

FROM ABRAHAM TO JESUS

WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The Old Testament is a collection of 39 books,

written over 1,000 years and divided into four different types of writing: The Pentateuch (first five books), History, Poetry and Wisdom and the Prophets.

However, for Jewish readers before Jesus the writings were divided into three sections: the law, the prophets and “writings” and made up of 24 books (called the Tanakh). This is why Jesus referred to “the Law and the Prophets”. We don’t know exactly the books were put together as one, but it is likely to be from 400 BC when the Jews had returned from exile in Babylon.

While the Old Testament and Tanakh contain the same material, Christians ordered the books slightly differently from their Jewish origins and divided some of the original material up, creating more books (e.g. “Kings” became “1 and 2 Kings”).

WHAT IS THE OVERALL STORY?

These different books can be best understood when we see them as part of one story.

As we have seen, the Bible begins by zooming out to paint a picture of who we are and why we are here (how God made everything and humans in His image) and what the problem is (the human and spiritual fall).

From Genesis 12 to the end of the Old Testament the story zooms in to focus on God’s solution - the story of how God seeks to work through a people who will be His own, a new humanity who will represent Him, joining in with the restoration of His world by being a “blessing to the nations”.

From Abraham comes the people of Israel – a people God rescues and guides, gives a land in which they can start to demonstrate what life under God might look like, and establishes a way in which they can experience His presence. Through this family of tribes God might once again be able to restore the whole world.

Yet the story of Israel is a parable of history. Like us, they sometimes respond to God’s call, yet more often than not turn away from Him – leading to chaos and being far from home. God remains faithful throughout, and the story of the Old Testament ends with a promise – that God Himself will act decisively through an anointed King who will finally restore and renew humanity and the world.



DATES	EVENTS	HELPFUL VERSES	BOOKS
<p>Around 1850 BC</p>	<p>God seeks to restore the _____ by calling Abram to leave Babylon and go to Canaan. He promises to make him the father of many nations and that through him all people on earth will be blessed.</p> <p>Abram and Sarah, despite finding it hard to trust God, have Isaac. God asks Abram to _____ Isaac, testing his ability to trust in God's plan. Child sacrifice to appease the gods was common at that time – by providing a ram at the last-minute God is showing Abram He is not like the other gods.</p> <p>From Isaac comes Jacob, who wrestles with God – and is renamed “Israel” – one who _____ with God.</p> <p>His twelve sons become the origin of the 12 tribes of Israel. Joseph is sold into _____ in Egypt but becomes the way in which God rescues the family, who join him there.</p>	<p>“I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you...and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” ... they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there...The Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” (Genesis 12: 2-7)</p> <p>The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.” (Genesis 22: 15-17)</p> <p>“I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” (Genesis 28: 15)</p> <p>“But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.” (Genesis 45: 7)</p>	<p>Genesis</p>

MISSING WORDS IN THE EVENTS COLUMN

Sacrifice, slavery, struggles, world.



”

I AM WITH YOU AND WILL WATCH OVER YOU WHEREVER YOU GO, AND I WILL BRING YOU BACK TO THIS LAND.

“

DATES	EVENTS	HELPFUL VERSES	BOOKS
<p>Around 1250 BC</p>	<p>After 400 years in Egypt the twelve tribes of the Israelites have grown into a large people, but have become enslaved by Egypt where _____ rules the land with divine authority.</p> <p>God renews His covenant with Moses and, through the ten plagues, which increasingly take Pharaoh's divine authority apart, Moses eventually is allowed to lead the people out of Egypt so that they may worship God in _____, escaping through the Red Sea.</p> <p>God gives them the Passover meal as a way of _____ how death "passed over" them, and they were rescued through this Exodus.</p> <p>God re-establishes His covenant with His people at Mount Sinai (or Horeb, the place where He had met with Moses in the burning ____).</p>	<p>God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. (Exodus 2:24)</p> <p>"And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain." (Exodus 3: 12)</p>	<p>Exodus Deuteronomy</p>

MISSING WORDS IN THE EVENTS COLUMN

Freedom, bush, Pharaoh, remembering.



”

GOD ...REMEMBERED HIS COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, WITH ISAAC AND WITH JACOB.

“

DATES	EVENTS	HELPFUL VERSES	BOOKS
	<p>He gives them _____ through the Ten Commandments and other laws (613 in total). At the heart of these is how they can image Him in justice and righteousness and be a blessing to the world. They will be a "_____ kingdom and a holy nation." (Exodus 19: 6)</p> <p>God gives them a way of being "at one" with Him again through a system of sacrifice, which communicates both the serious need for forgiveness and the reality of sin being _____ for. He gives them the reassurance of His presence in the tabernacle, at the heart of which is the place where heaven and earth can overlap again.</p> <p>It takes 40 years for the people to enter the Promised Land (an eleven day journey!). Despite God's rescue and continuing _____ they fail to trust Him, disobeying His call to worship Him, compromising with the other gods around them.</p>	<p>"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20: 2-3)</p> <p>"What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him (and) to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?" (Deuteronomy 4: 5-8)</p> <p>"...because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the Lord, you will be clean from all your sins." (Leviticus 16:30)</p>	<p>Leviticus</p> <p>Numbers</p>

MISSING WORDS IN THE EVENTS COLUMN

Atoned, provision, guidance, priestly.



