

Title: GENESIS

Author: Moses.

Background: It is the book of ancient history.

Date of Writing: About 1200 BC.¹

To whom it was written: To the children of Israel but also to the whole of the people of God.

Purpose of writing: To remind Israel of their beginnings.

Summary

The Book is divided into two parts. Part one shows the development of the world from the actual creation of the earth and Adam and Eve, the Fall of Man and its consequences in murder in the first family. Rules for marriage are proposed. Development of three distinct races in Shem, Ham and Japheth. The flood wiped out the world population except Noah and his family. Second part deals with Abraham and his consequent generations. Isaac the son of promise is followed by Jacob who becomes Israel and the life of Joseph which gave the emerging Israeli nation a truly great leader.

¹ Genesis. Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible. Abingdon Press, Nashville.(1962) p. 370

Title: EXODUS

Author: Moses

Background: The Nation moving from Egypt

Date of writing: Presumed to be about 1550 B.C.²

To whom it was written: Abraham's descendents

Purpose of writing: A book of history describing the exodus from Egypt

Summary

An Historical Book of The Old Testament. It records the release from slavery of the descendants of Abraham from Egypt after 430 years. Led by Moses, they journeyed towards the Promised Land. His brother Aaron, becomes his spokesman and priest. The first twelve chapters are devoted to this aspect. The next 20 chapters are given to the giving of the Law, and for the structure of the Tabernacle. This includes instructions for the conduct of life In the Land, and the pattern of the Tabernacle of worship including its furniture. It records their failure to enter the Land through unbelief and consequent 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

² Exodus. The Oxford Companion to the Bible. Oxford University Press (1993) Oxford.(1993). p. 210

Title: LEVITICUS

Author: Moses

Background: Moses received from God a whole list of instructions for the people.

Date of writing: 1450 BC.

To whom it was written: Children of Israel.

Purpose of writing: to teach the people how to worship service and a holy God, through sacrifice and obedience.

Summary:

This book orientated round the Tabernacle of the Meeting. There are five sacrifices mentioned in detail. Burnt offering, offered to make atonement for sin. The grain offering which sets aside some of the goodness the Lord has bestowed. The peace offering was an optional sacrifice related to a confession or vow. The sin offering covered un-intentional sin. The trespass offering for trespass.

Chapters also cover the service of the priests and the five laws of impurity including physical defects and diseases.

Finally, there are other subjects leading to holiness in the personal life and the keeping of the Sabbath.³

³ New Spirit-Filled Life Bible. Thomas Nelson, INC. (2002). p134

Title: NUMBERS

Author: Moses

Background: God commands Moses to undertake a census.

Date of writing: About 1440 BC.

To whom it was written The people of Israel

Purpose of writing: : As an historical book for God's people to be read in the future.

Summary: Smith⁴ suggests that the first ten chapters were preparing for the departure from the Sinai to the Promised Land. The opening chapters give details of duties according to families. The Levites are given detailed instructions of their work.

The journey from Sinai to the borders of Canaan covers the next four chapters including the rebellion by Arran and Miriam with God intervening! Moses sent out 12 spies to review the assets of Canaan. A negative report from 10 caused the people to refuse to enter the land and thereby thwarted the purposes of God.

⁴ Smith's Bible Dictionary. PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Biblesoft, inc (2003,2006)

Title: DEUTERONOMY

Author: Moses

Background. Deuteronomy is law preached rather than law taught.

Date of writing: Controversial About 1400 BC. Or parts of it later⁵

To whom it was written: The Children of Israel.

Summary:

Consists almost entirely of sermons and speeches. Its central element is a detailed law-code by which the Israelites are to live by in the Promised Land. Moses reminisces about their journey from Egypt and their struggles and trials in the wilderness. He repeats the Ten Commandments. Explains the religious and national regulations the children of Israel must keep. He details the three major feasts of the year, the Passover, Pentecost, and the feast of the Tabernacle. He gives them laws covering the Sabbath, space provision of cities of refuge, laws regarding murder, marriage, and delinquent sons. He adds laws covering close relationships, dress, building codes, and marriage. The book finishes with the death of Moses.

⁵ See the following publications for detailed reasoning about dates of writing.
The Illustrated Bible. Inter-Varsity Press. Leicester. (1994). P. 387
The Oxford Companion to the bible. Oxford University Press, Oxford. (1993). P. 165,166.
Thompson, J.A. Deuteronomy. Tyndale Old Testament Commentary. Inter-Varsity Press. Leicester. (1974) p. 47-53

Title: JOSHUA

Author: Joshua. (24:26)

Background: The history of the Children of Israel from the time of Moses' death to possessing the Promised Land

Date of Writing: Approximately 1250-1225 BC.

