genesis gives us our historical point of reference, from which all subsequent revelation proceeds. In the book of Genesis all the major themes of the Bible have their origin.

Genesis is a book of many beginnings: in it we see the beginning of the universe, of man and woman, of human sin and the fall of the race, the beginning of God's promises of

salvation, and the beginning of the nation Israel as the chosen people of God because of God's special purpose for them as the channel for Messiah and Saviour.

In Genesis we learn about Adam and Eve, about Satan the tempter, about Noah and the flood, and about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph and his brothers. But here we also have the beginning of marriage, family, work, sin, murder, capital punishment, sacrifice, races, languages, civilization. The Bible is, through and through, a historical revelation. It is the account of God's activity in history.

Q 3: Who is the author of Genesis?

Moses was inspired by God to write it. Jewish tradition say that God communicated His word to Adam, who told Methuselah, who told Noah, who told Shem, who told Abraham, who told Isaac, who told Jacob, who told Joseph, who told the Israelites in Egypt before his death. And Moses was inspired by God to put together all these knowledge which would have already been in wide circulation before his time.

Q 4: How does the Book of Genesis present Christ?

Christ is seen in Genesis in two ways: Prophetically and Typologically.

Prophetically: Immediately after the fall, the promise of salvation is given in the seed of the woman (3:15), but then the Messianic links are made clear throughout Genesis: the line of Seth (4:25), the offspring of Shem (9:26), the family of Abraham (12:3), the seed of Isaac (26:3), the sons of Jacob (46:3), and the tribe of Judah (49:10).

Typologically: There are several key types that portray the Saviour in Genesis.

- (1) **Adam** is a type of Christ (Romans 5:14). As Adam is the head of the old creation, so Christ is the head of the new spiritual creation.
- (2) **Abel's** offering of a blood sacrifice points to Christ who would die for us. Abel's murder by Cain may also illustrate Christ's death.
- (3) **Melchizedek** is also a type of Christ.

Melchizedek was a real man, he was the king of Salem, he was also a priest to his people like Job to his family, and that was a traditional priesthood from Adam until Moses. The official priesthood was limited only to the tribe of Levi.

The book of Hebrews in chapters 5-7, points to Melchizedek as a type of Christ, because by divine oath God had promised that the Messiah the Son of David according to Psalm 110:4 would be as '*a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek not after the order of Aaronic priesthood*' Why unlike the Levite priests?

Genesis records no genealogical background (no mention of a father or mother) so that he might make a fitting type of Christ. This inevitable conclusion is drawn by the writer to the Hebrews, who develops his theme of our Lord's heavenly priesthood on the basis of Psalm 110:4, expounded in the light of Genesis 14:18, where Melchizedek appears with nothing said about his birth or death, ancestry or descent, in a manner which declares his superiority to Abram and, by implication, to the Aaronic priesthood descended from Abram.

The superiority of Christ and his new order to the Levitical order of Old Testament times is thus established (Hebrews 5:6-11; 6:20- 7:28).

Melchizedek is not found on the register of the only line of legitimate priests; his father's name is not recorded, nor his mother's; no evidence points out his line of descent from Aaron. It is not affirmed that he had no father or that he was not born at any time or died on any day; but these facts were nowhere found on the register of the Levitical priesthood.

(4) Joseph is the last type for Christ in the book of Genesis.

He was loved dearly by his father, betrayed by his brothers, and yet became the means of their deliverance typifies Christ.

Q 5: Why have some in modern time undermined the value of Genesis?

Satan, the great enemy of mankind hates Genesis and bent all his energies to discredit it through the attacks of unbelieving scientists and critics for two reasons; first because it tells us about the Creator of the universe and all that is in it. Second because it tells us of Satan's downfall and about Christ the Seed of the woman who would bring this about.

Q 6: What are the two main section of Genesis?

1. Ch. 1-11 tells of the history of the world before Abraham.
2. Ch. 12-50 tells of the history of the patriarchs.

Q 7: What does Genesis teach about God?

Genesis teaches that God is the Creator and life-giver (1:1)

He desires a relationship with us (1:26-2:25; 3:8; 15:1-16)

He is Holy and will judge sinful men (3:8-24; 6:5-8; 18-19)

He is Merciful even in judgment (3:21; 4:15; 6:8; 18:32)

He is sovereign over every power (18:14; 26:12-16; 50:20)

Q 8: What are the lessons of Genesis for our generation?

1. Don't live your life like Sarah by your own rules but live like Abraham by God's promises.
2. Don't have favourites like Jacob who favoured Rachel and Joseph and caused troubles in his family.
3. Watch out for jealousy (Laban's sons; Joseph's brothers)
4. Like Joseph, be faithful in what you do even in difficult times, and you will see God's hand with you.

2. Notes on the Book of Exodus

“Exodus” is a Latin word derived from the Greek *exodos*, the name given to the book by those who translated it into the Greek Septuagint (LXX). The word means “exit,” “departure” or “the way out”.

Q1: What is the Key word of the book of Exodus?

The word “**Redeem**” is the key to understand the book of Exodus. It is used nine times (6:6; 13:13; 15:13; 21:8; 34:20). The book of Exodus begins by telling us how God came down in grace to deliver an enslaved people who were in Egypt for 400 years “*I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land*” (3:8), and ends by declaring how God came down in glory to dwell in the midst of a redeemed people “*And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them*” (Exodus 25:8).

Q2: What is the golden verse that sums up the book?

Exodus 15:13 “*In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling*”.

Q3: What is outlines of the Exodus?

1. Israel in Bondage (Chapter 1, 2).
2. Israel Redeemed (Chapters 3 to 15:22).
3. Israel Journeying to Sinai (Chapters 15:23 to 19).
4. Israel Given the Law (Chapters 20-23).
5. Israel in Worship (Chapters 24-40)

Q4: How does Exodus present Christ?

While Exodus contains no direct prophecy of Christ, there are a number of beautiful types of the Saviour.

- (1) In many ways, **Moses** is a type of Christ. Deuteronomy 18:15 shows that Moses, as a prophet, anticipates Christ. Both are kinsman-redeemers who were endangered in infancy, renounced their power in order to serve others, and functioned as mediators, lawgivers, and deliverers.
- (2) The **Passover** is a very specific type of Christ as the sinless Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36; 1 Corinthians 5:7).
- (3) The **Seven Feasts**, each of which portrays some aspect of the Saviour.
- (4) The **Exodus**, which Paul connects with baptism, pictures our identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor 10:1-2; Romans 6:2-3).
- (5) The **Manna and Water** are both portrayed as pictures of Christ (John 6:31-35, 48-63; 1 Corinthians 10:3-4).
- (6) The **Tabernacle** portrays the Saviour in its material, colors, furniture, arrangement, and the offerings sacrificed there (Hebrews 9:1-10:18).
- (7) The **High Priest** quite clearly foreshadows the person and ministry of Christ (Heb 4:14-16; 9:11-12, 24-28).

Q5: What is the most common misunderstanding of the Law of Moses particularly “The Ten Commandments”?

Many people think that the Law shows how they can be accepted by God. But remember that the Israelites were redeemed by God first, and only then were they given the law

to keep as an expression of gratitude to God their Redeemer. That is why the first half of the book demonstrates what God did by His grace to redeem them out of their slavery. The second half of the book shows how God expects them to live godly lives glorifying His name among the nations of the world.

In the same way in the New Testament, Christians are redeemed and then told to live a godly life to glorify God. We do not become Christians by doing good works first, but by being redeemed first and then living right.

Q6: Why was Israel chosen by God and what is the significant of this election?

God made a covenant with Abraham and redeemed his descendants from their slavery and gave them His moral law to be light and witnesses to all nations (Exodus 19:5)

Q7: What is the value of Exodus to us today?

In the first part of the book, many illustrations help us to understand our own redemption in Christ our Redeemer. The Passover Lamb (Exodus 12:1-11) is a clear foreshadowing of Christ the Lamb of God who took away our sins (John 1:29). Christ is referred to as “our Passover Lamb” in 1 Corinthians 5:7 “a lamb without blemish” (1 Peter 1:19).

In the last part of the book we are reminded that a redeemed people are called to be a worshipping people. God teaches them by using visual aids such as ‘the tabernacle’ which was the symbol of His presence among them.

In the New Testament, God in Christ ‘tabernacled’ among us to redeem us and sent His Spirit to dwell in us (John 1:14; 14:23).

Q8: How can we apply the message of Exodus in our lives?

As the Israelites saved by the Blood of the Passover Lamb, sheltered by the Blood and having access to God by the Blood so we too as Christians are redeemed to worship Him, coming before the throne of God by His grace through the blood of Jesus our Passover Lamb.

This redemption is shown to meet every need of Israel as a nation. Oppressed by the Egyptians, Israel needs deliverance. God supplies this deliverance. Having been saved, the nation needs a revelation from God to guide them in conduct and worship in their new life. God gives them the Law. Convicted of sin by the holiness of the law, the Israelites find their need of cleansing. God provides sacrifices. Having a revelation of God, the people feel their need of worship. God gives them the tabernacle and symbolically dwelled among them.

In the same way, Christians are redeemed from slavery to sin, to worship and to do good works that glorify God our loving redeemer by keeping His commandments which summed up in His saying “*You are the light of the world; you are salt of the earth*” (Matthew 5:13-14) proclaiming God’s love to the world. We are not doing good work in order to be saved, but because we have been saved we do good works to prove that we have been saved.

3. Notes on the Book of Leviticus

The book of Leviticus is very difficult to read and is so unfamiliar with its different culture and weird laws, and it seems to be irrelevant to us today. Take for example, the way they deal with infectious disease. The poor person has to tear his clothes, let his hair grow long and unbrushed, cover his mouth and shout “Unclean! Unclean”, when he sees a person coming his way. Today we deal with infectious diseases rather differently.

Also we do not arrive at the place of worship today carrying a little lamb or a pigeon to give to the pastor, who then slits its throat in front of the whole congregation. So here some questions to see Leviticus in the light of the New Testament and what the book has to say to us today.

Q1: What is the Key word of the book of Leviticus?

The key word of the book is “**Holy**”. The book of Leviticus is the book of holiness- Holiness of God’s redeemed people in their worship and in their daily life. Over and over God teaches the people of Israel to be holy. It is mentioned 87 times.

Leviticus 19:2 “*Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy*”, is the key verse to understand the subject of Holiness. **Holiness** does not mean to be without sin. It simply means that Israelites belong to One God, the only True God and they are not worshipping the false gods of the Egyptians and the Canaanites and doing what those pagans did.

Holiness does mean to be different from others people who do not know the Only One True God. Not following their practice but following what the Lord God says. God said *‘I am the Lord your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the Lord your God. Keep my decrees and laws, for the person who obeys them will live by them. I am the Lord’* (Leviticus 18:1-3; see also Psalm 115)

Q3: What is the message of the book?

The message of book can be summarised in this way: The Redeemed must be holy, because their Redeemer is Holy. Holiness of the Redeemed is imperative and their access to their Redeemer God with the privilege of communion and worship is on the basis of sacrifice through shedding of blood.

This is true even in the New Testament as the book of Hebrews says *“Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water”* (Hebrews 9:1-14 & 10:1-22).

Q4: What is the outline of the Book?

Leviticus can be divided into two parts:

1. Ch 1-10: **Getting right with God**; The Five Offerings (1-8) The Ministry of the Priests (8-10).
2. Ch 11-27: **Living right as God's people**; Holiness of the redeemed among the nations. **Laws of purity**: Pure worship, Pure morals, Pure activity – feasts, and Pure health (laws about hygiene).

Q 5: How does Leviticus present Christ?

Similar to Exodus, a number of types of Christ are evident in Leviticus.

