

## OLD TESTAMENT

### Lecture 6: OT WALK-THRU: IN THREE PARTS

**\*\*collect homework\*\***

**\*\*\*Pause\*\*\***

Purpose of Class: to read the Old Testament with better understanding and deeper joy and greater usefulness.

Goals: To give use of basic readings tools; **To shrink the OT**; To begin to answer common concerns with the OT; To expand our understanding of Jesus.... To help you love Jesus and others more freely and effectively. (Lk 24:27) To lead us to wonder. Ps 119:18

#### PRAY

[Themes: OT is always about the Goodness of God in Jesus; OT is a story of stories all retelling and pretelling One Story; OT is as important and applicable today as ever.]

**\*\*\*end\*\*\***

### OT WALK-THRU: IN THREE PARTS. PART THREE.

The Problem: because the OT is so big, some of our favorite, most human and most profound, books fall through the cracks.

The Solution: slow down and pay attention.

PART THREE: The Writings. Basic Info.

Classification/Contents: \*Wisdom: “not trying to speak for God in the same way the prophets did, but one that was musing carefully on life in order to teach the young how to live well before God.” (F&S, 155) \*\*Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song, Esther, Ruth, make little to no mention of important things in the rest of the OT, such as: Temple, Law, Land, Exodus. \*Chronicles/Ezra-Neh: well-crafted historical-sermons encouraging rededication of Temple and of hearts to Temple worship.

\*Timeline \*Map

- I. Psalms. 150 prayers, songs, poems, proverbs, taunts, and liturgies. 1000-400 BC. Arranged.
  - A. Structure: collections: David’s (3-41, 51-70; 138-145), Asaph/sons of Korah (42-50; 73-88), topical: God’s kingship, 93-100, praise, 103-107, songs of ascent 120-134, Hallelujah 111-113 and 146-150. Books: One, 1-41, Two, 42-72, Three, 73-89, Four, 90-106, Five, 107-150; each book ends with a doxology (added)
  - B. Verses: Psalm 1-2, 88, 145/150.

- C. Themes: YHWH as Sovereign Creator, as Covenant maker/keeper; life as hard, full of enemies and confusion.
  - D. Fit in STORY: Most citations by NT authors; written and compiled over so long a period of time, the Psalms summarize and synthesize all the major themes of the OT and all the major hopes as God's people look forward.
  - E. Great: A full emotional life in relation to God.
  - F. *Suggestion: compile your own mini-Psalter.*
- II. Proverbs. Practical instruction in the form of pithy generalizations based on observation.
- A. Structure: Collection of sayings from: Solomon, various wise men, Agur, and Lemuel. 1-9, prologue of value of wisdom (especially as opposed to adultery and sexual sin, cf. chp. 5, 6:20f, 7)
  - B. Characters/Stories/Events: the father and mother, the son; Lady Wisdom and dame folly; the simple, the fool, the wicked, the righteous, the wise.
  - C. Verses: 1:1-7.
  - D. Themes: wisdom—folly/righteousness—wickedness (easy money and easy sex [as opposed to Wise Wife, acrostic poem, at end]). Speech; Money; Sexuality.
  - E. Fit in STORY: most common command in Scripture: “fear not!” Rooted in Fear of Lord (What is “the fear of the Lord”? True knowledge of Him.).
  - F. Great: Describes life in: 1) a fallen world, 2) that's been made by God. So there are natural benefits to living a certain way, but natural pressures pushing us off that path.
- III. Job. Literary treasure. Patriarchal world. Answers question: “What is going on, God!?” i.e. Where is wisdom found?
- A. Structure: Prologue, 1-2; Increasingly Impatient Dialogue, 3-26; Job's Discourse, 27-31; Elihu Jumps in, 32-37; God Arrives, 38-41; Closing, 42.
  - B. Characters/Stories/Events: Job, wife, friends; God, satan; Trama of 1-2, Arrival of GOD in 38, God re-blesses in 42.
  - C. Verses: 19:25, ‘my redeemer’; KEY 42:7, “Job is right” (implication: don't read the others as ‘gospel’ no matter how ‘right’ they sound to you); 42:17, “full.”

