

STUDENT'S GUIDE

UNDERSTANDING THE OLD TESTAMENT

AS TAUGHT BY

DR. PAUL HOUSE



Understanding the Old Testament

as taught by
Dr. Paul House



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Because Spiritual Growth Matters

Understanding the Old Testament

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Overview

Title: Understanding the Old Testament

Speaker: Dr. Paul House

This Student's Guide is intended to be used with BiblicalTraining's foundations -level class, Understanding the Old Testament, taught by Dr. Paul House.

You will encounter the overarching themes of the Bible and humanity as Dr. House leads you through this introduction to an Old Testament survey. The more you understand the characters, plot, structure, themes, and historical settings, the more you see the unity of the Old Testament and the Bible as a whole.

Whether you are reading your Bible devotionally or studying your Bible using a bible commentary, Dr. House's Old Testament survey class will give you a new perspective on both the Old Testament and its relationship to the New Testament.

I. GOALS

1. UNDERSTANDING THE MAIN THEMES OF EACH BOOK OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
2. GAIN A FEEL FOR THE CHRONOLOGICAL SWEEP OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
3. FAMILIARITY WITH THE 130 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS DISCUSSED THROUGHOUT THE COURSE
4. ABILITY TO EMPLOY WHAT YOU ARE LEARNING FOR THE BENEFIT OF PEOPLE.

II. REQUIREMENTS

1. 20 SESSIONS
2. 2 HOURS PER WEEK (LESSON AND DISCUSSION)

III. PREREQUISITES

NONE

IV. FORMAT

AUDIO & VIDEO

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DISTINCTIVES

World class. All Bible classes are taught by world –class professors from major seminaries.

Holistic. We want to see students move through content to deep reflection and application.

Configurable. Ministries can use BT lectures as well as their own to design their educational program.

Accessible. BiblicalTraining is a web –based ministry whose content is provided at no cost.

Community –based. We encourage people to learn together, in mentor/apprentice relationships.

Broadly evangelical. Our materials are broadly evangelical, governed by our Statement of Faith, and are not tied to any one church, denomination, or tradition.

Partners. We provide the content and delivery mechanisms, and our partner organizations provide the community and mentoring.

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Your Speaker

Dr. Paul House teaches Old Testament Theology and Hebrew at Beeson Divinity School. He previously taught at Taylor University, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, and Wheaton College. Dr. House is the author of several books including *The Unity of the Twelve*, *Old Testament Survey*, *Old Testament Theology*, *Lamentations* (Word Biblical Commentary) and *Bonhoeffer's Seminary Vision*.

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MDiv, PhD, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
MA, University of Missouri-Columbia
BA, Southwest Baptist University

Student's Guide

We are pleased that you have chosen to use materials from BiblicalTraining.org. We trust that you will find them to be of the highest quality and truly helpful in your own spiritual growth and that of your church. Please read through the following guidelines: they will help you make the best use of this guide.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Listen or watch the lesson . The lesson for each chapter is designed to be listened to outside of your meeting. Each lesson lasts for an hour. This is a crucial step. If the meeting time with your fellow students is going to be productive and encouraging, everyone in the group needs to have listened to and wrestled with the lesson.

Take notes . This guide has the outline for each lesson with a summary of the teaching for each major point. If you are unable to take notes while listening to the lesson, please work through the guide at some point before your meeting.

Questions . Each chapter closes with a series of questions. Some of the questions are data based, confirming that you understand the information. Other questions are more reflective, helping you move beyond the important accumulation of knowledge to challenging you to think through what you are learning about God, yourself, and others, and finally to application. Our encouragement is to think through your answers before your meeting and then use the meeting to share your thoughts and interact with others.

Meeting . Meet together with your group. While some people may have to study on their own, we strongly recommend finding a group with which you can study. A group provides encouragement to finish the class. Interacting with others, their understanding and insight, is the most effective way to sharpen your own thoughts and beliefs. Just as you will need the help of others from time to time, so also, they will need your help.

Facilitator's Guide

If you are leading the group or mentoring an individual, here are some suggestions that should help you.

Your role is to facilitate . This is not an opportunity for you to teach. In fact, the less visible role you take, the better. Your role is to listen and bring out the best in the other people.

Preparation . Be sure to have done your homework thoroughly. Have listened to the lesson and think carefully through the questions. Have an answer for each question that will get the conversation going. A great question is, "What is the Lord teaching you this week?"

Creativity . What works to help one person understand may not help another. So, listen to the conversation and pray that the Lord help you bring out the greatest interaction among all the people.

Correct error . This is difficult. If someone says something that is not right, you do not want to come down on them, telling them they are wrong and shutting down their participation. On the other hand, if you let an obvious error pass, the rest of the group may think you agree and what was said was correct. So, look for gracious ways to suggest that perhaps the person's comment was incorrect.

Focus . Stay focused on Jesus and the Bible, not on church or religious traditions.

Lead the discussion . People do not want to listen to a sharing of common ignorance. Lead by asking questions that will prompt others to think.

Silence . Do not be afraid of silence. It may mean nothing more than people are thinking. But if the conversation lags, then ask thought-provoking questions to get the discussion started, and then step out of the way.