- (1) The **Five Offerings** all typify the person and work of Christ in His sinless life, submission to the Father that we might have fellowship with God.
- (2) The **High Priest** as mentioned above is a very prominent type of Christ in Leviticus.
- (3) The **Seven Feasts**, again, as already mentioned, also form a type of the Saviour.

Q6: Why did God ordain the sacrifices and the Priesthood for the Israelites?

The whole sacrificial system of Old Testament and the ministry of the Priesthood reflect the work of Christ on the cross, who brings us to God to enjoy His presence and His blessings. All point to Christ the Great Sacrifice that was to come.

God wanted His people to understand how serious sin is and to know also that their God is different from the pagans' gods. He is holy, the One who shows mercy in forgiving their sins and blesses us with everlasting love. The sacrifices reflect our response to God's mercy and grace in two ways: (1) To

say, thank you Lord for your blessings. (2) To say, sorry Lord, forgive us (Hebrews 4, 5, & 8-10).

	The 5 offerings	The Meaning
1	Burnt offering	Thank you- to glorify God
2	Cereal offering	Thank you- to glorify God
3	Fellowship	Thank you- to keep communion with God
4	Sin offering	Sorry Lord- for sins against God
5	Guilt offering	Sorry Lord- Compensation must be paid

The Day of Atonement was a very special day in which God wants His people to understand who He is for them. He is the loving God who forgives their sin and takes it away. And also as reference to Christ's perfect sacrifice that takes away our sins (Psalm 103:10-12; Micah 7:18; Isaiah 1:10-20).

Leviticus 17:11 is the Old Testament's central statement about the significance of blood in the sacrificial system. God said: *"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life."* *"Without the blood, there is no forgiveness."* This shedding of blood is a substitutionary act of Christ on our behalf (Hebrews 9:11-18; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

Q7: What is the significance of putting blood on the right ear, the right thumb and the big toe of the right foot?

In Leviticus 15:1-2, Moses was instructed by God to consecrate the High Priest, Aaron, and his sons for their duties in the tabernacle. The blood applied to the right ear, symbolizes listening and obedience to what God says. The thumb of the right hand speaks of right Service. The right great toe speaks of walking in righteousness. It is all about dedicating the whole life to God (Leviticus 8:1-36).

Q 8: What are the principles (Not the ritual Laws) which we can take from Leviticus that still apply today?

There are seven principles in Leviticus which still apply today;

1. God must be obeyed (Leviticus 19:2) He is holy and we must be holy. He can't tolerate sin. Sin separates us from fellowship with Him. Fellowship is to be regained, when we confess our sin.
2. God alone is to be worshipped (Leviticus 20:1-5).
3. Family life must be guarded (Leviticus 18:6-18).
4. The poor must be provided for (Leviticus 19:9-10) "*Love your neighbour as yourself*" (Matthew 22:36-40).
5. Justice is vital in all business transactions. Nobody is to build up great wealth at the expense of others (Leviticus 19:11; 25:8-55)
6. Everything magical or occult must be avoided (Leviticus 19:26-31).
7. God's provision must be recognized and remembered. That was the meaning of the **festivals**. They show gratitude to God remembering of the miracles and the good deeds he has done among them (Leviticus 23:1-44)

So we are to **get right** with God, through the blood of Jesus. And we are to **live right** and be light and glorify God as God's people among the nations. That is the Book of Leviticus.

4. Notes on the Book of Numbers

Numbers is the book of Wilderness. It is a story of the Exodus generation who failed to enter the Promised Land and their wanderings in the wilderness for nearly 40 years because of their unbelief. It is also a story of God's faithful care for His people in spite of their doubts, grumblings and disobedience. None of those who doubted God lived to see the Promised Land (Num 14:1-4; 26-35).

Q1: What is the Key word of the book of Numbers?

The key word of the book is "***In the wilderness***" (14:2, 35).

Q 2: What is the key verse of the book?

"How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them?" (Num14:11)

Q3: What is the message of the book?

The message of book is this "***Beware of unbelief. God honours faith and punishes unbelief that grieves Him***".

Caleb and Joshua stand out as men of faith and they were the only two from the Exodus generation who came out of Egypt who entered the Promised Land. Unbelief cost the Israelites 40 years wandering in the wilderness. "*Just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness*" (Num 14:2, 30-35; Psalm 95:6-11; Heb 3:7-19).

Q5: How does the book of Numbers present Christ?

- (1) Perhaps no place is there a clearer portrait of Christ and His crucifixion than in the **serpent lifted up** on the standard (cf. Numbers 21:4-9 with John 3:14).
- (2) The **rock that quenched the thirst** of the people is a type of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4).
- (3) The daily **manna** pictures Christ as the bread come down from heaven (cf. Numbers 11:7 with John 6:31-33).
- (4) The **pillar of cloud** and **fire** portray the guidance of Christ and the cities of refuge certainly portray Christ as our refuge from judgment (1 Corinthians 10).
- (5) Finally, the **Star** is also a type of Christ (cf. Numbers 24:17 with Matthew 2:2)

Q6: How do we apply the message of the book for us today?

The stories in Numbers still serve as good examples to us as the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:11-13 that the events in the wilderness are for our instruction, that we may endure and escape temptation. There are three sins in the book of numbers we need to avoid; unbelief, rebelliousness and jealousy. From Num 11 to 25, we read the sad story of their grumbling concerning: food 11:4-6; giants in the Promised Land 13:33-14:1-4; Moses' leadership Num 16; water and the manna 20:1-5.

We need to beware of unbelief. Unbelief bars the entrance to abundant life (See Num 14; Heb 3:7-19). We need to stop grumbling, rebellious, and disbelief. We can avoid what the Israelites did by trusting God, obeying what He says and not allowing fear to control our lives. We need to remember that

unbelief and disobedience cost them 40 years wandering in the wilderness. We need to stop jealousy. Aaron, Miriam, Korah and his group of 250 brought upon themselves God's displeasure because they did not accept Moses as God's appointed leader (Num 12 ;16:1-3; 32-35).

Q7: What is the most beautiful story in the book of Numbers?

Balak, the king of Moab, hired Balaam to curse the Israelites, but God intervened, forcing Balaam not to curse but rather to give a blessing upon God's people in spite of their grumbling and disbelief (Num 22:22–24:25).

Q8: Where in the NT the explanation of Balaam's evil works to make Israel sins and cursed?

Read first Num 25 and then Revelation 2:14, you will see clearly the sin of Balam which was common in the pagan's temple worship "*There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality*" (See 2 Peter 2:15-16; Jude 11).

5. Notes on the Book of Deuteronomy

Q1: What is the book of Deuteronomy all about?

Deuteronomy is a book of remembrance and a call for Obedience. It is a call to the second generation, who were about to enter the Promised Land, to remember God's faithfulness and calls them to obey His law.

The people of Israel were camped on the east side of the Jordan River, on the plains of Moab, across from the city of Jericho (Deut 1:1, 29:1). They were the children who had left Egypt, now adults, and those who were born during the forty years, now ready to enter the Promised Land. Before that could happen, the Lord renewed through Moses His covenant with them. Moses' gives them his last three sermons and his final farewells and he died on Mt Nebo.

The book of Deuteronomy can be summarised in this way: ***IF*** and ***IF NOT***. If you obey, blessing is for you, if you do not, troubles lie ahead for you and you will be **exiled** from the Promised Land.

Q2: What are the key word and the two key verses and of the Book?

The Key word is: **Obedience**. The First Key Verse "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength*" (Deut 6:4-5)

And the Second Key Verse is *“I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them”* (Deut 30:19-20)

Q3: What is the message of Deuteronomy?

The book was written to remind Israel what God expects from them. God calls His people to obedience, because He loves them, and desires to bless them; and that out of gratitude to God for His amazing grace, mercy and privilege, they should render such obedience (Deut 4:1,7,8,33,37,40; 5:29; 7:7,8; 14:1).

Deuteronomy is more than recapitulation of the law given at Sinai to the new generation, but it reviews the past with an eye to the future. God longed for their obedience, because He knew that they were no better than their fathers. He pleads with them to hear His voice and enjoy His blessing.

Q4: What is the Outline of the Book?

Deuteronomy offers a restatement of the Law for a new generation, and records **Moses’ three long sermons** in which he restated God’s commands originally given to the Israelites some forty years earlier in Exodus and Leviticus.

Sermon 1: Looking Back: Remember God’s faithfulness to your fathers and to you. Journey Review from Mt. Sinai to the Borders of the Promised Land – Chapters 1-4.

Sermon 2: Looking Up: Obey God’s commandments and His Law – Chapters 5-26.

Sermon 3: Looking Out: Take heed of God’s Covenant (IF & IF NOT) Blessing & Curse - Chapters 29-30.

Moses’ Final Farewells – Chapters 31-34

Q5: Why is Deuteronomy so important?

In the midst of polytheism and the shameful sins of the Canaanites, Israel was distinctive in that they worshiped one God. This belief is the basic confession of faith in Judaism even today. “*Hear, O Israel! The Lord [Yahweh] is our God; the Lord is one!*” (Deut 6:4). Their God was totally unique; there was none other like Him among all the “gods” of the nations surrounding them.

Deuteronomy also restates the Ten Commandments and many other laws given in Exodus and Leviticus. The book delivered to Israel God’s instructions on how to live a blessed life in the Promised Land. Chapters 27 and 28 specify the blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience.

Q6: How does the book of Deuteronomy present Christ?

The statement about Moses in 18:15 is one of the clearest portraits of Christ. It reads, “*The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.*”

Further, Moses, as a type of Christ, is the only figure other than Christ to fill all three of the offices of prophet (34:10-12), priest (Ex. 32:31-35), and king (although Moses was not king, he functioned as ruler of Israel 33:4-5).

Q7: What are the quotations from Deuteronomy in the New Testament?

1. Jesus sums up the law and the prophets from Deuteronomy (and another from Leviticus): love God, and love your neighbour as yourself (Deut 6:5; Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:29–33; Luke 10:27).
2. Jesus explanation of the hearts of the Ten Commandments (Deut 5:6-22; Matthew 5).
3. Rule of witnesses as outlines discipline in the church (Deut 19:15; Matthew 18:16).
4. When Satan tempts Jesus in the wilderness, Jesus responds from Deuteronomy (Deut 6:13-16; 8:3; Mathew 4:4, 7, 10; Luke 4:4, 8, 12).
5. The accursed for our sins on the cross (Deut 21:22-23; Galatians 3:10-13; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 21).

Q8: What is the most remarkable prophecy in Deuteronomy that God foretold and fulfilled in the Jewish nation?

Deuteronomy 28 -The nation was scattered and restless, suffering suspense and dread because of their disobedience to God (28:47-49, 63-67). God said in Leviticus 18:3, *“I am the Lord your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the Lord your God. Keep my decrees and laws,*

for the person who obeys them will live by them. I am the Lord” (See also Psalm 81: 13 & Isaiah 48:18).

Q9: How do we apply the message of Deuteronomy for us today?

Moses reviewed the Law at the doorstep to the Promised Land, urging this new generation to re-covenant with Yahweh, to recommit themselves to His ways.

In Moses’ conclusion of his last sermon, he entreated the people, *“I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days”* (Deut 30:19-20)

Our relationship with God is to be marked by faithfulness, loyalty, love, and devotion. *That* is life! How closely do we cling to God? Pray and recommit your heart to that all-important relationship with Him.

Part Two

The Four Major Prophets

1. Isaiah
2. Jeremiah
3. Ezekiel
4. Daniel

1. Notes on the Book of Isaiah

The Book of Isaiah is the first of the four Major Prophets along with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel in the Bible.

Q1: Why is Isaiah so important?