To whom it was written. To the Jewish Nation

Purpose of Writing: : As part of the historic collection of Books of the Old Testament.

Summary:

Joshua replaces Moses as leader then the Book describes in detail the invasion by Israel of Canaan and the subsequent partitioning of the land by tribes.

The crossing of the river Jordan and the possession of Jericho where major developments for the people were recorded. Then there were two specific battles whereby the power of the Canaanites were destroyed and this allowed major incursions into the other parts of the land. The Book closes with an account of Joshua's spiritual journey and God's faithfulness to him in his life and all his exploits.

Books of the Old Testament - Judges 7/39

Title: JUDGES

Author: Not known but according to ancient Jewish tradition Samuel.

Background: Time period of the Judges. Cundall (390 years⁶) while Farrar, estimates 410 years.⁷

Date of Writing: Estimates vary between 1045 and 1000 BC

To whom it was written: To the Jewish nation as a record of their history.

Purpose of writing: To give a history of God's people under the Judges.

Summary:

The Book of Judges deals with the entry of the Children of Israel into the Canaan, the Promised Land. This happened about 1230 BC.⁸ God then called upon chosen men and women, called Judges, to deliver his people from attacks of Gentile nations who were previously deposed of their lands. They did not reign as kings or presidents but were raised in times of need. There were gaps between them one being appointed and his/her successor. They included a woman Deborah.

⁶ Cundall, Arthur E. Judges. Tyndale Old Testament Series. Inter-Varsity Press. London.(1974) P.32-33

⁷ Farrar, F.W. Judges. A Bible Commentary for English Readers, (N/D) Cassell & Co Ltd. London. P 167

⁸ Cundall Arthur E. P. 32

Title: RUTH

Author: Unknown.

Background: Israel was under a seven year famine.

Date of Writing: Unknown with certainty. See Morris for detailed analysis.⁹

To whom it was written; To the Jewish Nation

Purpose of writing: To give a “family tree” for the greatest of all kings of Hebrew history, Jesus”.¹⁰

Summary

The family of Elimelech from Bethlehem to the land of Moab to escape a severe famine. The two sons marry Moabite women and both the father and the ones die.

The widow Naomi is left with two daughters-in-law. She decides to return to Israel but Ruth insists on going with her. Ruth gathers grain from a nearby field belonging Elimelech’s kinsman, Boaz. Through a series of encounters, Boaz buys the land and marries Ruth. The marriage line continues to Jesus. (Matthew 1:5). Several Jewish traditions are revealed such as who can redeem land and persons and the ritual involved.

⁹ Morris, Leon. Ruth. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries .Inter-Varsity Press, London. (1974). P 229-239.

¹⁰ Illustrated Bible Dictionary, The. Inter-Varsity Press, London (1994). p 1354

Books of the Old Testament 1 Samuel 9/39

Title: 1 SAMUEL

Author; Samuel for part of the Book.

Background: The Book shows the transition from the leadership of various judges to a full scale monarchy.

Date of Writing: 1150-1010 BC.¹¹

To whom it was written: To the Jewish nation as an historical record

Purpose of writing To record the events of a nation turning from Ad hoc judges to a fully fledged monarchy.

Summary

This Book essentially is one of relationships. The first was between Samuel and Saul, then between Saul and David. Samuel was dedicated to God's work as a child. The nation eventually rejected Samuel leading them and demanded a king. God chose Saul. He failed the test yet ruled for the next fifteen years. David the shepherd boy was anointed as king thirteen years before and secretly. David lived abroad for fear of his life until Saul and his sons were killed in battle.

¹¹ 1 Samuel. Russell, D. Understanding Each Book of the Bible. Renewal Bible Training Centre. Solihull. (2003) p 59

Books of the Old Testament. 2 Samuel 10/39

Title: 2 SAMUEL

Author: Author Unknown

Background: Israel had moved to the reign of kings era and this Book explores the period of King David's reign.

Date of Writing Between 931-722 BC.¹²

To whom it was written: Children of Israel.

Purpose of writing: To remind the nation, of their unique history in having King David and King Solomon.

Summary

This book describes the highlights in the life of King David who reigned firstly over Judah and later over the whole nation of Israel. . Death of King Saul and Jonathan occurs at the beginning. The Book covers David's triumphs, transgressions, and troubles. Other important characters are Bathsheba the wife of Uriah, and Nathan the prophet. David was able to establish Israel as a united nation, politically, spiritually and militarily with Jerusalem as its capital. The incident concerning Bathsheba and Uriah was to effect David for the rest of his life.

¹² New Spirit-Filled Life Bible. Thomas Nelson, INC. (2002) p.401

Title: 1 KINGS

Author: Unknown

Background: Continuation from 2 Samuel. Portrays the life of Solomon and the Temple building programme

Date of Writing: Unknown. 1 & 2 Kings cover the period 1015 – 560¹³

To whom it was written: To the Jewish Nation

Purpose of writing: A record of the Jewish history of God dealing with the Nation.

