

Old Testament Survey: From Creation to Christ

Jax Church Midweek Teaching Series Fall 2023

Date	Class	OT Books
September 6	1. Introduction: An Invitation to Explore	Overview
September 13	2. The Beginnings: YHWH and His Plan for Earth	Genesis 1-11
September 20	3. The Patriarchs: Learning to Walk with God	Genesis 12-50
September 27	4. The Chosen People: Claiming Our Identity	Exodus-Deuteronomy
October 4	5. The Promised Land: Is This What You Dreamed Of?	Joshua-Samuel
October 11	6. The Kingdom: Leadership, Unity, and Division	1 Kings/Chronicles, Prophets
October 18	7. The Exile: Surviving Religious Trauma	2 Kings/Chronicles, Prophets
October 25	8. The Second Temple: Are We There Yet?	Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Prophets

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. (John 1:1-4)

Required and Recommended Reading

1. **Required:** Finish the Old Testament (any books you've never read!)
2. **Strongly Suggested:** Bible Project Videos for each OT Book you read
3. **Other Great Resources (not required):**
 - [A Quick Overview of the Bible](#), by Douglas Jacoby
 - [Asking Better Questions of the Bible](#), by Marty Solomon
 - [Getting the Most from the Bible](#), by Steve Kinnard
 - Chronological or Archeological Study Bible

The Hebrew Scriptures (what we call the Old Testament or OT) define the foundations of the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religions. The collection of 39 books forms a library of history, wisdom literature, poetry, prophesy, and even apocalypse (revelation). More than that, the scriptures reveal the story of people struggling to understand and get to know the God who created them.

However, unlike many religious and secular historical documents, the OT often portrays the leaders as flawed, the people as immoral, and the only true hero of the story is the God they call Yahweh. Each book reveals something unique about this God and his relationship with the people he created. The authors, characters themselves in the story, offer their historical perspective, most often without directly saying who was right and who was wrong. They paint a picture of people who are at the same time the people of God and those who rebel against him—perhaps we can relate to both!

Reading the OT is no easy task. It includes 929 chapters with 23,145 verses, describing a culture alien to us—3000 years removed from these events. Only one in five Americans have read through the entire Bible! The OT captivates us with inspirational stories but may lose us in the details of constructing the temple, offering sacrifices, and dividing up the promised land. We may love the passages promising God's blessing on his people and cringe when discovering the horror of his curses. Much of the text should be rated "R" for violence and sexual content. Many commands and prophecies confound those of us from a different culture.

Join us on a journey to explore the thoughts, values, and cultures of the Old Testament that we may better understand how to apply God's word to our lives today!

Logistics

- Classes start each Wednesday night at 7 pm in the Annex and online ([Zoom link](#)) for 60-75 minutes
- Notes, recordings, and other materials will be posted on the [JAX Church OT Survey website](#)
- Final Exam is a great learning opportunity and required only for Certificate Track

CLASS 1: Introduction: An Invitation to Explore

Jax Church OT Survey Series Fall 2023

Twelve Words to Know in the OT					
Tanakh	Torah	Nevi'im	Ketuvim	OT Canon	Patriarchs
Exodus	United Kingdom	Divided Kingdom	Assyrian Exile	Babylonian Exile	Second Temple

Luke 24:44 Then he said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled."

1. Why should I read the Old Testament (OT)?

- [7 Reasons to Read the OT](#)
- [7 "Windows" of Interpretation](#)

2. What is the OT?

- Hebrew Scriptures (Tanakh)
- CASKET Overview/Outline
- OT Chronology (See Text Box)

CASKET*

Creation (date uncertain)
 Abraham (~2100-1450 BC)
 Sinai (1450-1050 BC)
 Kings (1050-586 BC)
 Exile (586-539 BC)
 Temple (539-430 BC)

* www.casketempty.com

OT CHRONOLOGY

Creation/Patriarchs

- Genesis
- Job?
- The Exodus (1450?)*
- Leviticus, Numbers
- Deuteronomy
- Canaan Conquest (1410?)*
- Joshua
- Judges, Ruth
- 1 Samuel
- United Kingdom (1051)*
- 2 Samuel
- 1 Kings 1-11
- 1 Chron – 2 Chron 9
- Psalms, Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs
- Divided Kingdom (931)*
- 1 Kings 12 – 2 Kings
- 2 Chron 10-36
- Amos, Hosea, Micah, Jonah
- Assyrian Exile (722)*
- 2 Kings 17
- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Nahum
- Lamentations
- Zephaniah, Habakkuk
- Babylonian Exile (586)*
- 2 Kings 25, 2 Chron 36
- Daniel, Ezekiel
- Joel, Obadiah
- Second Temple (539)*
- Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
- Haggai, Zechariah
- Malachi
- OT Canon (200 BC-200 AD)**