The book reveals to us the most comprehensive prophetic picture of our Lord Jesus in the entire Old Testament. It includes the full scope of His life: His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14), the announcement of His coming (Isaiah 40:3-5), His proclamation of the good news (Isaiah 61:1) and His sacrificial death (Isaiah 52:13–53:12). Isaiah stands as a testament of hope in the Lord, the One who saves His people from their sins. Isaiah contains one of the clearest expressions of the gospel in all the Old Testament.

Only second to Psalms, Isaiah is the most quoted prophet in the New Testament. For example, **Paul** in the Letter to the Romans Chapter 9 quotes Isaiah three times - Isaiah 10:22-23 in v.27, Isaiah 1:9 in v. 29, and Isaiah 28:16 in v.33. **Peter** in his first letter 1:24 quotes Isaiah 40:6-8 that says *"all flesh is like grass; the grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of the Lord endures forever."*

Isaiah Chapter 53 alone is quoted five times in the New Testament, v. 1 in John 12:38, v.4 in Matthew 8:17, Isaiah vv.7-8 in Acts 8:32-33, v. 9 in First Peter 2:23, and v.12 in Luke 22:37!

Q2: Who wrote the book?

Isaiah 1:1 identifies the author of the book of Isaiah as the Prophet Isaiah who prophesied from **739–681 BC**. Isaiah is described as the prophet who was “sawn in two” by the evil King Manasseh (Hebrews 11:37).

Liberal (unbelievers) theologians for the past two centuries have assigned multiple writers to Isaiah, dividing the book into three sections: Chapters 1–39, Chapters 40–55, and Chapters 56–66. However, these divisions come out of their denial of predictive prophecy. We as conservative Christians do not accept their position that not only limits the power of God to communicate with His people but also ignores the wide variety of specific, predictive claims about our Lord Jesus scattered throughout the book.

The discovery of **the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947**, a collection of writings composed by the **Essenes** (who were a monastic religious sect of Judaism that emerged near Qumran about 200 BC), revealed an intact scroll of the Book of Isaiah. The finding helps to verify that the prophecies of Isaiah were genuine and written by one person before their fulfilment.

Q3: What is the purpose of Book?

Isaiah 12:2 and 45:22 sum up the theme of the book “*Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid*”, “*Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other*”. This echoes the meaning of Isaiah’s name, which means the “*Salvation of Yahweh*.” More than any other book in the Old Testament, Isaiah focuses on the salvation through the Messiah who is the light to all the

nations (Isaiah 42:6; 45:22; 55:4-5; 65-66). Look also to “wells of salvation” 12:3; “joy of salvation” 25:9, “walls of salvation” 26:1; “the everlasting salvation” 45:17; “Day of salvation” 49:8, “the good news of salvation” 52:7; “the suffering and the glory of the Saviour” 53; “the garment of salvation” 61:10.

Isaiah spoke about God’s judgment and salvation. Israel is compared to a vineyard that should be, and will be, trampled on (5:1-7). Only because of His mercy and His promises to Israel, God did not allow Israel or Judah to be completely destroyed. He will bring restoration, forgiveness, and healing (43:2; 43:16-19; 52:10-12).

Israel had turned a deaf ear to the Lord. Isaiah proclaimed a message of repentance from sin and hopeful expectation of God’s deliverance in the future. He reminded them of the need to listen to God, and worship Him from their hearts. They offered meaningless sacrifices and committed injustices throughout the nation, which created the need for Isaiah’s pronouncements of judgment, declarations made in the hope that they would return to God.

Q4: What is the division of the book?

The Book of Isaiah is divided into two parts; Judgement (Ch. 1-39) and Consolation of God’s salvation through His Messiah (Ch. 40-66). Chapters 13-35, tell of the judgments by the Assyrian Captivity against Israel who have turned their backs on the Lord. Judah was spared at that time but their judgment would be by the Babylonian Captivity (Ch. 36-39).

The remaining 27 chapters detail God’s faithfulness to His promise to bring His people from their Babylonian captivity by Cyrus the Persian (Ch. 40-48). Also the promise of the

coming of the Messiah who will bring God's salvation from sin through His sufferings and brings them to the glorious renewed world He has prepared for His people in the New Heaven and in the New Earth (Ch. 65:17–66:24).

Q5: What are the key verses in the book?

Isaiah 7:14 *“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel”.*

Isaiah 9:6 *“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”.*

Q6: What is the golden chapter in the book?

Isaiah 53 is considered as the golden chapter in the book of Isaiah. The imagery Isaiah 53 contains a complete picture of the Gospel. Jesus was despised, rejected, stricken and pierced for our transgressions (v. 3 in Luke 13:34; in John 1:10-11; v.4 in Matthew 27:46; v. 5 in John 19:34 in 1 Peter 2:24). By His suffering, He paid the punishment we deserved and became for us the ultimate and perfect sacrifice (v. 5 in Heb 10:10). Although He was sinless, God laid on Him our sin, and so that we became God's righteousness in Him (2 Cor 5:21).

Q7: What is the practical application of the Book of Isaiah?

Isaiah presents our Saviour to us in undeniable detail. Knowing the price Christ paid for us, how can we neglect or reject “so great a salvation”? (Hebrews 2:3). From the first chapter, it is clear that the people have turned away from God and failed in their responsibilities as His children. Yet God

holds out hope to this unrepentant people, offering cleansing of sins and the blessing that comes with faith and obedience in Him (1:18–20). Salvation lies only in God; the only question is whether or not we will accept His offer.

Other important teaching in Isaiah;

1. Isaiah’s teaching about **the foolishness of Idolatry** (40:18-24; 44:9-20; 46:1-7; See Acts 19:21-41; Eph 2:11-16).

2. Isaiah’s teaching about **the Uniqueness of God**. Right through chapters 40-49 we find reference to God’s uniqueness. He is unique: the creator of the universe; the life-giver to man; the One who plans the future; the God of the covenant; the Only Saviour and Redeemer “*With whom will you compare me?*” 40:18-25; 44:1-8; 46:9) “*I, even, I am the Lord, and apart from me there is no saviour*” (43:11).

3. Isaiah’s teaching of **God’s Sovereignty**. He is sovereign over his people and all nations (44:28; 45:1; 41:25; 46:11).

4. Isaiah’s teaching about **Salvation**. (Ch 40-66). God is the Lord of salvation who is ready to save all nations through his servant, the Messiah “the servant of the Lord” (45:20-23; 59:1; 20; 60:1-3; 61:1-3; 56:1). The two servant’s songs in 49:1-6; 52:13-53:12 picture an individual who is the Messiah, and is not Israel as a nation.

5. Isaiah 45:7 “***God created evil***”, **does not mean** sin but troubles or calamities as reference to God’s judgment on Israel and Judah by the Assyrians and Babylonians captivity.

2. Notes on the Book of Jeremiah

Q 1: Who wrote the book?

Jeremiah chapter 1:1 identifies Jeremiah as the author of the Book (cf. Daniel 9:2; Matthew 2:17). He began his ministry from his youth and lasted some forty years or more (Jeremiah 1:1-8). Jeremiah is called the “***Prophet of Doom and Weeping***” who felt compassion for his stiff-necked people, suffered under God’s judgment by the Babylonians. He suffered the most of all prophets of the Bible (Jeremiah 15:18; 37:14-16; 38:6). He was concerned about his own safety as well (9:1; 12:1-4; 15:10). God forbade him to marry or to pray for Israel because judgment would be severe on them (Jeremiah 16:1-13; 7:16; 14:11; 15:1-4). He was stoned in Egypt by the Jews who fled there.

Q 2: When was the date of writing?

Jeremiah’s ministry was based in Jerusalem and he prophesied during five of Judah’s kings from Josiah to Zedekiah. He began between 627 BC and ended sometime around 582 BC with his prophecy to the Jews who fled to Egypt (Jeremiah 44:1). Jeremiah’s prophecies were given both before and after the fall of Jerusalem (605 BC). He is both a pre-exilic and early exilic prophet. He was a contemporary of Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Daniel, and Ezekiel.

Q 3: What is the purpose of the Book of Jeremiah?

The basic purpose of Jeremiah’s ministry is two-fold. Initially, he seeks to bring his people to a state of repentance.

It was then Jeremiah's sad task to warn them of the approaching destruction because they did not listen to God's final warning (Jeremiah 21:1-10). He informed them that the Babylonian captivity was a judgment from God. They must submit to it and take their punishment. It was this message that provoked furious anger in the Jews. Jeremiah was viewed as a traitor and persecuted more intensely than any other Hebrew prophet ever had been (Jeremiah 37: 14-21; 38:407).

Q 4: What are the key verses in the book of Jeremiah?

Jeremiah 25:8-11, *“Therefore the LORD Almighty says this: “Because you have not listened to my words, I will summon my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, against this land and its inhabitants and ... This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years”.*

Jeremiah 29:10-11, *“This is what the Lord says: ‘When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”*

Q 5: Why is Jeremiah so important?

Jeremiah provides us the clearest glimpse of **the new covenant** God intended to make with His people once Christ came to earth. It would be the means of restoration for God's people, as He would put His law within them, writing it on their hearts rather than on tablets of stone. God promised through Jeremiah that His people would know Him directly, a knowledge that comes through the person of His Son, Jesus Christ (Jeremiah 31:31-34; see also Hebrews 8:6).

Christ is presented in the book as the fountain of living waters (Jeremiah 2:13; John 4:14), the balm of Gilead (Jeremiah 8:22), the good Shepherd (Jeremiah 23:4), a righteous Branch (Jer. 23:5), and the Lord our righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6). Overall He is the weeping Prophet to His people (Matthew 23:37-38).

The prophecies of Jeremiah also provide us glimpse of hope even in the most severe judgment that God pronounce upon Judah. God promises the restoration of Judah back into the land God has given them (Jeremiah 29:10-14; 32:36-44). The prophecy of the return after the 70 years exile had great impact upon the prophet Daniel who was encouraged by it and prayed for God's mercy upon his people (Daniel 9:1-19).

Q 6: What are the divisions of the Book?

Chapters 1-39: Prophecies before the fall of Jerusalem. In these chapters, Jeremiah warned Judah that God's judgment was at hand (Jer. 7:30-34; 16:10-13; 22:5-9; 32:29). Chapters 45-52: Prophecies after the fall of Jerusalem. In these chapters, Jeremiah spoke about the hope in God's restration to the remnant in Judah, Egypt and those who went to Babylon.

Q 7: How do we apply this book?

Seeing God's great patience with His people nearly ***nine hundred years***, after the covenant in the Sinai desert (Exodus 24:1-18), reminds us that God has always been and continues to be merciful with his promise of their restoration (Jeremiah 33:6-26). Though we fail Him, He is patient with us, working in us to bring about the best for our lives and that should give us hope in our own struggles with living well for God.

Notes on the Book of Lamentations

Q1: Who wrote the book?

Lamentations was written by Jeremiah, after the third siege and fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, this book is prefaced with these words: *“And it came to pass, after Israel was taken captive, and Jerusalem made desolate, that Jeremiah sat weeping, and lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem, and said.”*

Q2: Why is Lamentations so important?

Instead of exultation over the fulfilment of his prophecies Jeremiah mourned and wept as he walked through the streets and alleys of the city of Jerusalem and saw nothing but pain, suffering, and destruction (Lamentations 1:13-15).

But in the middle of all the sadness, he wrote the golden statement of faith in Lamentations 3:21-26, that reflects the hope people can have in the Lord *“Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope. Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, “The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.” The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD”*.

The book foreshadowed the wailing of the Lord Jesus over the approaching desolation of Jerusalem *“As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it.... Jerusalem,*

Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing” (Luke 19:41-44; Matthew 23:31-38).

Yes, there is no doubt that a greater than Jeremiah is here. Many verses foreshadowed the suffering of the Messiah: (Lamentations 1:12; 3:1, 14, 30).