Discipleship . Be acutely aware of how you can mentor the people in the group. Meet with them for coffee. Share some life with them. Jesus' Great Commission is to teach people to obey, and the only way this happens is in relationship.

Different Perspectives . People process information and express themselves in different ways based on their background, previous experience, culture, religion, and other factors. Encourage an atmosphere that allows people to share honestly and respectfully.

Privacy . All discussions are private, not to be shared outside the group unless otherwise specified.

Goal . The goal of this study is not just increased knowledge; it is transformation. Do not be content with people getting the "right" answers. The Pharisees got the "right" answer, and many of them never made it to heaven (Matt 5:20).

Relationships . Share everyone's name, email, and phone number so people can communicate during the week and follow up on prayer requests. You may want to set up a way to share throughout the week using Slack or WhatsApp.

Finish well . Encourage the people to make the necessary commitment to do the work, think reflectively over the questions, and complete the class.

Prayer . Begin and end every meeting with prayer. Please do not do the quick "one-prayer-covers-all" approach. Manage the time so all of you can pray over what you have learned and with what you have been challenged. Pray regularly for everyone in the meeting

1.

PART I: THE LAW - INTRODUCTION

One purpose of this class is to give you an appreciation for the unity of the Old Testament by helping you understand the characters, plot, structure, themes, and historical settings. The purpose is to help us know God, be saved through him, and live in relationship with him

- I. THE UNITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
- II. WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT AND WHY SHOULD WE STUDY IT?
 - A. ORIGINS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
 - B. AUTHORITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
 - C. PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE
 - D. SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE
 - E. STRUCTURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. Law

2. Prophets

3. Writings

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In your own words, explain why studying the Old Testament is important. How should this affect the way that you read the Old Testament? What is something that you can do this week to help someone else understand why the Old Testament is important?
2. How do you see the Old Testament's relationship to the New Testament? How do both Testaments have the same purpose? Where do you see Christ in the Old Testament? How is the New Testament the fulfillment of the Old?

3. What are the implications of the sufficiency of Scripture, particularly the Old Testament? How should the words of Scripture guide our lives? What are some appropriate ways to use Scripture? What are some inappropriate ways?
4. How does the structure of the Old Testament affect the way we interpret it? What is different about the way we should interpret a portion of the Law versus a book in the Writings?

2

PART I: THE LAW - GENESIS

An Introduction to the Law portion of the Old Testament and an overview of the content and themes In Genesis from Creation to the migration of Jacob's family to live In Egypt with Joseph.

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE LAW

A. SIGNIFICANT OLD TESTAMENT THEMES INTRODUCED IN THE LAW.

B. TORAH - HEBREW FOR "INSTRUCTION," ALSO CALLED THE PENTATEUCH

C. TWO TYPES OF LAW

1. Command

2. Case

D. DIFFERENT KIND OF INSTRUCTION: GENESIS-4
EXODUS 19

E. THE AUTHOR OF THE LAW: MOSES

F. THE AUDIENCE OF THE LAW

II. **GENESIS**

A. EMPHASIS

1. God creates.
2. God judges sin.
3. God redeems his people.

B. OUTLINE

1. Genesis 1:1 –11:9

2. Genesis 11:10 –25:18

3. Genesis 25:19 –36:43

4. Genesis 37 –50

C. CONTENTS OF GENESIS

1. The Creation of the World (1 –2)

2. The Fall into Sin (3)

3. Effects of Sin on humans (4 –6)
4. New Beginning with Noah and His Family (6 – 9)
5. Covenant (9:11)
6. Rebellion at the Tower of Babel (11:1 -9)
7. The Call of Abraham (11:10 –12:9)
8. Abraham's Struggle for Faith (12:10 –25:18)

9. Isaac: The Promise Continues (25:19 –26:35)

10. Jacob: The Reluctant Heir of Faith (27 –36)

11. Joseph: The Completion of the Promise (37 –
50)

D. SUMMARY AND LOOKING AHEAD

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. God's covenant with Abraham was that he would bless Abraham so Abraham and his family would be a blessing to the world. How has God blessed you? How are you being a blessing to the world?
2. When God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, what did Abraham do? When we think that God is asking us to do something hard, how do we know it is God? What is an example in your life when God has asked you to do something difficult and he "showed up" in a miraculous way?

4. Joseph forgives his brothers and tells them that what they meant for evil, God meant for good. Think of one person that has mistreated you. How do you genuinely forgive that person and still maintain healthy boundaries?

3.

PART I: THE LAW - EXODUS

Exodus begins with Israel living securely in Egypt because of Joseph's favor with Pharaoh. By the end of Exodus, Moses is Israel's leader, and they are living outside of Egypt. God redeems his people from physical and spiritual bondage. God preserves Moses' life and prepares and calls him to lead the nation of Israel out of Egypt.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. SETTING

B. TIME PERIOD

C. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

II. **THE THEME OF EXODUS: GOD DELIVERS
HIS PEOPLE**

A. GOD DELIVERS ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT (CHAPTERS
1-18)

1. Israel's enslavement and Moses' call (1-4)

2. God leads the people out (5 -18)

Miracle and 10 plagues

Passover

Manna and water

Purpose in calling the people out?