”

WHAT OTHER NATION IS SO GREAT AS TO HAVE THEIR GODS NEAR THEM THE WAY THE LORD OUR GOD IS NEAR US WHENEVER WE PRAY TO HIM

“

DATES	EVENTS	HELPFUL VERSES	BOOKS
<p>930 BC</p>	<p>He brings the ark of the covenant – containing the Ten commandments and sign of God’s presence – into Jerusalem with _____. God promises David that one day his dynasty will rule over the whole world. (2 Samuel 7)</p> <p>Solomon, David’s son, builds a permanent Temple in Jerusalem – God is not confined to the Temple but it is the centre of His _____ on earth (2 Chronicles 7: 1-6; 11-22). Solomon leads Israel into its most fruitful period. Over the following 350 year period further kings often fail to be _____ to God’s call, turning to idolatry and leading the Israelites into conflict with others and with themselves.</p> <p>Under Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, there is a _____ in which the Promised Land gets divided into two kingdoms each with their own kings and capitals. The northern kingdom – called Israel – is made up of ten tribes. The southern – called Judah – is made up of two – with the capital in Jerusalem.</p>	<p>“...if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.” (2 Chronicles 7: 14-16)</p>	

MISSING WORDS IN THE EVENTS COLUMN

Faithful, joy, split, presence.



”

I HAVE CHOSEN AND CONSECRATED THIS TEMPLE SO THAT MY NAME MAY BE THERE FOREVER. MY EYES AND MY HEART WILL ALWAYS BE THERE.

“

DATES	EVENTS	HELPFUL VERSES	BOOKS
850 BC	<p>In both kingdoms prophets rise up to call them back to God and to being a covenant people – most notably Elijah in the northern kingdom who challenges the _____ of Baal.</p> <p>The prophets, such as Hosea, Amos and Jonah call the people to enact God’s justice and warn of destruction and exile as a result of their disobedience. Interestingly, Jonah is sent, somewhat reluctantly, to the Assyrians – Israel’s _____.</p>	<p>Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.” But the people said nothing. (1 Kings 18: 21)</p> <p>Amos to northern kingdom 750 BC: Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land, Will not the land tremble for this, and all who live in it mourn? (Amos 8: 4,8)</p>	<p>Major prophets: Before and during exile: Isaiah During exile: Jeremiah and Ezekiel.</p>
750 BC	<p>Yet within this increasing chaos there is also a promise – for example, Isaiah prophesies in Jerusalem that God will send an anointed King, a “Messiah”, who will come from _____, David and Judah’s line – fulfilling the promise. The end of Isaiah calls God’s people back to worship and foresees a time when Israel, God’s “delight”, will be His covenant bride once again, God will _____ His people in justice and there will be a new heaven and a new earth with no death, illness, sadness and pain.</p>	<p>For to us a child is born, to us a son is given...He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. (Isaiah 9: 6-7)</p> <p>Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53: 4-5)</p>	<p>Minor prophets: Warnings to the north before exile: Hosea, Joel Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah. Warnings to the south: Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah.</p> <p>After exile: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.</p>

MISSING WORDS IN THE EVENTS COLUMN

Prophets, Abraham, restore, enemy.



”

HE WILL REIGN ON DAVID’S THRONE AND OVER HIS KINGDOM, ESTABLISHING AND UPHOLDING IT WITH JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM THAT TIME ON AND FOREVER.

“

DATES	EVENTS	HELPFUL VERSES	BOOKS
<p>722 BC</p> <p>597 BC</p>	<p>The northern kingdom is invaded by the Assyrians (from present-day northern Iraq), and its people are eventually _____.</p> <p>After many attacks, the southern kingdom is invaded by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. All able-bodied Jews are taken into _____ in Babylon, 500 miles away. Jerusalem and the Temple is destroyed in 586 BC.</p> <p>The books Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Lamentations and Isaiah speak into this period – expressing the pain and judgment of the exile, but also offering hope. Many of the Psalms express the Jewish longing for return – “By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion.” (Psalm 137) Ezekiel’s _____ speak of God renewing the land and His people. Much of the Old Testament literature was begun to be written or put together during this period as the people needed to be _____ of God’s calling on them.</p>	<p>Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins. (Isaiah 40: 1-2)</p> <p>“As a pleasing odour I will accept you, when I bring you out from the peoples, and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will manifest my holiness among you in the sight of the nations. You shall know that I am the Lord, when I bring you into the land of Israel, the country that I swore to give to your ancestors.” (Ezekiel 20:41-43)</p>	

MISSING WORDS IN THE EVENTS COLUMN

Exile, visions, dispersed, reminded.



”

COMFORT, COMFORT MY PEOPLE,
SAYS YOUR GOD.

“

DATES	EVENTS	HELPFUL VERSES	BOOKS
<p>400 BC</p>	<p>Between the ____ book of the Old Testament (Malachi) and the coming of Jesus (the inter-testamental period) there is 400 years of silence. During this time the people are ruled by Persians, Greeks, Syrians, and Romans.</p> <p>Different groups have different responses. The Essenes (of whom John the Baptist was one) emphasise withdrawal into the desert to become pure. The Pharisees looked to show the difference between faithful Jews and pagan rulers. The Sadducees were a religious group but opted for compromise with the authorities while the Zealots wanted violent revolution.</p> <p>As they wait for God's _____ the book of Daniel offers inspiration as a story of someone who is both faithful under oppression and has a vision of one who is God's fully representative human, "like a Son of ___" who will bring God's plan to its completion.</p>	<p>"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.</p> <p>He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him.</p> <p>His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14)</p>	

MISSING WORDS IN THE EVENTS COLUMN

Promise, last, Man.



”

HIS DOMINION IS AN EVERLASTING DOMINION THAT WILL NOT PASS AWAY, AND HIS KINGDOM IS ONE THAT WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED.

“