Summary

The Book opens with the last days of King David and ends with the Kings of Babylon. It opens with the building of the Temple through Solomon and ends with its destruction. God gave Solomon long life and wisdom beyond all other men so that leaders from all over the world came to hear his judgements. When old, Solomon had his heart turned by his foreign wives and he worshipped foreign idols. As a consequence, God divided the kingdom into two - Israel and Judea. The exploits of Elijah are revealed.

¹³ Fausset's Bible Dictionary, Electronic Database Biblesoft, Inc (2006)

Books of the Old Testament: 2 Kings 12/39

Author: Unknown. The description is as for 1 Kings.

Background: As for 1 Kings

Date of Writing: Unknown. 1 & 2 Kings cover the period 1015 – 560¹⁴

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To whom it was written: To the Jewish Nation

Purpose of writing: A record of the Jewish history.

Summary

The Book opens with the last days of Elijah and the development of the ministry of Elisha. He performed twice as many miracles as Elijah, but still the country disintegrated into two kingdoms each with their own king. Elisha, ministered to God's people in the Northern kingdom for 50 years but still the nation turned from God and was exiled. It relates to the sordid story of the 12 Kings of the Northern kingdom (Israel) and the 16 Kings of the southern kingdom (Judah). This arrangement lasted for 130 years until Israel was conquered by Assyria and led into captivity in 722 BC

¹⁴ Fausset's Bible Dictionary, Electronic Database Biblesoft, Inc (2006)

Title: 1 CHRONICLES

Author Unknown. Suggestions of either Ezra or Nehemiah.

Background: Described as the Book of Things Left Out.¹⁵ 1 and 2 Chronicles are a revised edition of 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings.

Date of writing: 595 BC to 400 BC.¹⁶

To whom it was written: The remnant that had remained true to the Jewish faith after returning from exile from Babylon.

The purpose of writing: Record their history

Summary

The returning of the exiles from Persian captivity required an account of their country under the rule of Kings. The first nine chapters cover the genealogy from Adam to David showing the true Jewish line to the remnant that remained. It then describes the Hebrew nation up to the death of King David, and in particular, the development of the southern kingdom and David's desire to build the Temple following the return of the Ark to Jerusalem.

¹⁵ McConville, J. G. Chronicles. The Daily Bible Study The Saint Andrews Press, Edinburgh. (1984) p 2

¹⁶ International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, revised edition, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co (1979)

Title: 2 CHRONICLES

Author: Unknown. Suggestions of Ezra or Nehemiah.

Background: Described as the Book of Things Left Out.¹⁷ 1 and 2 Chronicles are essentially a revised edition of 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings.

Date of Writing: 595 BC to 400 BC.¹⁸

To whom it is written: The remnant that had remained true to the Jewish faith after returning from exile from Babylon.

The Purpose of writing: Record the history of the time.

Summary

This Book covers the period from Solomon's reign in 971 BC to the end of the exile in 538 BC. The main theme of the Book is the building of Solomon's Temple and Solomon's wise and righteous acts including the visit of the Queen of Sheba. It continues with the history of the rise and fall of the kings of Judea and Israel showing mainly their negative but occasionally positive reigns in following God.

¹⁷ McConville, J. G. Chronicles. The Daily Bible Study The Saint Andrews Press, Edinburgh. (1984) p 2

¹⁸ International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, revised edition, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co (1979)

Title: EZRA

Author; Ezra.

Background: Both Ezra and Nehemiah were part of Chronicles and therefore the dates of these three Books are intertwined.

Date of Writing: Kinder puts the date for Ezra going to Jerusalem as 458 BC¹⁹

To whom it was written: To the Hebrew nation.

Purpose of writing Recording the restoration community's achievements.

Summary

The Book records the early years of the remnant of exiles returning to the shattered city of Jerusalem. The Book starts with a decree from Cyrus king of Persia to Ezra to build the House of the Lord in Jerusalem. The articles stolen from the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar were returned. Ezra lists those who took the journey back to their own country. Opposition was encountered at least twice. During which time Haggai and Zechariah prophesied. His confirms how essential it was to receive the support of the prophets in this venture.

¹⁹ Kinder, D. Ezra & Nehemiah. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester (1979). p. 13

Books of the Old Testament Nehemiah 16/39

Title: NEHEMIAH

Author; Nehemiah

Background: The Book was written when the walls of Jerusalem were ruined however, the Temple had been rebuilt by Ezra's overseeing.

Date of Writing: Nehemiah came from Persia to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in 445/444 BC.²⁰

To whom it was written. To the Jewish nation.