Hebrew Scriptures: The 24 Books of the Tanakh		
Torah (instruction/law)	Nevi'im (prophets)	Ketuvim (writings)
1. Genesis	6. Joshua	14. Psalms
2. Exodus	7. Judges	15. Proverbs
3. Leviticus	8. <i>Samuel</i>	16. Job
4. Numbers	9. <i>Kings</i>	17. Song of Songs
5. Deuteronomy	10. Isaiah	18. Ruth
	11. Jeremiah	19. Lamentations
	12. Ezekiel	20. Ecclesiastes
	13. <i>The Twelve</i>	21. Esther
	<i>(Minor prophets)</i>	22. Daniel
		23. <i>Ezra-Nehemiah</i>
		24. <i>Chronicles</i>

3. How do I read the OT? (Tools, Background)

- Recommended Tools
 - Chronological and/or Archeological Bible
 - Getting the Most out of the Bible (Kinnard)
 - Quick Overview of the Bible (Jacoby)
 - How to Read the Bible for all its Worth (Fee/Stuart)
- OT Uniqueness
 - Hebrew Narrative
 - The Good, Bad, & Ugly
 - YHWH Elohim
- Who wrote the OT?
 - Original Authors; Oral vs. Written Word
 - Exile editors
 - OT Canonized between 200 BC and 200 AD

BibleProject Video (BPV): [The Bible as "Ancient Jewish Meditation Literature"](#)

4. What Themes Should I be Looking for?

- **God**—YHWH is the supreme spiritual being (elohim), introduced as the benevolent creator of humans who are his “image bearers” designed to inherit his dominion and establish his kingdom on earth as in heaven. *BPV*: [God, Spiritual Being Series, Image of God.](#)
- **The Torah** (instruction or “law”) is YHWH’s gift to humanity to help them live as they were intended. YHWH spoke the world into existence through his “word”; established his covenant with Adam/Eve, Noah, Abraham, and Moses; provided scripture as instruction (Torah) for his people. Jesus appeared as God’s word or instruction (John 1:1) become flesh (John 1:14); our way, truth, and life (John 14:6); our wisdom (Col. 2:3). *BPV*: [Law, How to Read the Bible Series.](#)
- **Redeemer, Messiah, King**—From Genesis, the serpent’s curse included a promise that someone from Eve’s line would crush his head and destroy evil—with another strange detail—the serpent would bite that someone’s heel. God chose to bless the world through Abram, then promised a Messianic King from David. The prophets described the Messiah as a servant deliverer. Finally, God brought his Messiah-King, Jesus, to announce God’s kingdom on earth. He received the “fatal” snakebite wound, but through resurrection overcame evil and death, offering us his inheritance in the kingdom of God. *BPV*: [Messiah, Gospel of the Kingdom, Anointing](#)
- **The Day of the Lord, Babylon, Egypt**—The Day of the Lord symbolizes God at work in history to confront collective human evil, liberate his people from oppression, and assert his rule over all creation. Genesis 10 introduced Egypt and Canaan, sons of Ham, and Nimrod who built Babylon and Assyria, foreshadowing God’s intervention at the tower of Babel (Gen 11). When Egypt, in the spirit of Babylon, enslaved Israel, God destroyed Pharaoh and liberated Israel in the Exodus account, memorializing Passover as the first “Day of the Lord” (Ex. 13:3, 14:40). God delivered the promised land, defeating the rebellious Canaanites. In Israel’s independence they became proud, imitating the nations around them to be called out as the new Babylon by the prophets, who declared the “Day of the Lord” to be a day of darkness for Israel (Joel 2:31; Amos 5:18). Jesus used the same apocalyptic language in predicting the destruction of the Temple (Matt 24, Luke 21) In Revelation, John picked up the theme of Jerusalem as Egypt-Babylon (Rev 11:8, 17-18). *BPV*: [The Day of the Lord](#)

Other great themes to help you in your study of the Old Testament

- **The Garden of Eden, “paradise,” and uniting heaven and earth**—In Eden, God established a Temple where YHWH and humans cohabitate. Throughout scripture, YHWH created sacred spaces where humans can fellowship with YHWH—altars, Tabernacle, Temple, the Church, and eventually the New Heaven and Earth. *BPV*: [The City, Heaven & Earth, Eternal Life.](#)
- **Sabbath**—God’s rhythm of rest and delight built into creation and restored in Jesus. *BPV*: [Sabbath](#)
- **Exile**—the challenge for God’s people to live as subversive exiles while we wait for the new heaven and new earth. *BPV*: [Exile, The Way of Exile](#)
- **Justice**—God’s example of calling all people “images of God,” and the charge to live in right relationship (righteousness) and bring restorative justice to the oppressed including the widow, orphan, and alien. *BPV*: [Justice, The Last First](#)

1. Find a new WINDOW

2. Use a new TOOL

3. Explore a new THEME