- D. Themes: the satan/accuser; God's sovereignty, wisdom, justice...and faith in His people (?). Q: is God worth it? +a Theodicy turned into Theology: Divine justice on trial? Or, human faith on trial?
- E. Fit in STORY: the righteous sufferer whose sufferings glorify God; the need for a MEDIATOR (5:1; 9:33; 16:18-22; 19:25-27; 33:23).
- F. Great: Job is a radical confrontation of legalistic, health-wealth theology that says, do-this and God-will-do-that; and also a view of God that is separate from His covenant. E.g. chp. 22, depth of 'friends' charges; chp. 25, man is worthless; chp. 35:2; 42:7, "Job has spoken right about me." They viewed God through a Mosaic covenant lens; Job views God from an Abrahamic covenant perspective.

\*\*begin Book of Five Scrolls

- IV. Song of Songs. Collection of love poems; between man and woman. Very difficult to determine proper interpretation: man-woman, Christ-church, literal-allegorical-typological; or, collection of love poems? 553 AD Second Council of Constantinople forbade any other than allegorical interpretation!
  - A. Structure: Who is speaking when? Decisions made by prior assumption about the book.
  - B. Characters/Stories/Events: Two characters, Sol + Shulamite, or three, Sol + Shulamite + shepherd?
  - C. Verses: 8:6-7.
  - D. Themes: Love; Erotic Love; Goodness of Creation; of Purity.
  - E. Fit in STORY: Counterbalance to Ecclesiastes? Extended meditation on Edenic love? (and as such a type or allegory of Christ-church?)
  - F. Great: Sex is okay; Sex is better than okay; Sex is a gift for married lovers.
- V. Ruth (during time of Judges; written during David's time)
  - A. Structure: 4. Naomi; Ruth meets Boaz; N's plan; B redeems R.
  - B. Characters/Stories/Events: **Naomi/Maura**, Ruth, Boaz; Naomi's loss, Ruth's covenant, Ruth's fortunate selection, Naomi's plan, Boaz's plot/redemption, +epilogue: who came later.
  - C. Verses: 1:16; 4:17.
  - D. Themes: "Kinsman Redeemer"; covenant faithfulness of these people during this time (David's ancestors).
  - E. Fit in STORY: contrast w/ Judges; 1:19, Bethlehem.

- F. Great: Naomi's move from empty in foreign land to full at home; from no hope of offspring to the greatest offspring of all!
- VI. Lamentations. Written after fall of Jerusalem. Two year long siege and terrible destruction (2 Kings 25).
- A. Structure: 5 poems; acrostic pattern (22 letters; 22 verses);
- B. Characters/Stories/Events:
- C. Verses: 3:22-24.
- D. Themes: Confusion, Sorrow, Pain.
- E. Fit in STORY: Terrible trouble comes to those who steadfastly refuse the steadfast love of the LORD.
- F. Great: to watch the struggle of emotion with a true knowledge of God.
- VII. Ecclesiastes. One of most difficult books of OT to interpret. Messy, multi-faceted wisdom essays, compiled.
- A. Structure: Prologue, Body, Conclusion; Epilogue.
- B. Characters/Stories/Events: "The Preacher" (trad: Solomon); the Editor, 12:9-14 (compiler).
- C. Verses: 1:1-11 (esp. v. 2) and 11:9-12:8 (esp. 12:8). Also, 3:11, "eternity in heart."
- D. Themes: "Vanity" ("breath, vapor" =meaningless, futile, for nothing). 1) God is over all and all good is His gift (3:11-13); 2) God's plan is mysterious; 3) Things aren't as they should be; 4) Death bulldozes everything and everyone and all they do. (F&S, 156).
- E. Fit in STORY: captures frustrations of living in Cursed world; one great Romans 8-type groan for redemption from death. And this from the perspective of a King!
- F. Great: Shocking and Disruptive: gotta get sick before you can get saved.
- VIII. Esther (10) 480 BC >
- A. Structure: a kind of a 'comedy' with lots of dramatic reversals and heaps of irony.
- B. Characters/Stories/Events: King Ahasuerus (Xerxes), Esther, Mordecai, Haman; Esther picked, Mordecai discovers plot, Haman plots against Mordecai/Jews, Esther Intervenes, Haman humiliated and killed, Jews emerge victorious.
- C. Verses: 4:14; 6:13.