Purpose of writing As an historical record.

Summary

Nehemiah, the King's cup bearer was informed that there was great distress in the city of Jerusalem and that the walls and its gates were destroyed. King Artaxerxes, responded giving Nehemiah unprecedented authority to rebuild the walls together with an approved shopping list including timber. For protection, he sent soldiers together with letters of authorisation to obtain supplies.

Nehemiah involved the whole community in building the wall near their homes and protecting it whilst being built. The work took 52 days despite opposition. A census of the people taking part was also recorded

Books of the Old Testament Esther 17/39

²⁰ Fensham, F Charles. Nehemiah. Oxford Companion to the Bible. (1993). P. 553

Title: ESTHER

Author; Unknown

Background: Intrigue in the courts of the Persian Empire.

Date of Writing: The Date is uncertain. Browne.²¹ and Tucker²² give widely varying dates.

To whom it was written: The Hebrew Nation

Purpose of writing An historical account of God's deliverance from annihilation

Summary

Esther is the only Book in the Bible that does not once mention God or religion once. An intriguing story of four characters playing out a dangerous game. Haman, A high official of King Ahasuerus in second only after the princes in the kingdom plans to annihilate the whole of the Jewish nation in the Persian Empire. The intervention by the Queen was successful, with the support of her uncle Mordecai and Haman is hanged on his own gallows.. The resultant celebration for deliverance is called Purim and is still celebrated today on the 14th and 15th day in March²³

²¹ Browne, L.E. Peake's Commentary on the Bible. Thomas Nelson & Son London (1962) p.381

²² Tucker, Gene M. The Oxford Companion to the Bible. Oxford University Press (1993) p. 201

²³ Purim. The Illustrated Bible Dictionary. Inter-Varsity Press Leicester (1994) p. 1306

Title: JOB

Author: Unknown

Background : Man from wealthy background is attacked by Satan but stands firm.

Date of Writing: Unknown. Possibly the oldest Book in the Old Testament. See Ellison²⁴

To whom it was Witten: Uncertain but part of the Wisdom section of the Old Testament

Purpose of Writing: To show how a true believer can respond to overwhelming adversity.

Summary

Job is subject to unprecedented attacks by Satan by permission of God. Previously God had protected him. However, his family is killed, his cattle destroyed, and he is covered in boils and then he is expelled from his community. Three friends visit named, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar and give worldly advice and suggest this catastrophe was his own fault. In all this confusion, Job remains true to God. When the testing is over, God rewards him with riches and wealth exceeding what he previous had.

²⁴ Ellison, H. L. Job. The Illustrated Bible Dictionary (Vol 2) Inter-Varsity Press. Leicester (1994) p. 790

Title: PSALMS

Author: 73 by David the King; 12 Asaph the priest; 10 Sons of Korah; 2 Solomon; 1 Moses; 1 Heman 1 Ethan and 50 unknown.

Background: Psalms were to be used as part of collective worship.

Date of Writing: Over many centuries (c1410-c430 BC)

To whom it was written: Some were addressed to the 'Chief Musician' while others were written for individuals.

Purpose of writing: A form of public worship and set to music.

Summary: The number of subjects is endless. The main ones include God's the historical dealing with the Jewish nation. Praise is evident in many of the psalms, extolling the attributes of God. The relationship between man and God including man's failing to keep covenant with God with forgiveness on God's part.

There are often cries to God against wicked people and nations for deliverance and judgement, there are moving psalms of repentance for sins committed.

Books of the Old Testament Proverbs 20/39

Title PROVERBS

Author: Solomon and others

Background: Classed as the wisdom/poetry section of the Old Testament. There is no consistent development of thought.

Date of writing: Written over many centuries with final editing date in the 5th century BC²⁵

To whom it was written: To people in general, particularly to young men.

Purpose of writing: To give instruction on how to live a self-fulfilled life.

Summary:

The Book is one of general principles; they are not the promises of God or part of his covenant. . Anyone who keeps them will benefit from their use. The general principles however, do have exceptions.

Wisdom predominates the Book. Other subjects include, Adultery, Alcohol, Business, Cheerfulness, Crime, Doing Good, Evil, Fools, Friendship, Giving, Gossip,. Government, Jealously and envy, Laziness, Lies, The Lord, Love, Neighbours, Parent/Child, Poverty, Prayer, Pride and Arrogance, The Righteous, Temper, Wealth, The Wicked, Wisdom, Women and Wives, Work.

²⁵ The Illustrated Bible Dictionary. Inter-Varsity Press Leicester (1994) p.1291

Books of the Old Testament Ecclesiastes 21/39

Title: ECCLESIASTES

Author: Solomon

Background: Written after Solomon's pagan wives had turned his heart away from God. His search for the meaning of life.