Q3: What is the Message of the Book?

The message of Lamentations can be summed up in this way: *“The misery that sin brings and the compassion of the Lord for the subject of his wrath”*. It stresses God’s faithfulness to His promise to punish evil and yet His steadfast love and compassion for His people (3:22-23).

Q4: What is the Analysis of the Book?

In many different ways Jeremiah describes the desolation of Jerusalem and the suffering of the eighteen month siege. Children begged food from their mothers (2:12), young men and women were cut down by swords (2:21), and formerly compassionate mothers used their children for food *“the hands of pitiful women have boiled their own children,”* so that *“they that are slain with the sword are better than they that are slain with hunger”* (4:10). Even the city’s roads mourned over its condition (1:4)!

Jeremiah could not help but acknowledge the miserable state of this city, piled with rubble. He pictured himself captured in a besieged city, without anyone to hear his prayers, and as a target for the arrows of the enemy (3:7–8, 12). Yet even in this hopeless situation, he found hope in the everlasting Lord (3:21–24).

The book is divided into five poems as indicated by chapters.
Chapter 1: The desolation of Jerusalem for her sins.

Chapter 2: The suffering of the people of Jerusalem.

Chapter 3: Jeremiah's suffering and his hope in the Lord.

Chapter 4: Jerusalem's past honour and present shame.

Chapter 5: Judah's repentant plea.

The only hope is in the everlasting Lord, "*Turn unto us, O Lord, and we shall be turned. Renew our days as of old*" (Lamentations 5:20-21)

Q5: How do we apply the message of Lamentations?

Sin does have its price tag! The Exile and the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem were the most devastating events in Jewish history, and one of the greatest influences in their developing understanding of God.

Jeremiah faces boldly the sins of his people, and God's hidden purpose of purification through judgement. To the question often voiced by those under trial: Where is our God? Jeremiah replies with a profound challenge; "*Try to understand what God is doing*".

The God of the Bible is Holy, Just; He cannot tolerate rebellion and His justice demands punishment (Psalm 89:14; Habakkuk 1:13), but praise Him, He is also merciful and gracious. He is anxious to forgive those who yield to his divine will. God does not enjoy disciplining his people, but caring discipline is one aspect of a parent-child relationship. We can turn to Lamentations 3:17–26, where we'll find our only hope in the Merciful Compassionate God.

3. Notes on the book of Ezekiel

Q1: Who wrote the book?

Ezekiel was the author of the book. He was a member of the priestly family who was called to be a prophet. His name means “*God strengthens.*” At age 25 years, and just eleven years before the destruction of the Temple, he was carried captive with the second wave of the Jews to Babylon in 579 BC. At age thirty a majestic vision of Yahweh's glory captivated his being in Babylon. His ministry began after five years of his captivity about 593 BC and continued for at least twenty-two years until about 570 BC (Ezekiel 1:1-3; 3:15 & 2 Kings 24:8-14; 29:17).

Q2: To whom was Ezekiel written & what was his mission?

Ezekiel addressed his book to the exiles in Babylon who were led by false prophets to imagine that Jerusalem and the Temple would not be destroyed, and they would soon be restored to their land. Ezekiel endorsed all the letters sent by Jeremiah to the exiles (Jeremiah 29), that say not to believe that false hope (Ezekiel 13:16). Ezekiel explains to them why Israel was in captivity and what future plans God had for their restoration. He emphasizes that before they could ever hope to return to their home land they must return to their Lord.

Q3: What are the key issues in Ezekiel?

Ezekiel describes the departure of God's glory from the temple and the city of Jerusalem because of Israel's sin (Ezek. 8:5, 10, 14, 16), and the return of God's glory in the future with the spiritual kingdom of Christ. Ezekiel saw the glory

cloud lift up from above the Ark of the Covenant (Ezek 9:3). The cloud lifted above the Holy of Holies (Ezek 10:4). It then lifted higher above the temple (Ezek 10:18), and finally God's glory departed from the city, and it will be return in the new spiritual temple in Christ. He taught that God's Word never fails and God is present and can be worshiped anywhere. People must obey God if they expect to receive blessings; and see His presence.

Q4: What are the Key Verses in Ezekiel?

“For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:24-26)

Q5: What is the message of the Book?

Ezekiel spoke of the God's power over all nations. He proclaims God's holiness and the seriousness of sin and the necessity of judgment (Ezekiel 1; 25; 20:7-9, 18, 26, 31; 36:38; 5:11; 23:38; 9:10; 24:14) Also Ezekiel spoke of God's promise to take away their *“heart of stones”* and give them a *“heart of flesh”* (Ezekiel 36:25-27), and bring new life to the world (Ezekiel 47:1-12).

Q6: What is the Foreshadowing of Christ in the book?

Ezekiel 34 describes the leaders of Israel as false shepherds for their poor care of His people. Instead of caring for the sheep of Israel, they cared for themselves. By contrast, the

Lord Jesus is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep and who protects them from the wolves who would destroy the flock (John 10:11-12). Ezekiel 34:4 describes people whom the shepherds failed to minister to as weak, sick, injured and lost. Jesus is the Great Physician who heals our spiritual wounds (Isaiah 53:5) by His death on the cross. He is the one who seeks and saves that which is lost (Luke 19:10).

Ezekiel anticipates Christ as the glory of God (Ezek 10:18-19), the Renewal of the covenant (Ezek 16:60), the Shepherd of the flock (Ezek 34:23), the Cleanser of the temple, the Regenerator of and the Restorer of Israel (Ezek 36:24-26).

Q7: What are the notable truths in the book?

God used Ezekiel as a living object lesson to show the exiles what would happen to them. For example, God told him to lie on his side for 390 days, “***one day for each year of their sins***” (4:5). Ezekiel used various methods to convey God's Word to his people. He used art in drawing a depiction of Jerusalem, symbolic actions and unusual conduct to secure attention. He cut his hair and beard to demonstrate what God would do to Jerusalem and its inhabitants (Ezek 4 & 5:1-4)

When His wife died in the year when the final siege of Jerusalem began and just before the destruction of the Temple and the city, God prevented Ezekiel from mourning her in public as a sign of Judah's lack of concern for the things of God (Ezekiel 24:16-24).

Ezekiel speaks of Satan's fall (Ezek 28:11-19). He speaks of Israel's idolatry in Egypt (Ezek 20:1-9).

Also he has an experience with bones coming back to life, a vision that speaks of Israel's restoration in Christ (Ezek 37).

Q8: What is the analysis of the book?

Ezekiel's book can be divided into four sections: Chapters 1-24: prophecies on the ruin of Jerusalem. The book begins with a vision of the glory of God, explaining that Judah no longer experiences it because of their sin. Chapters 25-32 speak of God's visitation in judgment on the nations surrounding Judah in preparation for the return of God's glory. Chapter 33: a last call for repentance to Israel. Chapters 34-48: conclude with a description of the return of God's glory and the restoration of spiritual Israel in Christ (Galatians 6:16 & Hebrews 8:8-10).

Q9: What is the practical application of Ezekiel?

God didn't exile the Israelites primarily to punish them. God never has been nor is He now interested in punishment for punishment's sake. Rather, He intended the punishment or judgment in Ezekiel's day as a means to an end—to bring His people to a state of repentance and humility before the one true God (Ezek 33:18; Isaiah 28:21). The book of Ezekiel reminds us to seek out the Lord in those dark times when we feel lost, to examine our own lives, and to align ourselves with the one true God.

The Book of Ezekiel calls us to join in a fresh and living encounter with God. Ezekiel challenges us to experience a life-changing vision of God's eternal presence and holiness; to let God direct us; to comprehend the evil that lodges in each human heart; to recognize that God holds His servants responsible for warning wicked men of their peril; to experience a living relationship with Jesus Christ, who said that the new covenant is to be found in His blood.

4. Notes on the Book of Daniel

Q1: Who wrote the book?

The Book of Daniel identifies the Prophet Daniel as its author (Daniel 9:2; 10:2). Our Lord Jesus mentions Daniel as the author as well (Matthew 24:15). Daniel was one of the three books written during the captivity. Lamentations looked back in regret at Israel's destruction. Ezekiel and Daniel looked forward to Israel's spiritual restoration in Christ.

Q2: What is the purpose of writing?

The Book of Daniel was likely written between 540 and 530 B.C. In 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon had conquered Judah and deported many of its inhabitants to Babylon. The exiled Jews were carried away by the Babylonians in three deportations (605, 597, and 586 BC). The Book of Daniel records the actions, prophecies, and visions of the Prophet Daniel during the Jews' seventy-year captivity- God's judgment upon them in Babylon.

Daniel is a book of encouragement to the majority of God's people who suffered the exile for their sins, and also encouragement for the godly remnant who suffered for their faith, calling them to keep their trust in God the sovereign Lord who rules in the kingdoms of men.

Q3: Why is Daniel so important?

Daniel makes it clear that the true God is the supreme ruler over heaven and earth (Daniel 4:17), even when all seems lost and the consequences of sin seem overwhelming. Daniel presents a strong case for the absolute sovereignty of God,

even over a multiplicity of world powers. This theme of sovereignty occurs on numerous occasions, including Daniel's deliverance from the lions' den, his friends' rescue from the fiery furnace, and significantly in the fulfilled vision of the seventy weeks that point to God's plan of our salvation through Jesus, the Messiah, our Saviour (Daniel 9:24-27).

Q4: What are the Key Verses in the book?

Daniel 4:25, 34-35 *“The Most High God rules in the kingdoms of Men”. “His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation.”*

Daniel 9: 24; 27 *“Seventy Weeks are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy One” “ He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering.”*

Q5: What is the division of the Book?

The book has two main parts: **Part 1:** Chapters 1-6, the historical section. Chapters 1, 3, and 6: Stories about four people, Daniel and three of his fellow-exiles who through their faith and loyalty to God succeeded and brought blessing to two kings who believed in the One true God. Chapters 2, 4, and 5: Two dreams brought blessing to a king and a vision brought a curse to his son.

Part 2: Chapters 7-12, prophetic revelation. Four visions which in the form of symbols present the successive rise and fall of the kingdoms of men (Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Roman), and point to the spiritual kingdom of God in Christ

who died for our sins (Daniel 9), and whose kingdom stands forever in spite of the opposition and persecution against it.

Q6: What is the foreshadowing of Christ in the book?

The chief portrait of Christ in Daniel is the coming Messiah, the anointed one to redeem mankind (Daniel 9). But Christ is also portrayed as the stone (Daniel 2:34-35), the Son of Man (Daniel 7:13), the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:22), the Coming King whose kingdom stands forever (Daniel 10:2-9; Daniel 2:34, 35).

Q7: How do we apply the book of Daniel for us today?

Like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, we should always stand for what we know is right. God is greater than any punishment or suffering that could come upon us, whether He chooses to deliver us or not, He is always worthy of our trust.

Studying the book of Daniel ought to increase our confidence in the sovereignty of God who makes no mistakes. Daniel's God is our God too. He is still on the throne. This may be the most important lesson of the book. God is in charge! He is in charge of nations, families, and individuals. He is in charge of the past, the present, and the future. He is in charge of good times and bad days, of happiness and sorrow, of joy and heartache, of great victories and shocking defeats. God knows what is best, and He honours those who trust Him.

For more details, please see my booklet "*Dreams and Visions of the Book of Daniel*".

Part Three

The Twelve Minor Prophets

- 1. Hosea**
- 2. Joel**
- 3. Amos**
- 4. Obadiah**
- 5. Jonah**
- 6. Micah**
- 7. Nahum**
- 8. Habakkuk**
- 9. Zephaniah**
- 10. Haggai**
- 11. Zechariah**
- 12. Malachi**

1. Notes on the Book of Hosea

Q1: What is the story of the Book of Hosea?