B. GOD DELIVERS ISRAEL TO BE HOLY PEOPLE (CHAPTERS 19-24)

1. Standards of the covenant - Ten commandments

2. Case laws

C. PRIESTS WILL SERVE GOD AND LEAD ISRAEL
(CHAPTERS 25-31)

D. COVENANT BREAKING AND COVENANT RENEWAL
(CHAPTERS 32-34)

E. BUILDING THE TABERNACLE (CHAPTERS 35-40)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In Exodus, God delivers the people of Israel from spiritual and physical oppression and bondage. Give an example of how God has done that for you personally.
2. God delivered the people of Israel so they would be a holy people, a kingdom of priests, a people for God's special possession. Christ came to do the same for us (see 1 Peter 2). How does that affect the way you live and the choices you make?
3. God calls Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses gives God excuses about why he is not qualified or able to do it. What is God calling you to do now that you are resisting by giving excuses?

4. God established the feast of Passover for His people to remember their plight in Egypt and how God delivered them. What do you do on a regular basis to remember and celebrate how God has protected and provided for you?

5. What do the Ten Commandments reveal about God's character? When we obey them, how does that affect our relationship with God? With others? Are there any that you ignore? If so, why?

6. In Exodus 34:5-8, God describes His own nature. What is he like? What is Moses' response? What is your response? Describe situations where you have displayed these character traits toward others. Are there people you have not treated in that way to whom you need to apologize and be reconciled?

4.

PART I: THE LAW - LEVITICUS

Leviticus emphasizes God's holiness and that His people are to be holy. Holiness means unique, set apart. Leviticus describes what the ideal society would be like if everyone loved and followed God. God knows people will sin, so he designed a system to prevent sin from standing in the way of their relationship with God.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. DEFINITION OF *HOLY*

1. Setting

2. Time Period

II. **SECTIONS**

A. 1–7: SACRIFICES

1. 8–10: Holy Priests

2. 11–15: Clean and Unclean

3. 16: The Day of Atonement

4. 17–27: Holy Society

III. CONTENTS

A. SACRIFICES (CHAPTERS 1-7)

1. Five Types

Burnt

Sin

Guilt

Grain

Peace

2. Set Ritual

3. Theological Truths

B. PRIESTS ARE SET ASIDE FOR COVENANT WORSHIP
(CHAPTERS 8-10)

C. CLEAN AND UNCLEAN (CHAPTERS 11-15)

D. DAY OF ATONEMENT (CHAPTER 16)

1. Four Stages of the Ceremony

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

2. Symbolic Significance

- a.
- b.
- c.

E. ISRAEL AS A HOLY PEOPLE (CHAPTERS ~~27~~)

IV. CONCLUSION

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean when we say, “God is holy?” What does it mean for Israel to be holy? How did God want Israel to be a blessing to other nations through their holiness? If God wants the same for us, how should this affect the way we spend our time and treat other people?
2. God shows that sin is serious because the animals required for sacrifice are costly. When you take sin seriously, how does it make a difference in your life and your relationship with God?

3. Part of the process of bringing a guilt offering was to make restitution for a sin that caused harm to someone else. Give an example of a sin you committed that harmed someone else and what you did to make restitution.

4. God set up the sacrificial system to demonstrate His mercy by providing a way for people to be forgiven of their sin. People were forgiven because of their faith, which motivated them to follow God's instructions. How does God forgive us of our sin today? Describe a recent occasion when you have asked God to forgive you. Describe a specific instance when you showed someone mercy because you were motivated by how God has shown mercy to you.

5.

PART I: THE LAW - NUMBERS AND DEUTERONOMY

Numbers begins with Israel ready to take the Land that God promised to Abraham. God is faithful to His people and he expects faithfulness from them. Deuteronomy emphasizes the fact that God renews His covenant with His people. Deuteronomy is written in the form of a covenant that nations would use.

I. INTRODUCTION

II. **NUMBERS**

A. DEPARTURE FROM SINAI (1:4-10:10)

B. ISRAELITES FAIL TO GAIN THE PROMISED LAND
(10:11 –21)

C. A NEW GENERATION ENTERS THE PROMISED LAND
(22 –36)

III. **DEUTERONOMY**

A. COVENANT STRUCTURE

1. Preamble (1:1-5)
2. Historical prologue (1:6 -4:49)
3. General stipulations (5 –11)
4. Specific stipulations (12 –26)
5. Blessings and consequences (27–28)
6. Witnesses and ratification (29 –33)

B. SECTIONS

1. God renews his covenant with His people. (1 – 4)
2. Basic rules for possessing the land. (5 – 11)
3. Specific rules for possessing the land. (12 – 26)
4. Blessings of obedience . (27 – 28)
5. Last words of Moses, covenant affirmed . (29 – 33)

6. Moses dies (34)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

5. Aaron and Miriam criticized Moses because of who he married. Who have you unjustly criticized or gossiped about lately? What people is God bringing to your mind that he wants you to be in relationship with so you can demonstrate love to them and allow God to bless them through you?
6. Is there something God has told you to do? Are you willing to take a risk and trust him to give you the strength and wisdom to accomplish it?