- D. Themes: Euchatastrophe (Climactic, Happy; Reversals); Festival of Purim (“lots”, cf. 3:7. i.e. God runs the table!)
  - E. Fit in STORY: Even far away, long after the amazing miracles of the prophets and fathers, God is still keeping His covenant and working in amazing ways to protect His people as they call on Him. +Israel vs. Amalek, Exod 17:8-16, 1 Sam 15:7-8, cf. Esth 2:5 (only Saul and Mordecai called “son of Kish”) and 3:1 (Agag Amalekite king, Haman an “Agagite”).
  - F. Great: Where is God? No mention in book.
- IX. Daniel (reads like two different books)
- A. Structure: 1-6, stories; 7-12, apocalyptic visions. 1, 8-12 in Hebrew; 2-7 in Aramaic.
  - B. Characters/Stories/Events: Daniel, 3 other Hebrews, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius; Food story, Neb’s Dream, Firey Furnace, Lion’s Den, Nebuchadnezzar’s Madness, the Writing on the Wall, the Visions.
  - C. Verses: 7:13-14; 2:20-22 (re: dreams).
  - D. Themes: God is sovereign over all nations and world events; God continues to protect His servants no matter where they are or what they’re up against; God’s new Kingdom is coming; pride comes before a fall; God speaks through dreams.
  - E. Fit in STORY: Main Thing: that no matter where they are—literal or proverbial lion’s den or firey furnace—God will keep His covenant promises and keep His people; prophecies of post-OT events preceding Christ (Persia, Babylon, Greece/Alexander, Seleucids/Ptolomey’s, Antiochus IV, Rome(?)).
  - F. Great: THE STORIES! God is totally, immediately, unstopably Sovereign.
- X. Ezra-Nehemiah. Second volume to Chronicles.
- A. Structure: Interwoven memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah with official records and court documents.
  - B. Characters/Stories/Events: Ezra, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel; nearly 50,000 return with Zerubbabel in 538 BC to rebuild Temple (Ezra 3); 2,000 with Ezra, 458; ? with Nehemiah 444 to rebuild the wall.
  - C. Verses: Ezra 3:11Neh 9:32f; Ezra 10:2;

- D. Themes: God’s faithfulness; dealing with opposition; Reforms (seeds of Pharisaism?); Crisis of National Identity (embodied in Wall building emphasis [note the concern with walls over even temple]).
  - E. Fit in STORY: beginnings of Pharisaism, with overemphasis on exact obedience to Mosaic Law leading to “fenced in”/supplemented laws; overemphasis on Hebrew exclusivity and separation; Ezra created new class of teachers w/o reference to priesthood (i.e. academy versus pastors). This is what Jesus has to deal with, falling off the horse the other direction. +we sort of end where we began: Neh 13:23 cf. Judges 1-2.
  - F. Great: courage and perseverance, leadership.
- XI. Chronicles. A cleaner re-telling of the events of the Monarchy of Israel. (Mad Men vs. Leave it to Beaver)
- A. Structure: Genealogy, David, Solomon, Judah’s Kings. Ending leads directly into Ezra.
  - B. Characters/Stories/Events: David, Solomon, Kings; Building of the Temple.
  - C. Verses: 2 Chron 13:4f; 2 Chron 30:6f.
  - D. Themes: Connection with Past (Gen. to Adam); Temple and Worship (half David’s story is prep; 2/3’s of Sol’s is building); the entire “chronicle” is centered on establishing the Temple and good worship in Israel and then the decline of those things until, amazingly, Cyrus king of Persia is called to build a new temple.
  - E. Fit in STORY: focus in on continuity with past, showing especially the greatness and wisdom of David and Solomon in focusing on the Temple and pure worship.
  - F. Great: great stories of reform and struggle for good.
- XII. Summary: common themes: that God is, deeply and truly if not always detectably to us, good: God is good; also, that God will care for His people no matter where they are (His Covenant promises will not be stopped; He is Lord of all the earth); God is in charge of all nations.
- XIII. Conclusion: things seem hopeless, but never are. The message of the OT, seen in these books of pain, suffering, confusion, and lostness, is that there is always hope with God. He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love; He keeps His promises.
- XIV. Homework: read one of these books, and 1) learn something new [which may involve a quick ‘google’], and 2) find something AWESOME to you. Share you findings with me.