Following the command of God, Hosea married Gomer and had three children, two sons and a daughter (Hosea 1:4,6 and 9). God used the names of Hosea's children, along with his wife's unfaithfulness, to send specific messages to Israel who had turned their back on God and worshiped idols.

Hosea boldly pictured this faithlessness in terms of his own disastrous marriage to an unfaithful woman. Just as his wife Gomer deserted him to be with another man who enslaved her, so Israel had deserted the Lord and served idols. For this, judgment would fall on them (The Assyrian Captivity). God then told Hosea to bring his wife back and redeem her from slavery (Hosea 3:1-2). In the same way God's constant love for His people would prevail and He would redeem them and bring them back to Himself.

This love is expressed in God's moving words which are considered as the golden verse in the book: *"How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over (abandon you), Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? My heart churns within Me (my heart will not let me do it!); My sympathy is stirred (my love for you is too strong). I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man, the Holy One in your midst; and I will not come with terror"* (Hosea 11:8-9)

Q2: What are the Key verses in the Book?

Hosea 2:13: *“I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals... and went after her lovers, but me she forgot, declares the LORD”*

Hosea 2:23: *“I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved one.' I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people'; and they will say, 'You are my God.'”*

Q3: What is the theme of the book of Hosea?

The theme of the book tells us of God’s Judgment upon a faithless people and His faithfulness and mercy to bring them back to Himself at the end. More than any other prophet, Hosea linked his message closely with his personal life. Firstly, Hosea’s children names tell us of God’s judgment upon His unfaithfulness people.

The first son called was Jezreel (Hosea 1:4-5), which means “God scatters” to point to God’s punishment of Israel by the Assyrian captivity. Hosea’s daughter was named Lo-ruhamah (Hosea 1:6-7), which means “unloved” to point to God’s mercy being no longer shown to Israel because of sins. Hosea’s third child, was a son named Lo-ammi (Hosea 1:8-9) which means “not My people” and the message is, not only would God remove mercy from His people, but He would also renounce and reject them as his children.

Secondly, Hosea’s children are given new names to reflect Israel’s new relationship with their God (Hosea 1:10- 2:1). Here is where the grace of God comes in, for God will one day changes these names. Not my people “Lo-ammi” will become “*My people*”; Unloved “Lo-ruhamah” will become

“My loved one” and *“Jezreel”* the place of judgment, will become the place of joy where they will be called *“the sons of the Living God”*.

Hosea is quoted often in the New Testament. Hosea 2:23 is the wonderful prophetic message from God to include the Gentiles as His children as recorded in Romans 9:25 and 1 Peter 2:10. We are not originally “God’s people,” but through His mercy and grace in Jesus, and by faith in Him we are grafted into the tree of His people (Romans 11:11-18). Other quotations found in the NT *“For I desire mercy, not sacrifice”* (Hosea 6:6 in Matt 9:13; Hosea 13:14 in 1 Cor 15:54-55).

Q4: What is the purpose of writing?

Hosea wrote this book to remind Israel and us that God is a loving God whose loyalty to His people is unwavering. In spite of Israel’s continual turning to false gods, God’s steadfast love is portrayed in the long-suffering husband of the unfaithful wife. Hosea’s message is also one of warning to those who would turn their backs on God’s love. Through the symbolic presentation of the marriage of Hosea and Gomer, God’s love for the idolatrous Israel is displayed in a rich metaphor in the themes of sin, judgment, and forgiving love.

He calls them to repentance *“Take words with you and return to the LORD. Say to him: ‘Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips...We will never again say “Our gods” to what our own hands have made, for in you the fatherless find compassion.’ “I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them”*” (Hosea 14:2-4).

Q5: What is the summary outline of the Book?

The Book of Hosea can be divided into three parts:

1. Chapters 1 to Ch 3 are a description of an unfaithful wife and a faithful husband, symbolic of the unfaithfulness of Israel to God through idolatry.
2. Ch 4 to Ch 10 contains the condemnation of Israel for its sins, and in particular their worship of idols.
3. Ch 11 to Ch 14 shows how God's love once again restores His children as He forgets their misdeeds when they turn back to Him with a repentant heart.

Q6: What is the practical application of Hosea for us today?

The Book of Hosea is a prophetic accounting of God's relentless love for us. As we consider how the Israelites turned their backs on God, we need to look no further than the mirror in front of us to see a reflection of those same Israelites.

Hosea has shown us God's heart of loving commitment. When we do sin, if we have a sorrowful heart filled with repentance, then God will bring us back to Himself and show His never-ending love to us (1 John 1:9).

Not only does the book of Hosea provide an example of God's love to a people who have left God behind, but it also shows us what forgiveness and restoration look like in a close relationship. The book of Hosea illustrates that no one is beyond the offer of our forgiveness because no one sits outside God's offer of forgiveness. Certainly, God brings judgment on those who turn from Him, but Hosea's powerful act of restoration within his own marriage set the bar high for those of us seeking godliness in our lives.

2. Notes on the Book of Joel

The Book of Joel is the second of the twelve minor writing prophets, *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*.

Q1: What is the story of the book of Joel?

A plague of locusts hits the land of Israel and devours every green thing, spreading ruin on every hand. Joel told them it was because of their sins, God sent his army of locusts (Joel 1:2-4; 9-12; 2:25). He calls them to repent (1:5; 8; 2:12-17), and receive God's blessings (2:18-32), otherwise God will send His second army the Assyrians from the north which is at hand (Joel 2:1-11; 2:20) and at the end will come upon them the terrible Day of the Lord (Joel 2:11; 3:14).

Q 2: What are the key themes of Joel?

The Book of Joel speaks of the value and importance of repentance, before the coming Day of the Lord. God's purpose in sending the plague, and the drought was this: God was looking for His people to turn away from their sins and come back to Him. The book is highlighted by **two major events**. One is the Day of the Lord - God's terrible Judgment- and the other the outpouring of the Spirit referring to God's mercy and blessing. The scope of Joel's prophecy was extending from his own day to the end of time. It gives the first indication of the outpouring of the Spirit upon those who

repent and believe in God's Messiah. Joel's prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost as Peter said (Acts 2:1-21).

The Day of the Lord" is spoken of five times in Joel 1:15; 2:1-2; 11, 31; 3:14. It tells of 3 serious judgments. First, the Day of the Lord is experienced in the present by the plague of locusts. Then God will send His second army from the north in the near future which at hand. If they continue in disobedient, the final judgment of the terrible Day of the Lord will come upon them at the end of time, no one can endure it.

Q 3: What are the key verses of the Book?

Joel 1:4 *"What the locust swarm has left the great locusts have eaten; what the great locusts have left the young locusts have eaten; what the young locusts have left other locusts have eaten."*

The Call to Repentance.

Joel 1:14 *"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 2:13 *"Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity".*

The promise of Blessings and Restoration

Joel 2:25 *"I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten, the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm, my great army that I sent among you".*

Joel 2:28 "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."

The Promise of Redemption that was fulfilled in Christ.

Joel 2:28-32 – Acts 2:14-21 "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".

Q 5: What is the practical application for us today?

C.S. Lewis said "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains, it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world". In His mercy, He sends calamity sometimes to make us repent and escape judgment.

Joel tells us that God's ultimate judgment, which falls on the Day of the Lord, will be "great and terrible. Who can endure it?" (Joel 2:11). The answer is that we, on our own, can never endure such a moment. But if we have placed our faith in Christ for atonement of our sins, we have nothing to fear from the Day of Judgment, but it will be a day of the eternal blessing. Without repentance, there is no escape from God's judgment, on the Day of the Lord.

3. Notes on the book of Amos

The prophet Amos prophesied during the final days of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. It was a time of peace, joy and happiness for most of the people. But Amos comes to them with a message of judgment and condemnation. His message exposes the true spiritual condition of the nation. They are wealthy and they are powerful, but they are spiritually destitute. They are enjoying peace, safety and prosperity, but they are in the midst of a spiritual drought and do not even recognize it.

Q1: Who was Amos?

Amos ministry takes place between 760 and 753 B.C., while Jeroboam II reigns over Israel, and Uzziah reigns over Judah. Amos came from Tekoa, a very small town centered in the wilderness area of Judah, south of Jerusalem. God called him to bring an unpleasant message to the northern kingdom of Israel. Amos tells us something about himself as he writes, *“The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel...I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, but I was a herdsman and a tender of sycamore fruit. Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock and the Lord said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to My people Israel’”* (Amos 1:1; 7:14-15).

Q2: What are the key verse and the key word to understand the Book of Amos?

Amos 3:2; 10; 14 *“You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will **punish** you for all your*

*sins...They do not know how to do right...who store up in their fortresses what they have plundered and looted... On the day I **punish** Israel for her sins, I will destroy the altars of Bethel... I will tear down the winter house along with the summer house; the houses adorned with ivory will be destroyed and the mansions will be demolished, declares the LORD”.*

Q3: What is the theme of the book of Amos?

The book is full of judgment and doom of Israel, the northern kingdom. Amos presents God as a roaring lion (Amos 1:2; 3:8). Israel will be exiled by the Assyrians, and the basis for this judgment is for its sins of **complacency, idolatry, and oppression of the poor** (Amos 6:1, 5:5, 11-12, 25-27, 2:6-8, 8:4-10) They "*sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals*".

Amos warns Israel that the Day of the Lord is going to be a day of judgment “*Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord! Why do you long for the day of the Lord? That day will be darkness, not light*” (Amos 5:18).

Q4: What is the purpose of the Book?

Amos went to Bethel, the seat of idolatry (7:10), and declares that the Lord has this to say to them: “*I hate, I despise your feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept 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! Did you bring to me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the desert, O house of Israel?* (5:21-24)

When he is opposed by the idolatrous priest, Amaziah, he becomes even bolder in his preaching. Although Amos insisted that he spoke only the words that the Lord told him to proclaim, Amaziah told him to leave the country and never to prophesy again in the land of Israel (7:10-17). The people in the north used Amos's status as a foreigner from Judah as an excuse to ignore his message of judgment for their sins.

The Lord calls Israel to awaken and repent from their sins *“Seek the Lord and live... do not seek Bethel, do not go to Gilgal, do not journey to Beersheba. For Gilgal will surely go into exile, and Bethel will be reduced to nothing. Seek the LORD and live, or he will sweep through the tribes of Joseph like a fire; it will devour them, and Bethel will have no one to quench it. There are those who turn justice into bitterness and cast righteousness to the ground... 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”* (Amos 5:6-7, 14-15).

The Lord is going to punish them but will not abandon Israel altogether, He will bring future restoration to the righteous remnant *“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”* (Amos 9:7-15).

Q5: What is the outline of the Book of Amos

The contents of the book may be analysed into three sections:

1. Judgments on Israel's neighbours (Amos 1: 2-5)
2. Judgment on Israel- 5 visions (Amos 2:6-9:10)
3. Hope for the godly remnants (Amos 9:11-15)

The prophet Amos saw five visions of judgment and responded to the first three with intercession that God would have mercy on Jacob.

1. The first vision of *locusts* destroyed the harvest (Amos 7:1-3).
2. The second vision of devouring *fire* that dried up the water and burned the land causing great drought (Amos 7:4-6).
3. The third vision of a *plumb line* (Amos 7:7-9), which is an instrument used to test whether a wall was straight. A man stood on the top of the wall and dropped a line with a weight on it. By matching the line to the wall, the workers could tell if the wall was upright.

God's Law is His plumb line, and He measures His people to see how true they are to the pattern in His Word, and if they are of upright character and conduct. God says, "*I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line*" (Isaiah 28:17).