7. Balaam was faithful to say what God told him even though he knew the king wanted him to say something different. Describe a time when you have said something God told you to say even though you knew it would not be popular. What was the result?

8. Deuteronomy is a book that shows how God keeps His promises and renews His covenant with His people. God showed His mercy by giving them another chance. Describe a time when you kept a promise to be faithful to someone even though it was difficult. Describe a time in your life when God has given you a second chance. How should that affect the way we treat others?

9. How have your parents and mentors obeyed God and set a good example for you? How have they fallen short? How are you living your life to carry on with what they have done well and do better in areas in which they fell short? Deuteronomy chapters 6 and 8 emphasize the importance of the love of God as the primary motivation for obedience to him. How does God's love for you motivate you to love God? How do God's love for you and your love for him motivate you to love others? How does the love of God motivate you to listen to His voice and obey?

6.

PART II: THE FORMER PROPHETS - JOSHUA

The books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings give the history of Israel by recording what happened and state the theological factors. The kings and people are judged by the standard of the Law in Deuteronomy. They are referred to in the Hebrew Canon as the former prophets.

I. REVIEW OF THE LAW

II. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHETS

III. OUTLINE OF JOSHUA

**A. GOD GIVES HIS PEOPLE THE ABILITY TO CONQUER
THE LAND (1–12)**

B. HOW THE ISRAELITES DIVIDED THE LAND (13–22)

C. RENEWING THE COVENANT WITH YAHWEH (23–24)

D. AUTHORSHIP OF JOSHUA

E. QUESTION OF FAIRNESS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Joshua focuses on Yahweh's faithfulness in offering Canaan and Israel the challenge to respond faithfully. What has God promised the Body of Christ? What has he promised you personally? What are you doing, both as part of the Body and personally, to respond in faithfulness?
2. In Joshua chapter 1, God tells Joshua three times to be strong and courageous. What reasons does God give him? Since God told Joshua three times, what does that indicate about Joshua's attitude at the time? Has God told you to do something that you are afraid to try? How do God's promises to Joshua apply to you?

3. In Joshua 24, Joshua challenges the people to renew their commitment to God and choose to serve the Lord. When is the last time you set aside time to renew your commitment to God personally and corporately?

What are the three main sections in the book of Joshua? What is one event or teaching that stands out in each section? How has meditating on that event or teaching affected your relationship with God?

7.

PART II: THE FORMER PROPHETS - JUDGES AND 1 SAMUEL

God disciplines and delivers His people. When everyone does what is right in their own eyes, terrible things happen. (17:6; 21:25) The nations near Israel influenced them to forsake God. The "sin cycle" in Judges happens when the people forsake God by worshipping foreign gods. Turning away from God results in all sorts of chaos and suffering. 1 and 2 Samuel emphasize that God will provide a kingdom and a king with whom he will make a covenant to establish an eternal kingdom through his descendants. Samuel is the last judge and Saul is the first king.

I. JUDGES

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The Theme of Judges (17:6; 21:25)
2. Setting and Dating for the Book of Judges
3. Sociological Factors

B. OUTLINE OF JUDGES

1. The Roots of Chaos (1:1–2:5)

2. Living in Chaos (2:6–16:31)

The Sin Cycle

Othniel

Ehud

Deborah

Gideon

Jephthah

Samson

3. The Consequences of Living in Chaos (17–21)

C. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

II. 1 SAMUEL

A. SETTING FOR 1 & 2 SAMUEL

B. OUTLINE OF 1 SAMUEL

1. Samuel's Career (1–8)

2. Saul as Israel's King (9–15)

3. David Becomes King (16–31)

C. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON SAUL'S LIFE AND WORK

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. When people ignore God's covenant and do "what is right in their own eyes," terrible things happen. What is an example in your church and in your life where you have experienced a natural consequence of disobeying God's covenant? What did you do to restore your relationship with God and others? How are you different because of experiencing that process?
2. The essence of Baal and Asherah religions focused on worshipping money, sex, and power. In what ways do you put money, sex, and/or power before God? How does God want you to change your relationship with him, so he is most important?

3. How do you become a leader who starts out and continues to serve God wholeheartedly? How do you train and identify people like that?

4. How do you as an individual and as a group of believers keep God's covenant in a way that draws other people to want to do the same thing? In what ways do you fall short? What can you do to continue in what you do well and improve in areas in which you are weak?

5. God's purpose in giving Saul a "bad spirit" was with the goal of bringing Saul back to himself. Give an example in your life of how God allowed you to experience the consequences of your sin, resulting in repentance and restoration of your relationship with him.

8.

PART II: THE FORMER PROPHETS - 2 SAMUEL AND KINGS

2 Samuel begins by describing how God enables David to build a kingdom. Next is a narrative describing David's sin and its consequences for himself, his family and the nation. The last chapters in 2 Samuel recount God's faithfulness to David during his last years.

1 Kings begins by recounting David's death and Solomon's ascendance to be king of the nation. God granted Solomon wisdom, for which Solomon was famous.