Date of Writing: 970-940 BC.²⁶

To whom it was written: A philosophical Book for all. Warning, no biblical doctrine should be based upon these writings.

Purpose of writing: To show how meaningless life is on a human basis without God.

Summary:

This Book records the sad decline of the wisest man in the Bible. He searches for meaning in a backslidden state through a series of statements. No Christian doctrine can be established by its writings. Materialism is a folly and there is nothing new under the sun. It shows man to be ethical because he understands right from wrong, righteousness and wickedness. For those who live virtuous lives and the sinful. Finally, if man lives in the natural only they only eat, drink and be merry;

²⁶ The Applied Bible Dictionary..Kingsway Publications Ltd. Eastbourne. (1990) p.323

Books of the Old Testament Song of Solomon 22/39

Title. SONG OF SOLOMON

Author: Solomon

Background: None can be found

Date of writing: Between 970-930 BC²⁷ or as late as 450-400 BC.²⁸

To whom it was written: Not known

Purpose of writing: Solomon's love for his wife a Shulamite girl

Summary:

It is a mystery why this Book is found within the Old Testament canon. There is no connection with religion and presents itself as secular literature.²⁹ Some theologians have suggested it is a picture of God's love for his covenant people, others an allegory of Christ's love for his heavenly bride the Church.

It is a poetic Book, full of vivid imagery. It is the only Book in the Bible to have all its content put into the mouth of speakers, but it is a monologue with practically no dialogue. It has a vocabulary all of its own. There are many exquisite expressions that describe the loveliness of womanhood..

²⁷ New Spirit-Filled Life Bible. Thomas Nelson, INC. (2002) p.859

²⁸ The Oxford Companion to the Bible. . Oxford University Press Oxford. (1993).p 708

²⁹ Aglen, Rev. Song of Solomon. A Bible Commentary for English Readers. Cassell & Co Ltd.London (n/d) p. 383

Books of the Old Testament Isaiah 23/39

Title. ISAIAH

Author: Isaiah

Background: Isaiah, was married to a prophetess (Isa 8:3) and he was called to be a prophet.

Date of writing: During the reigns of Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz and Hezekiah (740-700 BC)³⁰

To whom it was written: Peoples of Judah (Chapters 1-39) Future generations (Chapters 40-66).

Purpose of writing: Warning of God's judgement on a nation that had forsaken God.

Summary. There are six sections of the book: (1) chapters. 1-12, prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem, closing with promises of restoration. (2) chapters 13-23, oracles of judgment and salvation; (3) chapters 24-27, the Lord's world judgement in the redemption of Israel; (4) chapters. 28-35, a cycle of prophetic warnings against alliance with Egypt, ending with a prophecies concerning Edom and Israel's ransom; (5) chapters. 36-39, history, prophecy, and song intermingled;

³⁰ IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament. Inter-versity Press. Leicester 2000)
Electronic version

(6) chapters. 40-66, prophecies of comfort and salvation, and also of the future glory awaiting Israel.³¹

³¹ International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, revised edition, by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1979 (computer edition)

Books of the Old Testament Jeremiah 24/39

Title: JEREMIAH

Author: Jeremiah

Background: Writer ministered as prophet during the reigns of five kings of Judah – Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Johoiachin and Zedekiah.

Date of Writing: 626-586 BC³²

To whom it was written: To the kings and rulers of Judah and people in Jerusalem.

Purpose of writing: To record the forty years history of Judah to the final fall of Jerusalem.

Summary

There is no chronological order to this Book. Harrison lays out a possible order under the reign of the kings.³³ The nation believed it held the ultimate defence against all enemies in that it had the Temple in Jerusalem and God promised never to leave them. Jeremiah confronted the kings and the people with the message that they would be captured unless the nation turned back again to God. He suffered severely for his prophetic ministry. The Book ends with the fall of Jerusalem.

³² International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, revised edition, 1979 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. (1979) Computer Edition.

³³ Harrison, R. K. Jeremiah & Lamentations. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Inter-Varsity Press. London. (1973) p. 33

Books of the Old Testament Lamentations 25/39

Title: LAMENTATIONS

Author: Possibly Jeremiah

Background: Jerusalem had fallen and the writings concentrate around this time.

Date of writing: approximately 587 -550 BC³⁴

To whom it is written: To the survivors after the fall of Jerusalem.

Purpose of writing: To help exiles express their grief over the fall of the nation and in particular Jerusalem and its Temple

Summary:

The Book consists of five poems. The writer uses the twenty two consonants of the Hebrew in succession to form an alphabetical acrostics.³⁵

This Book is difficult to find a pattern because of its process. Chapters 1-2 are a discussion between Jeremiah and the City itself. , there is an alternation between the viewpoint of an observer of the calamity and the personified city itself.³⁶ Chapter 3 explores the fall of the City. Chapter 4 deals with the fall of the city while the final chapter is an appeal to God for assistance.

