

THE STORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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. 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.

WHAT IS THE OVERALL STORY?

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

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	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>Genesis</p>

MISSING WORDS IN THE EVENTS COLUMN

Sacrifice, slavery, struggles, world.



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

“

DATES	EVENTS	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>Exodus Deuteronomy</p>

MISSING WORDS IN THE EVENTS COLUMN

Freedom, bush, Pharaoh, remembering.



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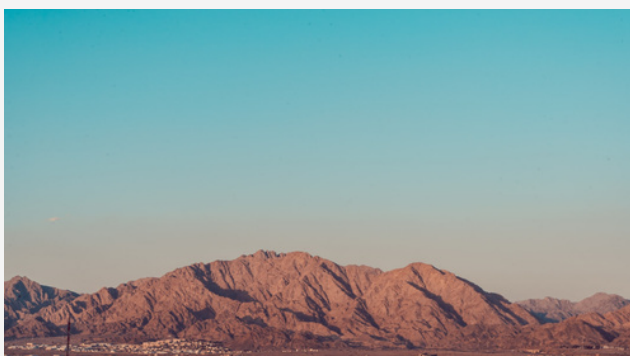
GOD ...REMEMBERED HIS COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, WITH ISAAC AND WITH JACOB.

“

DATES	EVENTS	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>Leviticus</p> <p>Numbers</p>

MISSING WORDS IN THE EVENTS COLUMN

Atoned, provision, guidance, priestly.



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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

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DATES	EVENTS	BOOKS
<p>Around 1050 BC</p>	<p>Joshua leads the people across the Jordan into this _____ Land. Over time the people become established in the land, driving out existing tribes, and allotting each tribe a different area.</p> <p>Following Joshua's death, the Israelites quickly start to worship the gods of other neighbouring nations. God appoints _____ as gifted leaders such as Deborah, Gideon, Samson and Samuel who will bring Israel back to God.</p> <p>As Israel continues to refuse to worship God enemy nations of Israel such as Canaanites or Philistines are used as instruments of _____.</p> <p>God agrees to giving the people a King as a compromise in His relationship with them. Samuel, a judge, _____ Saul and, after his death, David as king. David unites the tribes, establishes Jerusalem and secures Israel's borders.</p>	<p>Joshua</p> <p>Ruth, Judges</p> <p>Kings, Samuel and Chronicles</p>

MISSING WORDS IN THE EVENTS COLUMN

Judges, justice, anoints, Promised.



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THEN, BEFORE THE LORD, YOU WILL BE CLEAN FROM ALL YOUR SINS.

“

DATES	EVENTS	BOOKS
930 BC	<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.</p> <p>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>	

MISSING WORDS IN THE EVENTS COLUMN

Faithful, joy, split, presence.



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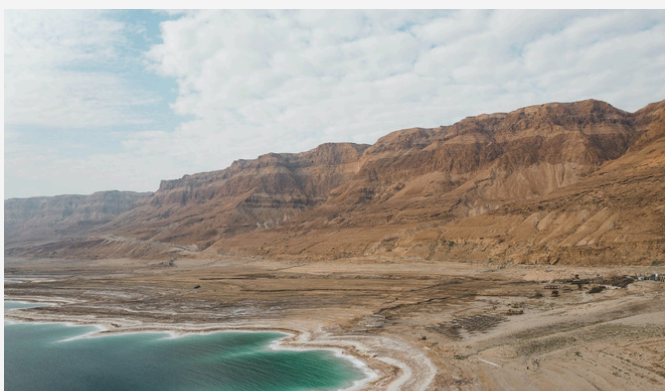
I HAVE CHOSEN AND CONSECRATED THIS TEMPLE SO THAT MY NAME MAY BE THERE FOREVER. MY EYES AND MY HEART WILL ALWAYS BE THERE.

“

DATES	EVENTS	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>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>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.



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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	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)</p> <p>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>	

MISSING WORDS IN THE EVENTS COLUMN

Exile, visions, dispersed, reminded.



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COMFORT, COMFORT MY PEOPLE,
SAYS YOUR GOD.

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DATES	EVENTS	BOOKS
<p>538 BC</p> <p>445 BC</p>	<p>After King Cyrus of Persia invades Babylon, the Jews are allowed to return 70 years later to _____.</p> <p>Under Nehemiah and Ezra they rebuild the walls of the city and recommit to living under God’s rule. The story of Esther, living under Persian rule, is from this time.</p> <p>Even now, the prophets like Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi encourage them to _____ their life under God, rather than resisting Him, and point to the coming Messiah.</p> <p>Further wisdom literature is brought into the Tanakh reflecting many of the _____ and themes of Israel’s story: God’s love for His people (Song of Songs); where is God in suffering (Job); worship, lament and _____ for the future (Psalms); living wisely (Proverbs and Ecclesiastes).</p>	

MISSING WORDS IN THE EVENTS COLUMN

Experiences, Jerusalem, hope, renew.



HE WILL BE CLOTHED WITH MAJESTY AND WILL SIT AND RULE ON HIS THRONE. AND HE WILL BE A PRIEST ON HIS THRONE.



DATES	EVENTS	BOOKS
400 BC	<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. 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>	

MISSING WORDS IN THE EVENTS COLUMN

Promise, last, Man.



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

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