I. 2 SAMUEL

A. OUTLINE OF 2 SAMUEL

1. David builds a kingdom (1 –10)

2. David's sin and its consequences (11–19)

3. David's last years (20–24)

B. CONCLUSION

II. KINGS (PART 1)

A. THE SETTING OF 1 & 2 KINGS

B. OUTLINE OF 1 & 2 KINGS

1. The Rise and Fall of Solomon's Family (1 Kings 1–12)

2. The Temple

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In 2 Samuel 7:1-17, God promises that a descendant of David will always rule, and the Messiah will come from his family. How do you act differently each day knowing that God is in control of history and that your choices can cause him to do things that he would not otherwise do?
2. David's involvement with Bathsheba began when he was at home instead of at war where he was supposed to be. What choices are you making in your actions and/or thought life that are putting you in places that make you vulnerable to temptation? Who do you meet with regularly that knows you well enough and loves you enough to ask you questions to help keep you accountable?

3. Dr. House says that “David’s failings do not negate God’s faithfulness.” Give an example in your life of how you failed, and God has turned it into something that glorifies him.
4. David’s life is an example of how difficult it is to make good choices in the areas of faith in God, family, politics, and power. In what areas of your life is it difficult to make good choices? In what areas has God been speaking to you about making changes? Give a specific example of how you have been obedient and one example of how you will be obedient.

5. Contrast the prayer of Solomon in 1 Kings 8:22ff when he dedicates the temple with the end of his life in chapter 11. Why doesn't he finish well? What are some ways in which you have started well with the Lord? How are you staying in relationship with him so you can finish well? In what areas do you need to make changes to get back on course?

9.

PART II: THE FORMER PROPHETS – KINGS (CONTINUED)

After Solomon's death, Jeroboam becomes king of the northern ten tribes (Israel) and Rehoboam becomes king of the southern two tribes (Judah). Jeroboam sets up an alternative religion to try and keep the loyalty of the people. After Jeroboam's death, Omri becomes king of the northern ten tribes. Omri's son Ahab succeeds him. Ahab marries Jezebel, who encourages Baal worship. Elijah is God's prophet during this time, who encourages people to worship Yahweh. After Ahab dies in battle, Elijah is taken up into heaven and Elisha succeeds him. The story of Naaman shows us that God saves Gentiles. Elijah and Elisha speak the word of God accurately and uphold the covenant fully. Jehu kills Omri's family and the priests of Baal. When the people of Israel rebel against God, he disciplines them through wars and famines to encourage them to come back. He also sends prophets to warn them. When these don't work, God

promised in Leviticus and Deuteronomy that he would drive them from the land. In 722 BC, Assyria conquers Northern Israel. In the Southern kingdom, Hezekiah worships Yahweh, but his son Manasseh worships idols. Josiah tries to lead Israel back to Yahweh, but they resist.

I. OUTLINE OF KINGS (PART II)

A. RISE AND FALL OF JEROBOAM'S FAMILY (1 KINGS 12-15)

B. RISE AND FALL OF OMRI'S FAMILY (1 KINGS 16-2 KINGS 10)

C. THE DECLINE AND FALL OF NORTHERN ISRAEL (2 KINGS 11-17)

D. THE DECLINE AND FALL OF SOUTHERN ISRAEL (2 KINGS 18-25)

II. ALL IS NOT LOST (DEUTERONOMY 30)

III. CONCLUSION TO THE FORMER PROPHETS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. God requires Israel to worship him in specific ways. Christ said we are to worship God in spirit and in truth. How do you worship God in the way he wants to be worshipped? In what ways do you follow traditions that are not biblical?
2. After Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal and God defeated them, Elijah was depressed because Jezebel still wanted to kill him, and he felt like he was the only one following God. Have you ever felt alone? How has God comforted you? Who do you know that may feel alone? How does God want you to encourage them ?

4. Hezekiah followed God and listened to Isaiah and other prophets. His son Manasseh worshipped other gods. How do you pass your faith on to your children? How do you pursue children who are walking away from God? How do you support parents of children who are walking away from God?

5. 2 Kings ends with Babylon taking the people into captivity. What difficulty in your life are you struggling with that seems hopeless? What attitudes and motivations does God want you to change in your life so you can love him and serve others?

10.

PART III: THE LATTER PROPHETS - ISAIAH

In the prophetic books, poetic speeches replace narrative as the main type of writing. Seven themes that are common in prophetic books are word and symbol, election and covenant, rebellion, judgment, God's compassion, redemption and consummation. These themes can be compressed into the ideas of sin, judgment and renewal. Books of prophecy stress how to live for God.