³⁴ ³⁴ Harrison, R. K. Jeremiah & Lamentations. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Inter-Varsity Press. London. ((1973) p. 196

³⁵ Ibid p 199

³⁶ Laminations. The Oxford Companion to the Bible. . Oxford University Press Oxford. (1993). P. 419.

Books of the Old Testament Ezekiel 26/39

Title: EZEKIEL

Author: Ezekiel (3:1)

Background: To bring Judah back into relationship with God and to call the nation to repentance.

Date of writing: approximately 598-571 BC³⁷

To whom it is written: To the people of Judah and exiles.

Purpose of writing: Foretelling the fall of Jerusalem and the judgement of God.

Summary:

This Book is in the category of mystic quality with visions and revelations. It is prophetic with vivid, symbolic language much like that of the Book of Revelation. These prophecies are addressed to the Jewish exiles in Babylon.

The 48 chapters of the Book have a logical and orderly structure. After a brief introduction about the prophet and nature of his mission, the Book falls naturally into three main divisions. (1) Judgement on the nation (Ch 4-24), (2) judgement on the surrounding nations (Ch 25-32), and the future blessing of God's covenant people (Ch 33-48).

³⁷ Ezekiel. The Oxford Companion to the Bible. Oxford University Press Oxford. (1993) p 217

Books of the Old Testament Daniel 27/39

Title: DANIEL

Author; Daniel. Daniel confirms his authorship in 7:1,28: 8:2; 10:1-2, & 12:4. Jesus accepted Daniel's authorship (Matt 24:15).

Background: Daniel in the royal court of Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon

Date of Writing: This was also the time of Ezekiel and Nehemiah. This period was about 605-530 BC. Others date much later. ^{38 39}

To whom it was written To the nation of Israel

Purpose of writing: To demonstrate how God can use men of God willing to submit to him even in when held captive.

Summary

The Book is divided into two parts. Chapters 1-6 deal with the empires rising and falling during the lifetime of Daniel. The other six chapters 7-12, deal with visions and angelic visitations received by Daniel telling him of the last days. Daniel's visions are the Old Testament Apocalypse to what Revelation is to the New Testament.

He serves, in addition, Kings Cyrus and Darius.

³⁸ Jeffery, Arthur. Daniel, Interpreter's Bible. Abingdon Press. Nashville (1956). P.349

³⁹ Baldwin, Joyce G. Daniel, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Inter-Varsity Press Leicester (1978) p.p.35-36.

Books of the Old Testament Hosea 28/39

Title: HOSEA

Author: Hosea

Background: Israel had rejected God and were worshipping pagan religions. Her enemies were attacking spasmodically.

Date of Writing: 785-745 BC⁴⁰

To whom it was written: Israel, the Northern kingdom.

Purpose of writing: To turn the whole country back to serving the only true God.

Summary:

God uses an unusual approach in warning the people to turn away from worshipping of false gods. Hosea is instructed to marry a prostitute and he chooses Gomer. She conceives and bears him two sons and a daughter. She then goes back into prostitution. God requires Hosea to find his wife and bring her home again. This time he separates her for a period where she cannot have sexual relations with anyone including her husband.

God uses this series of events in the life of Hosea to show the nation that they have prostituted themselves and been unfaithful to him.

⁴⁰ Hubbard gives an interesting chart of events recorded by Hosea and possible dates for the writing of his book. See Hubbard, D. A. Hosea. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Inter-Varsity Press. Leicester (1989) pp.22-26.

Books of the Old Testament Joel 29/39

Title: JOEL

Author: Joel (1:1)

Background A devastating swarm of locusts had been experienced by the people of Judah as God's judgement.

Date of writing: Uncertain ⁴¹ ⁴²

To whom it was written. The people of Judah

Purpose of Writing: Warning the people of God's judgement with worse to come.

Summary:

Joel addresses the present and future generations of God's people. He writes in three phases. Having dealt with the present situation of the locus invasion and its devastation he takes a look at the near future. Called the 'Day of the Lord.' He forecasts an enemy invasion like the locusts unless the nation repents. In a future generation the Day of the Holy Spirit is prophesied which became Pentecost of the New Testament. Finally, the Great Day of the Lord is promised to his people when God restores all things and gives judgement on the nations and perpetual peace reigns.

⁴¹ Craigie, P.C. Joel. The Daily Study Bible. The St Andrews Press. Edinburgh (1984) p. 86

⁴² Thompson, J.A. The Book of Joel. The Interpreter's Bible. Abingdon Press. Nashville. (1956) p. 732

Books of the Old Testament Amos 30/39

Title: AMOS

Author; Amos a prophet from the town of Tekoa. (7:14,15).

