

## SESSION 3 – THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Bible is divided into two main parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament consists of 39 books written in Hebrew before the time of Christ.

(Some Bibles contain 7 additional books from the latter part of this period, written in Greek, and referred to as the Apocrypha. In some Bibles, the Apocrypha are part of the Old Testament; in others, they are in a separate section; in others, they are not included at all.)

The Old Testament is traditionally divided into the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings:

### 1. THE LAW

The first five books: Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy

### 2. THE PROPHETS

The Former Prophets – Historical Books such as Samuel and Kings

The Latter Prophets – Books of prophecies – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.

### 3. THE WRITINGS

Books of songs, stories, poetry, proverbs, etc., such as the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the Song of Solomon, etc.

## KEY THEMES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Sometimes called “the Five Ps” – Providence, People, Place, Promise, Prophecy

1. **PROVIDENCE** – God is a personal God, actively involved in human history, working for the good of humanity and all creation.
2. **PEOPLE** – God has chosen a particular people, the Children of Israel—i.e. the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—to be “a light to the nations.”
3. **PLACE** – God has given his people the Land of Israel (also known as “the Holy Land”) to be their inheritance, with its capital and Temple at Jerusalem.
4. **PROMISE** – God has promised the people of Israel that if they obey His Law, they will be His People and be their God. He has also promised to send a Messiah (“Anointed One”) who will establish God’s kingdom on earth.
5. **PROPHECY** – God sends prophets to reveal his will to the people. Prophecies are more than just predictions of the future. They contain warnings of dire consequences if the people continue to sin, and/or promises of blessings if they obey God’s law.

# OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

## TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

1. **Creation and Fall** – in the beginning, God creates the world and all living creatures, including humanity. Adam and Eve, the first human beings, disobey God and are expelled from the Garden of Eden.
2. **The Flood** – Noah, his family, and all the animals enter the Ark and escape the flood, which punishes the world's wickedness.
3. **The Patriarchs** – stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel). Abraham receives God's promise that he will be the ancestor of a great nation, which will possess the land of Canaan (the Promised Land). Jacob's twelve sons are ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel.
4. **The Exodus** – God sends Moses to free the children of Israel enslaved in Egypt. The sea parts to let the escaping Hebrews through, but drowns the pursuing Egyptians. God gives the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. The stone tablets of the Law are kept in a box called the Ark of the Covenant (around 1275 BC).
5. **The Conquest** – after wandering forty years in the wilderness, Joshua leads the children of Israel into the Promised Land (around 1235 BC).
6. **The Judges** – in the Promised Land, leaders called "Judges" defend the Israelites against their enemies. Some of the more famous judges include Samson and Gideon (1200-1000 BC).
7. **The Monarchy** – the people of Israel ask God for a king. The prophet Samuel anoints Saul to be the first king. After Saul's death, David becomes king and establishes his capital at Jerusalem. After David's death, his son Solomon becomes king and builds the Temple in Jerusalem (1000-900 BC).
8. **The Divided Kingdom** – after Solomon's death, the ten northern tribes rebel and set up a separate Kingdom (of Israel). The people of both kingdoms disobey God's Law. Prophets sent by God call them to repent. Eventually, the northern Kingdom is conquered by the Assyrians (700 BC), and the southern Kingdom (of Judah) is conquered by the Babylonians (586 BC).
9. **Exile and Return** – the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem are taken captive to Babylon. When the Persians conquer Babylon (538 BC), the Jews (as they are now known) are allowed to return and rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple.
10. **The Maccabees** – after the Greeks led by Alexander the Great conquer Persia (332 BC), the Jews rebel and establish an independent kingdom under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus and his family (167-142 BC).
11. **Roman rule** -- the Roman general Pompey conquers Israel (64 BC) and makes it part of the Roman Empire, setting the stage for the events described in the New Testament.

## OLD TESTAMENT QUIZ

### TRUE OR FALSE

1. The Old Testament consists of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. T F
2. The Apocrypha is part of the New Testament. T F
3. The Old Testament identifies Adam and Eve as the first human beings. T F
4. Joshua led the People of Israel into the Promised Land. T F
5. Prophecies are just predictions of the future. T F
6. The Old Testament was written in Latin T F

### THEMES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT -- FILL IN THE BLANKS

Providence – God is actively \_\_\_\_\_ in human history.

People – the Children of \_\_\_\_\_, chosen by God.

Place – the Land of \_\_\_\_\_, given by God.

Promise – “If you obey my laws, you will be my \_\_\_\_\_ and I will be your \_\_\_\_\_.”

Prophecy – \_\_\_\_\_ and Promises.

### MULTIPLE CHOICE (Please choose the best answer for each question.)

1. The Old Testament Patriarchs were Abraham, Isaac, and:
  - a. Moses
  - b. Jacob
  - c. Joshua
2. In 583 BC, the inhabitants of Judah were taken captive by the:
  - a. Babylonians
  - b. Greeks
  - c. Persians
3. Who built the First Temple at Jerusalem?
  - a. David
  - b. Samson
  - c. Solomon