4. The fourth vision of *basket of ripe fruit* (Amos 8:1-3); just as this fruit was ripe for eating, Israel was ripe for judgment.
5. In the fifth vision Amos saw **the Lord standing by an altar** and announcing that idols worshippers would be slain and their idols temple would be destroyed.

This was the end of the northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrian army.

Q6: How does Amos present Christ in his prophecy?

The book of Amos presents Christ as the Rebuilder of David's Tabernacles (Amos 9:11). In Acts 15:13-17 James

said that the believing in Christ Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles are the fulfilment of Amos prophecy of rebuilding the house of Israel Amos prophesied: *“On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; That they may possess the remnant of Edom. And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,” Says the LORD who does this thing”* (Amos 9:11-12).

And James said *“Brothers, listen to me. Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: “‘After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things”* (Acts 15:13-17).

Q7: How do we apply the message of Amos today?

God has called His people not only to be in relationship with Him but also to be in relationships with others. God hates religious hypocrisy and He calls us to make sure that our worship is real. God wants social justice and He wants us to make sure that poor people are valuable to Him. Amos pulls us back toward the center, where both the physical and the spiritual needs of people matter in God’s scheme of justice.

4. Notes on the Book of Obadiah

Q1: What is the purpose of the book of Obadiah?

Obadiah, the shortest book in the Old Testament, is only 21 verses long. It tells us a story of the descendants of two brothers, the Edomites and the Israelites. The Edomites are descendants of Esau and the Israelites are descendants of his twin brother, Jacob. The Israelites are being beaten up by the enemy and asking for help, but their brothers refuse and choose to fight against them. For that reason God pronounced judgment on the Edomites, and promised blessing on the Israelites. The Edomites were proud and thought nothing could hurt them. They forbade the Israelites to cross their land during the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt (Num 20:14-21). And when the Babylonians captured Jerusalem on 586 BC, they rejoiced over Israel's downfall and cruelly took part in plundering and massacre (Psalm 137:7).

The purpose of Obadiah is warning against sinful pride and showing that God will judge all those who are against His children; Edom is used as the example of this truth.

Q2: What are the key verses of the book?

The key verses 4, 12, 15 "*Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down,*" declares the LORD... *You should not look down on your brother in the day of his misfortune, nor rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their destruction, nor boast so much in the day of their trouble... As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head*".

Q3: How does Obadiah present Christ in his prophecy?

Verse 21 of the Book of Obadiah contains a foreshadowing of Christ and His Church. *“Then saviours shall come to Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, And the kingdom shall be the LORD’s”*. These “saviours” or “deliverers” are the apostles of Christ, and the preachers of the Gospel in these latter days. They are called "saviours," not because they obtain our salvation, but because they preach salvation through the Gospel of Christ and show us the way to obtain that salvation. They, and the Word preached by them, are the means by which the good news of salvation is delivered to all men. While Christ is the only Saviour who alone came to purchase salvation, and is the author of it, saviours and deliverers of the Gospel will be more and more in evidence as the end of the age draws near.

Q4: What are the outlines of Obadiah?

1. Verses: 1-9 Edom’s Humiliation
2. Verses: 10-14 Edom’s Crime
3. Verses: 15-21 Edom’s Doom and Jacob’s blessing.

The Day of the Lord is like a coin of two sides, one is a blessing to God’s people and the other a curse for the nations that know not God or reject his rule (it is applicable in both present and future) *“Esau’s house will be as stubble” and “The house of Jacob will be a fire”* (Obadiah. 18).

Q5: What is the practical application of Obadiah?

Unlike Edom, we must be willing to help others in times of need. Pride is sin. We have nothing to be proud of except Jesus Christ and what He has done for us.

5. Note on the Book of Jonah

The Book of Jonah portrays God's absolute sovereignty over his creation, but above all it portrays God as a God of love and mercy, who would rather forgive and save pagan people, than punish and destroy them. He is not only the God of Israel, but He is also the God of all nations. This lesson Israel never learned in spite of the clear teaching of this book. The Bible says "*Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too*" (Romans 3:29).

Q1: What is the key verse of the Book of Jonah?

The Lord said to Jonah, "*You have been concerned (pity) about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern (pity) for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and also many animals?*" (Jonah 4:10-11)

Q2: What is the message of the Book of Jonah?

The message of the book is to rebuke Israel, who was chosen and called by God to be a blessing to the Gentiles (Genesis 12:1-3), but, like Jonah, they refused to obey. And, like Jonah, they had to be disciplined; for Assyria would take Israel into captivity and Babylon would take Judah into captivity; and finally by the Romans when they destroyed the Temple and Jerusalem in 70 AD, but still God showed mercy for them through the Church (Romans 11:25-36).

Q 3: What are the outlines of the Book?

Ch 1:1-17: Jonah's commission and disobedience.

Ch 2:1-10: Jonah's repentance and deliverance.

Ch 3:1-10: Jonah's Recommissioned and success.

Ch 4:1-11: The angry prophet and God's great mercy.

Q4: Why did Jonah disobey God at first?

The book of Jonah tells about Jonah's struggle with God's love and compassion for pagan people, even those who were their enemies (Assyrian). Jonah wished to leave them to perish in their sins, and thus Israel would be rid of their foe forever. To go and preach to them might lead them to their salvation, and their consequent preservation. And this he wanted to avoid. But the merciful God gave Jonah an object lesson (the plant). It was designed to teach Israel that God's purposes of grace and love toward them as well as toward all nations.

Q5: What lessons we can learn from the Book of Jonah?

1. God is Sovereign in the world He has made. He can control his creatures, the weather, even plants (1:4,9,17, 2:10; 4:6-8).
2. God is the compassionate God, who cares for all mankind—even for animals; He is the “God of the second chance” even for a rebellious prophet (2:8-9; 3:9-10; 4:10-11).
3. The foolish, disobedient, selfish and angry prophet, who needed to know that the Compassionate God is the God of Israel as well as the God of all nations too (Romans 3:29).

4. Israel like Jonah, wrote off the pagans from God's mercy because there were not Israelites, but the pagans surprise us with their ready response to God's message; they repented, yet Israel refused to obey God (1:13-16; 3:5-9).

Q6: How does the book of Jonah present Christ?

The book of Jonah presents a beautiful type of the death and resurrection of Christ from the dead. "*For as Jonah was three days and nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*" (Matthew 12:40). Just as Jonah was marked out as God's servant by his miraculous deliverance, Jesus' claims and message would be endorsed by his resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:3). The story of Jonah being swallowed by a great fish or whale and come out alive is considered by Jews as parable, and by liberal scholars as fiction. But our Lord Jesus Christ, appealed to the narrative as genuine history (2 Kings 14:25 & Matthew 12:39-41), and this settles the issue for all who have any regard for the Saviour's deity.

Q7: What is the application of the Book of Jonah?

The book of Jonah ends with a question. God asks Jonah, "*Should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?*" Jonah does not answer. The question is left for Israel and us today to answer. Should God be concerned even about such sinners as those who live in Nineveh? And if God is, shouldn't we also be concerned? We should learn to accommodate our own sense of right and wrong to the realities of God's mercy to all people.

6. Notes on the Book of Micah

The book of Micah provides one of the most significant prophecies of Christ's birth in all the Old Testament, pointing some seven hundred years before Christ's birth to His birthplace of Bethlehem and to His eternal nature "*But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times*" (Micah 5:2; Matt 2:6).

Q1: Why is Micah so important?

Micah's prophecy of Jesus' birth is one of the most clear pictures of the world's future under the spiritual reign of the Prince of Peace (5:5), which is characterized by the presence of many nations coming to spiritual Jerusalem to worship the reigning king, that is, Jesus Himself (4:2; Hebrews 12:18-24; Galatians 4:21-27).

The prophecy of the birth of Christ as the Messiah and coming Ruler (Micah 5:2) is quoted in Matthew 2:6. This is interesting; as it shows that the people at the time of Christ understood and accepted that Micah 5:2 was a prophecy of the Messiah to come. Other New Testament passages include references to Micah 7:6 in Matthew 10:35-36 and Micah 7:20 in Luke 1:72-73.

Q2: What is the theme of Micah's book?

The message of the Book of Micah is a complex mixture of judgment and hope. On the one hand, the prophecies announce judgment upon Israel for social evils, corrupt leadership and idolatry (1:1-3:12). This judgment was

expected to end in captivity and the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem.

On the other hand, the book proclaims not merely the return of the remnant of Jacob from captivity, but also the transformation and exaltation of Israel and Jerusalem. The messages of hope and doom are not necessarily contradictory, however, since restoration and transformation take place only after judgment (Micah 4-5). Judgment and restoration inspire fear and hope, two ideas wrapped up in the final sequence of Micah's prophecy, a courtroom scene in which God's people stand trial before their Creator for turning away from Him and from others (Micah 6-7).

Micah's message of sin, repentance and restoration finds its ultimate fulfilment in Christ who is the propitiation for our sins (Romans 3:24-25) and the only way to God (John 14:6). The book of Micah concludes that God delight in pardoning with the prophet's call on the Lord as his only source of salvation and mercy (Micah 7:7), pointing the people toward an everlasting hope in their everlasting God (Micah 7:18-19).

Q3: What is the purpose of the Book of Micah?

Micah directed much of his prophecy toward the powerful leaders of Samaria and Jerusalem, the capital cities of Israel and Judah, during the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah between 735 and 700 B.C. (Micah 1:1). Jotham and Hezekiah were good kings, but Ahaz was very wicked (2 Kings 15-18).

The people living during Micah's time were deceived into thinking that their artificial religious spirituality and false sense of righteousness would save them from punishment and retribution. Despite their "transgression," "sin" and "iniquity",

they were under the misguided impression that because they had God among them, they would escape the penalty of disobedience. *“Yet they say, ‘Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us’”* (Micah 3:8-11).

Micah foretells in clear terms the invasion of Shalmaneser and Sennacherib (Micah 1:6-16), the utter destruction of Jerusalem (Micah 3:12). Just as clearly he foretells the deliverance of Israel (Micah 2:12, 4:10, 5:8); the birthplace of the Messiah (Micah 5:2); the spread of His Gospel from Mount Zion, and its results; the exaltation of His Kingdom over all nations” (Micah 4:1-4).

Q4: What are the key verses of the Book of Micah?

Micah 6:8 *“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.”*

Micah 7:7-10 *“But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me. Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light. Because I have sinned against him, I will bear the LORD’s wrath, until he pleads my case and upholds my cause. He will bring me out into the light; I will see his righteousness. Then my enemy will see it and will be covered with shame, she who said to me, “Where is the LORD your God?” My eyes will see her downfall; even now she will be trampled underfoot like mire in the streets”.*

Micah 7:18-19 *“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."

Q5: What are the outlines of the book of Micah?

The following is a suggested outline of the book of Micah:

- 1. Chapters 1- 3:** Judgment on Israel and Judah.
- 2. Chapters 4 – 5:** Restoration and peace in the coming of the Messiah.
- 3. Chapters 6 -7:** God’s controversy with Israel; His forgiveness upon Israel’s confession of their sins.

Q6: What is the Practical Application of the book of Micah for us today?

God gives warnings so we will not have to suffer His wrath. Judgment is certain if God's warnings are not heeded and His provision for sin in the sacrifice of His Son is rejected. For the believer in Christ, God will discipline us, not from hate, but because He loves us. He knows that sin destroys and He wants us to be whole.

This wholeness which is the promise of restoration awaits those who remain obedient to Him. Let’s determine to live as God desires “to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8).

7. Notes on the Book of Nahum

Q1: What is the story behind this book?

The book of Nahum is written about a hundred years after the mission of Jonah to Nineveh, the capital city of the Assyrian Empire. Nineveh had been given the privilege of knowing the One True God, under the preaching of Jonah. This great Gentile city had repented, and God had graciously stayed His judgment (Matthew 12:38-41).