Background: Israel was very prosperous at this time and Jeroboam had conquered land from Syria.

Date of Writing: During the reign of Jeroboam II 783-745 BC. (See 7:10-17).

To whom it was written To those Jews in the northern kingdom

Purpose of writing: To warn of the righteousness of God and against the complacency that comes when wealth comes to a nation.

Summary

Amos commences his Book with a threat against the nations. Nations surrounding Israel are rebuked. Damascus, their gates to the city will be made vulnerable to attack. Gaza have fire on the walls. Philistines and Tyre will perish, Edom will experience fire while Ammon, Moab and Judah will come under judgement.

Material prosperity was not a sign necessarily of God favour and blessing but rather, a sign of their abandonment of their covenant with God.

Books of the Old Testament OBADIAH BOOK 31/39

Title: OBADIAH

Author: Nothing is known about the writer.

Background: People of Judah were mourning over Jerusalem

Date of Writing: Uncertain. See Craigeie⁴³

To whom it was written: The Edomites who were descendants of Esau (Gen. 36, 1, 9).

Purpose of writing: To bring comfort to the inhabitants of Judah.

Summary

This Book divides into two parts. Part 1- speaks of judgement (vv 1-14) and Part 2- the Day of the Lord (vv 15-21).

Obadiah is the shortest Book in the Old Testament. Its theme is to warn the Edomites about future judgement because of their attack on Israel. It was the Edomites who refused to give passage to the children of Israel as they journeyed to the Promised Land. A feud had existed between them (See Gen. 25:31-35, 27:41). Obadiah announces God's judgement on The Edomites and his and his blessing on the people of God.

⁴³ Craigeie, P. C. Obadiah. The Daily Study Bible Saint Andrew Press Edinburgh (1984). p 195

Books of the Old Testament JONAH BOOK 32/39

Title: JONAH

Author: Jonah son of Amittal (1:1).

Jonah was mentioned in 2 Kings 14:23-25 as Jonah the son of Amittai,.

Background: How God dealt with a man who refused the call of God.

Date of Writing: Referring to 2 Kings mention of Jonah. He lived during the reign of Jeroboam II (782-753 B.C.).

To whom it was written

The peoples of Nineveh

Purpose of writing:

To give testimony of God's dealings with the writer.

Summary

Jonah received a call to God to go to Nineveh, to announce judgement on them. This city was founded by Nimrod (Gen 1:11). He fled from God in a ship. Disaster struck and resulted in him being swallowed by a large fish. The three days he spent in its belly illustrating the death and resurrection of Jesus (See Matt 12:39-41). Jonah repented, preached in Nineveh and the whole city turned to the Lord.

Title: MICAH.

Author: Micah son of Imlah

Background: Forecasts the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Date of Writing: Uncertain. Thomason gives dates of 737 to 686 BC.⁴⁴

To whom it was written To the peoples of Israel and Judea. Samaria (chapter 1) and Jerusalem (chapter 1 & 4).

Purpose of writing: To warn the inhabitants of Samaria and Jerusalem of future judgement and deliverance.

Summary

Through the prophecies of Micah, King Hezekiah was converted. The Book has three parts beginning with the words 'hear' or 'listen', Micah 1:2, 3:1, and 6:1.

The general theme of the Book is that of bringing to the notice of the people that God is a righteous God and abhors sin and breaking of his commandments causes righteous judgement upon the nations. Bethlehem is revealed as the birthplace of the coming Messiah (5:2). Finally, His warning about the destruction of Jerusalem is foretold.

⁴⁴⁴⁴ Thompson, J. A. The Interpreter's Bible. Abingdon Press. Nashville. (1956) p. 898

Books of the Old Testament . Nahum 34/39

Title: NAHUM

Author: Nahum (1:1)

Background: To declare God's judgement on the city of Nineveh

Date of Writing: 612c⁴⁵

To whom it is written: To the people of Nineveh

Purpose of writing: Proclaiming God's judgement on Nineveh and Assyria.

Summary:

The writer in poetic form prophecies the destruction of the capital city of one of the most powerful empires Assyria, at this time. Nahum in chapter 1 shows that although God is slow to punish when he does he demonstrates his power even through wind and flood, rocks and fire, with great force. Even in the midst of exhibiting this power, God is shown to be good and a stronghold for the righteous in time of trouble. Chapter 2 shows the destruction of Nineveh through siege and battle followed by breaching of the walls and flood. Chapter 3 summarises the cause and reasons for the fall of this great city.

⁴⁵ Nahum. The Oxford Companion to the Bible. Oxford University Press Oxford. (1993) p 544.