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE LATTER PROPHETS

II. HOW TO READ THE PROPHETIC BOOKS

A. B. D. NAPIER'S SEVEN THEMES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

B. THREE MAIN EMPHASES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

C. BOOKS OF PROPHECY STRESS HOW TO LIVE FOR GOD

III. **ISAIAH**

A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

B. ISAIAH'S MESSAGE

C. THE STRUCTURE OF ISAIAH SEVEN CYCLES

1. First cycle: (1–4).

2. Second cycle (5–12).

3. Third cycle: (13–27)

4. Fourth cycle: (28–35)

5. Fifth cycle: (36–56:8)

6. Sixth cycle: (56:9–62:12)

7. Seventh cycle (63–66)

D. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. The three main themes of the prophets are sin, judgment, and renewal. Give an example in your life of a situation involving these three elements. How did going through this process affect you in your relationship with God and how you serve others?
2. The prophets stress how we are to live for God now. What is one area that the prophets speak to Israel about that you need to change in your life? What attitudes toward God and others need to be different? How will those changes result in different behavior?

4. Isaiah describes God as the Planner and Maker of their history. Does that mean that we are free to make choices? Why or why not? How does your answer affect your relationship with God and how you live your daily life?

5. Isaiah 56 describes how the Messiah will gather people from all nations. What is God calling you to do to be a light to the nations?
6. Describe how looking forward to the time of renewal when God makes the new heavens and the New Earth affects your relationship with him and your willingness to serve others.

7. Isaiah 66:18ff says that God will call priests from all nations. First Peter talks about the priesthood of believers. What does it mean that, as fully devoted followers of Christ, God has made us priests? How does that affect your relationship with him and your willingness to serve others?

11.

PART III: THE LATTER PROPHETS - JEREMIAH

Jeremiah lived near Jerusalem and had a message for the nations from God during difficult times. God tells Jeremiah that because he is calling people to repent and return to worshipping Yahweh, he will face opposition, but that God will be with him

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHECY (1)

II. ISRAEL'S SINS AND THE SINS OF THE NATIONS (2 –29)

III. RENEWAL THROUGH THE NEW COVENANT (30 –33)

**IV. ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS' PUNISHMENT
(34–51)**

V. CONCLUSION TO THE PROPHECY (52)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Jeremiah is a prophet when Jerusalem is destroyed and he is taken as a refugee to Babylon, away from everything familiar. Yet, he is still faithful to listen to God's voice and proclaim His message. When times are difficult for you, do you blame God and curse him, or do you trust him and continue to hope in him? Give an example.
2. God says he called Jeremiah and gave him a mission even before he was born. What has God called you to do? Are you doing it?

4. How does Jesus fit the description of the Messiah in Jeremiah 23:1-8?

5. In Jeremiah 31:33, God says that He will “put My law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.” What does that mean? How does it affect your relationship with God?

6. What is a situation in your life that has shaken you to the core? Do you trust God and hope in him, or have you become bitter? Have you become more compassionate to others because of experiencing God’s comfort and mercy in your own life? Give an example.

7. Jeremiah is a man who faithfully does a difficult task over a long period of time and continues to believe that God will bring the New Covenant. How do you want people to remember you when you are gone?

12.

PART III: THE LATTER PROPHETS - EZEKIEL

Ezekiel is a prophet of restoration and hope. He offers hope to the exiles that God will make the future brighter than the past.

I. INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL

II. SECTIONS OF EZEKIEL

A. THE PROPHET'S CALL (1-3)

B. SERMONS ABOUT JUDAH (4-24)

C. DOOM FOR ISRAEL'S ENEMIES (25-32)

D. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM
(33-39)

E. VISION OF RESTORED AND RENEWED JERUSALEM
(40-48)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. God calls Ezekiel to eat the scroll of His Word. How do we do that, so it becomes more than just information?
2. God says that if Ezekiel preaches His message, God is responsible for the results. How do we preach God's Word in a way that the hearers understand? How are the lives of individual people in our church changing because of the message we are preaching? How is my relationship with them encouraging them to pursue their relationship with God and others, and serve God and others in the process?

3. How am I called to be a Watchman? How is each follower of Christ called to be a Watchman? How do we encourage others to be Watchmen without motivating them by guilt and shame?

4. In Ezekiel 36:26-27, God promises to give the people of Israel a heart of flesh and cause His Spirit to dwell within them. Does that apply to us today? How does having a heart of flesh make a difference in how we relate to and serve God and others? How do we hear and respond to the voice of the Spirit who lives in us?

5. Ezekiel preaches about the themes of sin, judgment, and renewal. Are those appropriate themes to preach today? How do we preach them authentically without trying to motivate people by guilt and shame? In what ways is God speaking to you in these areas? How will it change how you relate to and serve him and others? Who is there in your life that God wants you to interact with regarding these themes?

13.

PART III: THE LATTER PROPHETS - THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE (PART 1)

In the Hebrew Bible the Book of the Twelve is considered one book. In the Christian Bible, these are split up into twelve books known as the minor prophets. The major themes are the description of the sins of Israel and the nations, punishment of sin of the "day of the Lord" and restoration of Israel and the nations.

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE

A. STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

1. The first 6 prophecies describe the sins of Israel and the nations.
2. The next three emphasize the punishment of sin on the day of the Lord.
3. The last three emphasize the restoration of Israel and their neighbors.