However, a hundred years later, Nahum proclaims the downfall of Nineveh, because the new generation of Ninevites have forgotten God's mercy to their ancestors, and have returned to idolatry, violence, wickedness and arrogance. They killed more people than could be counted. They plundered nation after nation. It did not bother them to be cruel and vicious to their captives.

The Assyrians invaded Israel, and deported the ten tribes, but some escaped into the kingdom of Judah. In his arrogance, Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, challenged God and wanted to invade Jerusalem, and besieged Jerusalem, but God saved the city and his people that time, and destroyed 185,000 from the Assyrian army (2 Kings 18-19; Isaiah 36 -37).

Q2: What is the key verse of the Book of Nahum?

The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him, but with an overwhelming flood he will make an end of Nineveh Although I have afflicted you, Judah, I will afflict you no more. Now I will break their yoke from your neck and tear your shackles away” (1:7-8, 12-13)

Q3: What is the message of the book of Nahum?

The Hebrew name Nahum means comfort or consolation. The destruction of Nineveh and the Assyrian army is a message of comfort and consolation to Judah and all who live in fear of the cruelty of the Assyrians (Nahum 1:7, 12-13).

Q4: What is the outline of the book?

The book contains two sections, introducing us first to God the Just Judge, then to the judgment. Nahum describes the fall of Nineveh and God's reasons for destroying them. All this prophecy came to pass 86 years later, and the Babylonian army destroyed Nineveh.

1. Ch 1:1-7: God the Judge. Who and what God is (God's anger, patience, and power)
2. Ch 2-3: Nineveh's destruction.

Q5: What are the applications of Nahum for us today?

God is a holy, just Judge as well as loving; therefore we are all answerable to Him. He is the protector of His people and also the destroyer of the wicked who challenge His love and do evil things as the Assyrians did.

If the people of Nineveh repented when Jonah preached to them, why a hundred years later did their children become wicked than their ancestors?

Each generation of people has to choose whether to follow God. Parent's decisions can influence their children. But the children have to decide to believe and obey God too. Nineveh at the time of Nahum decided not to keep the knowledge of God as their ancestors did, and in their depraved mind honoured false gods and gave themselves to do evil things.

8. Notes on the Book of Habakkuk

Q1: What is the Story of the book?

Habakkuk was troubled with the “Why?” He asked God how come He was not doing anything about all the evil that his people were doing. The surprising thing was that God had a plan that was stranger than anything Habakkuk could imagine. God was going to use the Babylonians to punish His people. This made more questions for Habakkuk. How could a Holy and Just God use the Babylonians who were far wicked to punish his people?

Q2: What is the outline of the book?

The Book is divided into three chapters; the first two chapters are dialogue between Habakkuk and God. It reflect, the questions of “Why” and God’s answer. God assured Habakkuk that someday He will punish all who do evil, but those who fear God shall live by faith. The third chapter is Habakkuk’s prayer that reflects God’s greatness. He asked God to have mercy on Judah in the time of discipline and then he sang a doxology that reflects his resting faith in God.

In the first dialogue, Habakkuk complains to God that he sees sinful violence on every hand, yet no punishment is visited upon the evildoers. This is Habakkuk’s first perplexity at the Lord’s neglect of his prayers and apparent indifference to sin and suffering.

“How long, O Lord, shall I cry and You will not hear? Even cry out to You “Violence!” And You will not save? Why do You show me iniquity, and cause me to see trouble?” (1:2-3).

Habakkuk receives the Lord’s answer revealing His plan of using the Babylonians to punish His people of Judah *“I am raising up the Babylonian, a bitter and hasty nation, which marches through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful; their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves” (1:5-11)*

In the second dialogue, the Lord’s reply, though it solved one difficulty, raised another in Habakkuk’s mind. How can a Holy God use a wicked nation to punish His people who are more righteous than they?

“Are You not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O Lord, You have appointed them for judgment; O Rock, You have marked them for correction. You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours a person more righteous than he? (1:12-13)

Habakkuk ascends his watch-tower to wait patiently for the Lord’s answer. To this complaint, the Lord replies that He would punish the Babylonians but those counted righteous through their faith would be preserved from those troubled time (Habakkuk 2:1-20).

“I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint. Then the LORD replied: “Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. And the righteous will live by his faith” (2:1-4)

Chapter 3: Habakkuk concludes with a prayer that God would revive His delivering grace and in execution of judgment, He would remember mercy (Habakkuk 3: 2).

In vv.3-19 he praise God’s wisdom and trusts Him even though he does not fully understand His ways. He thought of God’s majesty in going before Israel to possess Canaan, and this brings rest to his soul *“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 tread on the heights” (Habak 3:17-19).*

Q3: Who was Habakkuk?

He was not only a prophet, but also one of the Levitical choristers in the Temple. He could not square his belief in a good and righteous God with the facts of life as he sees them. He was troubled with “Why?” Yet in all this mystery and perplexity, true to his name (his name means –to embrace or to cling), he clung to God, and pouring out his difficulties to Him in prayer, waited patiently for God’s answer. He trusted

the Lord and praises Him even though he did not understand God's ways (Hab. 2: 1-5; 3: 16-19)

Q4: What is the key verse of the Book?

Habakkuk 2:4, “*The Just Shall Live By Faith*”.

Habakkuk is actually the Grandfather of the Reformation. The great doctrine of Justification by Faith Paul learned from Habakkuk, and Luther learned from Apostle Paul, for he quotes Habakkuk 2:4 three times, (Rom 1:17, Gal 3:11, Hebrews 10:38)

Q5: How does Habakkuk present God in his prophecy?

The book of Habakkuk reveals God as the Holy One, the Saviour, the Sovereign, Unchanging, Righteous, and Merciful. The God who answers our prayer (1:12, 2:20, 3:2,6,13-15).

Q6: What is the application of Habakkuk for us today?

The world we live in is full of suffering and evil and is not any different from when Habakkuk lived in Judah than 2,500 years ago. It is not wrong to ask God “Why” as Habakkuk did. But we must also think through our faith, facing up to the hard questions of life though we may not have ready-made answers. We can trust in God as Habakkuk did, even when we cannot understand what God is doing. We can be confident that He is working things out in His own way and time. We can also learn to rejoice, not in our circumstances, but in God, in who He is and what He will do.

9. Notes on the Book of Zephaniah

Zephaniah was one of the last three prophets before the captivity of Judah; the other two were Habakkuk and Jeremiah. He began his ministry during the early reign of King Josiah (Zeph 1:1; 2 Kings 23:2).

Q 1: What is the story of the book of Zephaniah?

Zephaniah spoke about “*The Day of the Lord*” as the searching judgment of God (Zeph 1:12-18). The book begins with sorrow, but ends with singing. The first part of the book is full of sadness and gloom, but the last contains one of the sweetest songs of love in the Old Testament as the sun breaks through the clouds in the last chapter (Zeph 1:1-18; 3:14-17).

Zephaniah condemned the sins of Judah; the people had forsaken the Lord worshiping and swearing oaths by the name of heathen deities like Milcom, who was associated with the god Moloch, the god who required worship by human sacrifice (Zeph 1:4-6). The Lord said that he will search out and punish those who have "settled on their lees- wine left on its dregs" (Zeph 1:12), thinking in their heart that God will not do anything. Also he condemned the lack of justice in the land, oppression of the poor, and wealth that was gained by violence and deceitful practices (Zeph 1:8-9).

Zephaniah foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and the doom of all nations. He calls Israel to repent and seek the Lord while there is time (2:1-3). He also foretold blessing upon those who repent from all nations and Israel and their glorious future in Christ who will be the cause for praise and singing (3:9-20).

Q 2: What are the key words in Zephaniah?

There are three key words in the book; the first is “***Day of the Lord***” which is the theme of the book. It is described as an *inescapable and catastrophic time* (Zeph 1:7, 14-18; 2:2). The prophets of the Bible frequently mentioned Day of the Lord and they referred to various events of judgment upon all nations including God’s people, each of which pointed toward the ultimate Day of the Lord. The fall of Jerusalem is considered as a manifestation of that day.

The second key word in Zephaniah is “***In the midst***” that outlined the book into two divisions: God is mighty to smite, and He is mighty to save (Zeph 1:7; 3:5 & 3:15, 17)

1. The Lord “***in the midst***” for judgment (Zeph 1 to 3:8).
2. The Lord “***in the midst***” for salvation (Zeph 3:9-20).

The third key word is “***Jealousy***” (1:18; 3:8; 17). There is a jealousy which must never be associated with God, a jealousy which is always suspicious of faithlessness “*a lover’s hell*” that destroys the relationship. But God’s jealousy reveals the natural outcome of God’s love for His people, even in his awful judgment on them for their salvation and their eternal blessing. God does not want his people to suffer for their sins

Q 3: What are the key verses in the book?

Zephaniah 1:18 "*Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the LORD's wrath. In the fire of his jealousy the whole world will be consumed, for he will make a sudden end of all who live in the earth*". This verse tells us that it is too little too late when judgment comes as the prophet says “*Seek the Lord while there is time*” (Zeph 2:1-3).

Zephaniah 2:3 "*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.*" This verse is calling for repentance before it is too late.

Zephaniah 3:17 "*The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet (comfort) you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.*" This verse tells us of the hope for the godly remnant.

Q 4: What is the purpose of the Book?

Zephaniah showed God as both loving and severe. God is gracious and compassionate, but when all His warnings are ignored, judgment is to be expected (Zeph 1:2; 3:17).

Zephaniah showed that;

1. A faithful remnant would be delivered from captivity.
2. The Gentile nations shall be converted (full numbers).
3. One day people could worship God anywhere, not only in Jerusalem (2:11). Spiritual worship does not depend upon a place, but on the presence of God (John 4:21).

Zephaniah's message of judgment and encouragement contains three major doctrines: 1) God is sovereign over all nations. 2) The wicked will be punished and the righteous will be vindicated on the Day of Judgment. 3) God blesses those who repent and trust in Him.

Q 5: Who are the "remnant" and what is their blessing?

In every generation, there is a godly remnant of people who seek the Lord "*they call upon the name of the Lord and serve him*" (Zeph 3:9), when many treat God as if though He

doesn't exist or as though He doesn't care (Zeph 1:6; 12). They are cleansed from their sin, secure in God's protection, rejoicing in God's salvation (Zeph 2:3; 3:11-15) and with an incredible mystery bring delight and joy to God Himself "*The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet (**comfort**) you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing*" (Zeph 3:17).

The blessings of the day of the Lord in 3:14-20 on His remnant was partially fulfilled in Christ Jesus as Joel and Peter says (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21), but it will be fulfilled completely when the full number of Jew recognize Jesus as their Messiah as well as the full number of the believers from the Gentiles come to Christ before His second coming as Paul says (Romans 11:25-27).

Q 6: What is the Practical Application of Zephaniah for us today?

Zephaniah reminds us that God is offended by the moral and religious sins of His people. God's people will not escape punishment when they sin wilfully. Punishment may be painful, but its purpose is redemptive and brings hope for the faithful.

The inevitability of the punishment of wickedness gives comfort in a time when it seems that evil is uncontrolled and victorious. We have the freedom to disobey God but not the freedom to escape the consequences of that disobedience. Those who are faithful to God may be relatively few, but He does not forget them.

Zephaniah challenges us to pursue a godly lifestyle, to acquire a greater willingness to do what God wishes, and to get excited about the path on which obedience will take us.

10. Notes on the Book of Haggai

Q1: What is the story of the book of Haggai?