Books of the Old Testament Habakkuk 35/39

Title: HABAKKUK

Author: Habakkuk (1:1 & 3:1)

Background: The prophet is overwhelmed by the iniquity and perversion of justice seen all around him and a lapse of the legal system.

Date of Writing: 609-598 BC⁴⁶

To whom it is written: The people of Judah

Purpose of writing: The prophet reveals God's holiness and that he will judge sin in his own way and he will choose the timing. However, God will react righteously towards every person.

Summary:

The prophet sees his country as corrupt and unwilling to change. It has lost direction and Habakkuk having asked God for a solution is utterly appealed when God gives his answer. He is to use the most hated of Judah's enemies, the Babylonians, to bring them back the nation to himself. He raises the question. "How can God tolerate sin and unrighteousness?" He learns that God has his own time plan.

⁴⁶ Baker, David W. Habakkuk. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Inter-Varsity Press. Leicester. (1988) See fuller debate on time of writing on p 44

Books of the Old Testament 36/39 . Zephaniah

Title: ZEPHANIAH

Author: Zephaniah (1:1)

Background: Zephaniah is concerned with Judah's deterioration to idolatry.

Date of Writing: 640-609 BC⁴⁷

To whom it is written: The people of Judah and Israel now exiled in Babylon

Purpose of writing: Proclaiming the Day of the Lord with its judgement upon Israel.

Summary

The Day of the Lord appears nine times in this Book. It appears that not only will Judah and Israel be punished by their idolatry but the whole world in the last day will come into judgement. God is so angry with his people that he will even search the streets with a lamp to find those hiding from his judgement. This anger is so great that he promises to consume everything from the face of the land! The destruction on that day is vividly illustrated. Finally, we find the faithful remnant waiting for the Lord with joy on that day.

⁴⁷ Zephaniah The Oxford Companion to the Bible. Oxford University Press (1993) Oxford. P. 828

Title: HAGGAI

Author: HAGGAI. A Prophet of that name indicated in 1:1.

Background

The people are in poverty and have no resources or inclination to rebuild the Temple.

Date of Writing During the second year of the reign of King Darius (520 BC)⁴⁸

To whom it was written To the exiled Jews who had returned to their homeland

Purpose of Writing; To motivate the leaders and the people to re-commence the rebuilding the Temple

Summary

The Lord sent Haggai with a message for Zerubbabel the Governor of Judah and to Jehozadak, the high priest, covering the secular and spiritual life of the city, who had lost the motivation to rebuild the Temple.

These leaders received three messages from the Lord. The first message was the challenge to rebuild the Temple (1:3-11). The second one was to match the previous Temple (2:1-9) The third message is one of prosperity instead of scarcity.

⁴⁸ New Spirit-Filled Life Bible. Thomas Nelson, INC. (2002) p. 1240

Books of the Old Testament ZECHARIAH BOOK 38/39

Title: ZECHARIAH

Author: Zechariah. A prophet, indicated in 1:1.

Background: The Temple had been rebuilt so the prophases relate to Israel in the latter days.

Date of Writing. (537-520 BC)⁴⁹.

To whom it was written: To the Jews who had resettled in the land of Israel but still under foreign occupation.

Purpose of writing: To exhort the Jews to obedience to the message; to encourage the builders of the Temple and to bring messages of warning.

Summary

The message is in the form of a series of eight symbolic visions/prophecies indicating the future events in Israel's history. They are full of typologies of Christ.

(a) Christ and his atoning death for sin in 3:8-9 & 13:1.(b) The BRANCH in 6:12. (c)

On throne in 6:13. (d).He foretold Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a colt.9:9. (e)

Finally, the betrayal by Judas for thirty pieces of silver is foretold in 11:12.

⁴⁹ The Illustrated Bible Dictionary. Inter-Varsity Press (1994). Leicester. p. 1677

Books of the Old Testament MALACHI BOOK 39/39

Title: MALACHI

Author: Malachi

Background Israel was occupied by the Persian Empire. and the priests were corrupt.

Date of Writing. In Jerusalem 450 BC.⁵⁰

To whom it was written; To the Israelites, particularly to the priests.

Purpose of writing: To show how the leaders and people had departed from practicing the Law of Moses.

Summary

Malachi challenges false religion while still calling themselves Jews. The sacrifices the people offer were diseased therefore, the priests are responsible for the people's failure to follow the Law of Moses

God gives a judgement on divorce. He hates it. 2:16. The third year tithe was not kept so the poor were without food. The last chapter is written to prepare the people of God for the coming of the Lord. There is the promise of Elijah being sent to prepare the hearts of the people. Jesus identifies John the Baptist as Elijah (Matt 11:14).

⁵⁰ Malachi. The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Abingdon Press. Nashville. (1956) p.229