B. CHARACTERS

C. HISTORICAL DETAILS AND THEOLOGICAL THEMES

D. OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE

II. CONTENTS OF THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE

A. HOSEA

1. Israel's adultery dramatized (1 –3)

2. Israel's adultery detailed (4 –14)

B. JOEL

C. AMOS

1. Worldwide lack of justice and love (1-2)
2. The injustice in Israel (chapters 3-6)
3. Visions of the coming destruction (7:1 -9:10)
4. Statement of restoration (9:11 -15)

D. OBADIAH

E. JONAH

1. God calls Jonah to go to Nineveh (1–2)
2. Jonah preaches repentance in Nineveh (3)
3. God is concerned about all nations (4)

F. MICAH

QUESTIONS

1. Hosea shows God's willingness to pursue and forgive Israel even when they have turned against him. He does the same for us. How does that affect our relationship with God? Are you willing to forgive others, even when they do not deserve it? How do you maintain healthy boundaries in relationships and still forgive people? Have you asked God specifically for wisdom and strength to restore a broken relationship?
2. Acts 2 quotes Joel 2. In what ways was Joel's prophecy fulfilled in Acts? What caused it to happen? How is it being fulfilled in your life and your small group today? What is causing it to happen and what does it look like? If it is not happening, what needs to change?

3. In Amos, God says he will judge Israel and the nations because of their unjust practices. In what ways did they practice injustice? How do we as individuals and as a group practice injustice? What should we do to repent and begin treating people fairly?

4. Jonah 4 shows God's compassion for the city of Nineveh. Explain how you as an individual and a group demonstrate compassion toward people who are not seeking the Lord. Would you say you are more judgmental or more compassionate? Why? How can you improve in this area?

5. Israel's calling is to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, showing God's glory to all the people around them. That is the same calling that we have as disciples of Christ (see 1 Peter). In what ways are you doing this well? In what ways are you failing to do this? How can you improve on what you are doing poorly and expand in the areas in which you are doing well? What will you do to accomplish this?

14.

PART III: THE LATTER PROPHETS - THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE (PART 2)

In the Hebrew Bible the Book of the Twelve is considered one book. In the Christian Bible, these are split up into twelve books known as the minor prophets. The major themes are the description of the sins of Israel and the nations, punishment of sin at the "day of the Lord" and restoration of Israel and the nations. This lesson covers the books of Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

I. CONTENTS OF THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE

A. NAHUM

B. HABAKKUK

C. ZEPHANIAH

D. HAGGAI

E. ZECHARIAH

F. MALACHI

II. CONCLUSION

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Nahum says that God showed grace to the nation of Assyria, but he would not let the guilty go unpunished. Does God have this same kind of relationship with nations today, or does he work only through individuals? How do we see him offering grace to those who have not yet believed? Do we see him punishing nations, or is that only to happen on the Last Day?
2. Habakkuk had trouble with the fact that the wicked were prospering in his day. What was God's promise to him? How do we remain faithful in our day, even though it appears that the wicked seem to prosper? What is the importance of the statement, "The righteous shall live by faith" for living in our day?

3. When sharing with others about the holiness and mercy of God, how can you use the message of the Book of the Twelve to show that God punishes sin, but also is patient and long-suffering with those who sin?

4. Review the message of each book of the Book of the Twelve to see how they fit into the theme of sin, punishment, and restoration. How especially do the last three emphasize the message of restoration? How can we use these books to point people to the fulfillment of this in the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

15.

PART IV: THE WRITINGS - PSALMS

This is the most diverse section in the Old Testament in terms of types of literature. We learn a lot from these books about how the people of Israel lived as they related to God and one another. The Psalms represent the best prayers, hymns and calls to worship that Israel produced. Psalms teaches us what true worship is.

I. THREE WAYS TO INTERPRET THE PSALMS

A. INDIVIDUAL EXPRESSIONS OF SPIRITUALITY

B. INTERPRETED AND APPLIED ACCORDING TO THEIR
LITERARY TYPE

1. Hymn of praise

2. Royal Psalms

3. Individual thanksgiving Psalms

4. Individual laments

5. Community laments

C. READING THE PSALMS AS A WHOLE BOOK:

1-41

42-72

73-89

90-106

107-150

II. OUTLINE OF PSALMS

A. PSALMS 141: WORSHIPPING GOD IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

B. PSALMS 42-72: TEACHING WORSHIP TO THE NEXT GENERATION

C. PSALMS 73-89: THE CONSEQUENCES OF
REJECTING A GODLY HERITAGE

D. PSALMS 90-106: ISRAEL MUST EXERCISE WORSHIP
WHILE BEING PATIENT

E. PSALMS 107-150: WORSHIP AND RESTORATION

III. CONCLUSION OF PSALMS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In looking at Psalms as a whole book, Wilson notes that each section ends with a doxology. What does that indicate about the overall emphasis of the book of Psalms? Does our prayer and worship have the same emphasis? What difference will it make in our individual lives and in our local body?
2. Psalms says that those who are wicked should be warned to turn away from their sins and come to God. Name someone you have a relationship with that does not have a relationship with God. How will you warn them in a way that will encourage them to turn to him?

5. How does reading God's Word and meditating on it help you to hear God's voice in your life? Give a specific example from the past week.