In 538 BC, the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, the LORD moved his heart to make a proclamation throughout his realm (*the former Babylonian and the Assyrian Empire*) and also to put it in writing:

“This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem, and may their God be with them. And in any locality where survivors may now be living, the people are to provide them with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem” (Ezra 4:1-5).

The Jews who had returned to Jerusalem started to rebuild the altar of the Lord, the Temple and the wall of the city, but their enemies stopped the work (Ezra 5-7). Zeal and enthusiasm of the people died away and their personal affairs interfered with God’s business (Haggai 1:3-11).

In 520 BC, eighteen years having passed since the Jew returned from their captivity; the Temple still lay in ruins. The Lord directed the prophet Haggai to urge the leaders and the people of Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple (Haggai 1:1-3; Ezra 5:1-2). Haggai preaches four fiery messages to stir them up to finish the Temple. He calls them to renewed courage and faith in the Lord who controls the future. The Lord

promises prosperity and peace in the future for the renewed and purified people.

Q2: What is the purpose of the Book?

Haggai sought to challenge the people of God concerning their priorities. He called them to reverence and glorify God the Lord of Hosts, who is in control of everything (a name that describes the greatness of God). He urged them to honour God, by building His Temple in spite of all the difficulties and opposition that faced them (1:2-14).

Haggai called them not to be discouraged because this Temple would not be quite as richly decorated as Solomon's. He exhorted them to turn from the uncleanness of their ways and to trust in God's sovereign power (2:1-19).

The Book of Haggai is a reminder of the problems the people of God faced at this time, how the people courageously trusted in God and how God provided for their needs.

Q3: What are the key verses of the Book?

Haggai 1:4 *"Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your panelled houses, while this house remains a ruin?"*

Haggai 1:5-6 *"Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Give careful thought to your ways. 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.'"*

Haggai 2:9 *“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.”*

Q 4: Why is the book of Haggai important?

Haggai’s message to rebuild the temple was passionate, simple, and straightforward (1:8). The people of Judah listened! Through the physical act of rebuilding the temple, the people began to indicate a shift in their spiritual lives: from devotion to self toward devotion to God.

Haggai’s prophecy came at a time when the people of Israel were extremely vulnerable. They had been humbled by their exile to Assyria and Babylon, hopeful in their return to their land of Israel, and then so discouraged by opposition in their rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem that they had quit (Ezra 4:24). Now, eighteen years later, with Haggai blaming their lack of food, clothing, and shelter on their failure to rebuild the temple, the Jews were receptive to his message of rebuilding the Lord’s house.

Haggai ends with promises of restoration and blessing. God promises to make Zerubbabel the governor of Judah like a signet ring, which was a symbol of honor, authority, and power, used to seal letters and decrees.

Zerubbabel, as God’s signet ring, represents the house of David and the continuation of the messianic line. Through Zerubbabel the Davidic line of kings was re-established and fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ which appears in the line

of Jesus on both Joseph's side (Matt 1:12) and Mary's side (Luke 3:27).

Q5: What is the outline of the Book?

1. Chapter 1: The command to rebuild the Temple
2. Chapter 2: Messages of comfort and hope.

Unlike most of the other prophets, Haggai explicitly dated his prophecies, down to the day. He gave four separate messages, the first on August 29, 520 BC (Haggai 1:1); the second on October 17, 520 BC (2:1); and the final two on December 18, 520 BC (2:10, 20). These messages encouraged the people of Judah to finish building the temple and to have hope in God for the promise of blessings in the future.

Q 6: How can we apply the message of Haggai today?

The Book of Haggai draws attention to common problems most people face even today. God sought to warn the people to heed His words. Not only did God warn them, but He also offered promises through His servant Haggai to motivate them to follow Him. Here five things we need to consider;

1. To examine our priorities, doing God's work first, and to act on the basis of God's promises.
2. To reject a defeatist attitude when we run into opposition or discouraging circumstances.
3. To seek to live pure lives before God.
4. To act courageously for God because we have the assurance that He is with us always and is in full control of our circumstances. He is the Lord of Hosts.
5. To rest secure in God's hands knowing that He will abundantly bless us as we faithfully serve Him.

11. Notes on the Book of Zechariah

Q1: What is the story of the Book of Zechariah?

In 538 BC, Cyrus the king of Persia smashed the Babylonian Empire, and in same year he announced that the exiles were free to return to their home land, and rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. The Jews, who had returned from Captivity, were struggling and trying to rebuild their temple, but they could not. Now, more than eighteen years had passed and the Temple had not yet been finished. Here in 520 BC, the prophet Zechariah came alongside with his contemporary Haggai, the older prophet (Ezra 6:14), to deliver messages from the Lord to them. While Haggai's message pointed out the Jews' sin and self-focuses, Zechariah's message encourages them to finish the Temple, and points out that they are not merely building a Temple; but they building their future, because it is in this Temple that the Messiah will come. With that as their motivation, they can enter into the building project with wholehearted zeal, for their Messiah is coming.

Q2: What is the theme of the book?

For eighteen years after the exiles had returned to Jerusalem, the task of rebuilding the temple has not been completed. Zechariah is commissioned by God to encourage the Jews in their unfinished responsibility. Zechariah encourages them to action by reminding them of the future importance of the Temple. The Temple must be built, for one day the Messiah's glory will inhabit it. God promised blessing upon their present obedience and that He would remember

His promises to His people, even after all the time they had spent outside the land.

Zechariah provided specific prophecy with great encouragement about their immediate and distant future. Their nation would still be judged for sin (5:1–11), but they would also be cleansed and restored (3:1–10), and God would rebuild His people (1:7–17). Zechariah concluded his book by looking into the distant future, first at the rejection of the Messiah by Israel (9:1–11:17), and then at His glorious coming to reign forever (12:1–14:21).

Q3: What are the key verses of Zechariah?

Zechariah 1:3 *"Therefore tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Return to me,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'and I will return to you,' says the LORD Almighty."*

Zechariah 4:6 *"This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty".*

Zechariah 7:13 *"When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen,' says the LORD Almighty."*

Zechariah 9:9 *"Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."*

Zechariah 13:9 *"They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God.'"*

Zechariah 14:7 *"At evening time it shall be light"*

Q4: Why is Zechariah so important?

The book of Zechariah contains the clearest and the largest numbers of messianic prophecy passages among the Minor Prophets. Christ is the theme of the Book of Zechariah. Zechariah pictures Christ in both His first coming in lowliness for our salvation (9:9) and His second coming in glory for judgment (9:10–10:12). The Messiah is described according to Zechariah, as *Saviour*, as a *fountain* whose blood covers the sins of all who come to Him for salvation (12:10; 13:1; 1 John 1:7), as a *Shepherd* forsaken by his sheep who pay him off with thirty pieces of silver (11:12-13; 13:7; Matt 26:14-16; 27:3-10) as *a Judge*, and ultimately, as the *King* whose kingdom will never end (14:8–9).

The theme of Zechariah is looking to the promise that Messiah would come and dwell in our midst (2:10-12), which was fulfilled in Matthew 1:23. Also the theme of Zechariah is looking to the promise of His Second Coming where those who pierced Him will look upon Him and mourn (12:10; John 19:33; Rev 1:7).

Q5: What is the outline of the Book of Zechariah?

The book of Zechariah has two distinct parts:

1. Chapters 1-8 are largely in the form of 8 visions which deal with the restoration of Jerusalem, particularly the completion of the Temple and the purification of God's people with a snapshot of the Messianic age.
2. Chapters 9-14 are prophecies about the expected Messiah and the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom and judgment for the unbeliever but salvation for God's people on the Day of the Lord at the end of time.

Q 6: How do we apply the message of Zechariah today?

If we struggle with discouragement to fulfil God's plan in our lives (as God's people were struggling to finish the Temple and Satan with his allies were against them- Zech 3), let us rely on God's promise as they did "*Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD Almighty*" (Zech 4:7). Yes as God says "*At evening time it shall be light*" (Zech 14:7); this is our hope for the future.

Let also remember that Jesus is the ultimate temple in which God's presence dwells with his people "*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*" We join in the building of God's new temple as we seek to expand the church by the Spirit's power. "*Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?*" (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Zechariah emphasized in the last chapter that peoples from all nations will come to worship God, who desires salvation for all including Israel. But let us remember that God does not eliminate the individual's freedom to follow God or rebel, but holds people responsible for the choices they make.

Salvation is only available through the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross, who died in our place to atone for sin. So we must extend God's invitation of salvation to all people regardless of their origins, languages, races and cultures.

12. Notes on the book of Malachi

Malachi is the final book and the last prophet of the Old Testament to speak to Israel after Exile. Its message was delivered many years after the Israelites had rebuilt the temple in 515 BC. It was written between 440 and 400 B.C.

Q1: What is the story of the Book?

One hundred years had passed since Israel had returned to their land after their Exile. The Temple had been rebuilt. The walls of Jerusalem had been completed. Israel had been cured of idolatry but the majority were living in sin and were as corrupt as their ancestors. They were perplexed and wondering where God's promises of blessing were prophesied by Haggai and Zechariah. They were still under Persian rule and questioned God's love and even said harsh things against him. God calls them to repent and addresses their corruption regarding issues like sacrifices, marriage and tithing. Malachi encourages them while he rebukes their indifference to God and affirms that God still loves them and He will send the Messiah as He promised (Malachi 1:6-8; 2:10-12).

Q2: Why is Malachi so important?

Malachi is unique for *its dialogue* style between God and His people. He uses question and answers throughout his messages. All their words of criticism had been noted by the Lord, and the Lord answers them "*You say*" which is the Key Word in this book (1:2, 6, 7, 12, 13; 2:14, 17; 3:7, 8, 13, 14).

Malachi closes with God's promise of sending another messenger who will prepare the way before the coming Messiah. Malachi pronounces God's promise of blessing and restoration for the godly remnant and curse for those who

reject the Lord's way of righteousness. After four hundred years, God fulfilled His promise, and John the Baptist comes as Elijah before Jesus, the Messiah proclaiming, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near*" (Matthew 3:2; 11:4; 17:10-13; Mark 9:13; Luke 1:17).

Q3: What is the Purpose of Writing?

Malachi made it clear that God's people had to take their worship more seriously and he called them to repentance. The corruption among the priests was great. Animals with blemishes were being sacrificed (Deut 15:21). The people were not tithing as they should have been (Lev 27:30-32). Men were divorcing their wives to marry women who worshipped idols. They focused on their unfortunate circumstances and refused to account for their own sinful deeds. But in spite of the people's sin and turning away from God, Malachi assures them of God's love, and the Messiah, the Sun of Righteousness, will heal those who believe in Him.

Q4: What are the Key Verses in the Book?

Malachi 1:6 "*A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me? says the Lord Almighty. It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name.*"

Malachi 3:6-7 "*I the Lord do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you", says the Lord Almighty.*

Malachi 3: 16-18 "*Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of*

remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name”.

Malachi 4:2 *“But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. Then you will trample on the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act,” says the LORD Almighty.*

Q5: What is the outline of the Book?

1. A Message of Love: Chapter 1:1-5
2. A Message of Rebuke: Chapter 1:6 to 2:17
3. A Message of Hope: Chapters 3-4

Q6: How do we apply the message of Malachi today?

Throughout Israel’s history, the nation failed and God called His people back to Himself. Each time, Israel would fail again, prompting the cycle to begin again. God’s final word of the Old Testament concerns judgment for sin and testifies to our inability to love Him without the help of His grace.

Malachi’s call prompts us to live faithfully before God and offers hope that God is not yet through with extending mercy to His people (Malachi 3:1; 4:2-6). God sees our hearts, so He knows what our intentions are; nothing can be hidden from Him. He will return and He will be the judge. But if we return to Him, He will return to us (Malachi 3:6), and this is His promise to us *“But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays”* (4:2).

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