6. Psalms 146-150 tell us that praising, honoring, and glorifying God in our lives and with our lips will help us to live for God as we wait for the Messiah and faithfully proclaim His name to the nations. How do you praise, honor, and glorify God with your life and your lips? Give an example of how someone has been drawn to God because of something you said or did.

16.

PART IV: THE WRITINGS - JOB AND PROVERBS

Job teaches us how to struggle with doubt, pain, and suffering, and even with our faith. The message of Job is that we should trust the providence of God. The message of the book of Proverbs is how to develop wisdom.

I. **JOB**

A. DESCRIPTION OF WISDOM LITERATURE

B. BACKGROUND OF JOB

C. OUTLINE OF JOB

1. Testing of Job (1 –2)
2. Job's dialogue with his three friends (3 –31)
3. Fourth friend (32 –37)
4. Yahweh confronts Job (38:1 –42:6)
5. Healing and Restoration (42:7 -17)

6. Conclusion

II. PROVERBS

A. DESCRIPTION OF WISDOM LITERATURE

B. THEMES IN PROVERBS (HEADINGS 1:1, 10:1, 22:17, 25:1, 30:1, 31:1)

C. OUTLINE OF PROVERBS

1. Choosing wisdom and avoiding foolishness (1–9)

2. How to become a righteous child (10:1 – 22:16)
3. Sustaining righteousness (22:17 –24:34)
4. Becoming a righteous leader (25 –29)
5. Dealing with pride (30)
6. Importance of choosing a faithful life partner (31)

D. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Is God obligated to give us what we want if we are diligent about living according to the teachings of the Bible? How do you respond to God when you get what you want? How do you respond to God when you do not get what you want, and the rules do not seem to work?
2. Have you ever thought you were doing what God wanted you to do and experienced great difficulty and/or pain? Have you ever doubted God's sovereignty as a result? Do you believe God is sovereign? What do you say to people you know who are facing a similar situation? Do you want to be like Job's friends? Why or why not?

4. Proverbs 26 and 27 remind us of the importance of choosing good companions. Do you or your friends practice gossip or flattery? How do you choose good friends? Do you have friends that encourage you spiritually? Do you have friends that can tell you what you need to hear, even if it is not what you want to hear?

17.

PART IV: THE WRITINGS - RUTH, SONG OF SONGS, ^[L]_[SEP]ECCLESIASTES, AND LAMENTATIONS

In the Hebrew Bible, Ruth follows immediately after the description of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31. The book as a whole tells how to survive personal difficulties and emphasizes God's mercy. The theme of Song of Solomon is enjoying love. Ecclesiastes describes how to search for meaning in life. Lamentations is about how to mourn national tragedy. Esther survived in exile by the grace and providence of God. Daniel shows us how to maintain distinctive faith in exile. Ezra and Nehemiah talk about how to rebuild a nation. 1 and 2 Chronicles talk about how to view the past.

I. RUTH

II. SONG OF SOLOMON

III. ECCLESIASTES

IV. LAMENTATION S

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Boaz made it easy for Ruth to “glean” in his fields. Give an example of how you are aware of the needs of people around you. Who do you know in your family or community that needs your help? How does God want you to assist them in a way that is helpful to them?
2. Ruth is humble enough to follow Naomi’s advice and Boaz is humble enough to accept Ruth’s offer of marriage. Who has God placed in your life to give you wise counsel and direction? Are you listening carefully to hear it and are you humble enough to respond?

3. Ecclesiastes starts out by giving examples of how life on earth vanity and death is inevitable. The conclusion is to fear God and keep His commandments. How do you live each day to accomplish this? If you really believe that earthly pursuits are vain, that death is inevitable, and that fearing God and keeping His commandments have eternal benefits, how will that change where you choose to spend your time and money? How will it change how you relate to other people?

18.

PART IV: THE WRITINGS - ESTHER, DANIEL, EZRA-NEHEMIAH, AND CHRONICLES

Esther survived in exile by the grace and providence of God. Daniel shows us how to maintain distinctive faith in exile. Ezra and Nehemiah talk about how to rebuild a nation. 1 and 2 Chronicles talk about how to view the past.

I. ESTHER

II. DANIEL

III. EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

IV. 1 & 2 CHRONICLES

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Esther risked her life to come before the king and then had a creative plan to make her request. Can you give an example of a time when you took a risk for God and he came through? Is there a situation in your life where you sense God wants you to take a risk? Have you taken the time to wait on him and ask for His plan to accomplish it?
2. Ezra 7:10 says, “For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach His statutes and rules in Israel.” Is your heart set to study God’s word, to do it, and to teach it to others? Is that your desire? In what ways are you doing it now? In what ways is this not true of you now? How will it affect your life and your relationship with others if this is true of you?

3. According to 1 Chronicles, David is the main character in the history of Israel. In what ways did he live up to the title “a man after God’s own heart?” In what ways did he fall short? In what ways are you like David? Are you willing to be as honest and transparent with God as David was? How do you notice your relationship with God and others changing as you seek him?
4. God is still moving from Creation to New Creation by fulfilling His promises to Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and, through the Scriptures, promises to us. Give an example in your life of how seeing God fulfill His promises in the past has motivated you to step out in faith to obey him.