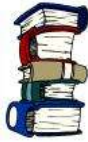


Lesson
Three



The Books of the Bible

Introduction

It is a daunting task to sit down and decide to read through the entire Bible. Often, as you read, you find many books that seem either boring or just don't make sense. We are going to take this time to go through the various groups of books in the Bible and cover what they are and how they are important.

We will look at the books in the standard King James order as that will be the order most teens are familiar with. This is not meant to be a detailed Book-by-Book summary, but rather a way of becoming aware of how it is organized. Most importantly, how to get the most out of reading it. Each section will be a title followed by the books contained in that section.

OLD TESTAMENT

The Torah or Law

Genesis * Exodus * Leviticus
Numbers * Deuteronomy

These five books alone constitute what is known as the Torah or the Law (as referred to by Yahshua). Not every scripture could be considered law itself as a majority of it is actually history. However, the law is contained within these books and are what guides most of the events throughout the Torah.

Genesis has to be the most concise book of the entire Bible as it covers a span of about 2000 years. It is vital to knowing and understanding the first promises made to the Israelites through Abraham.

Leviticus is considered the best book to read when you need to fall asleep. This is due to the extremely detailed listing of sacrifices and laws (many of which don't seem to apply anymore since we don't have a temple nor are most of us farmers). However, some of the important chapters have to do with what was commanded to be observed by Yahweh each year (ch. 23).

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is Genesis considered part of the law if the law was not given until halfway through Exodus at Mount Sinai?

History of the Israelites

Joshua * Judges * Ruth
1 & 2 Samuel * 1 & 2 Kings * 1 & 2 Chronicles
Beyond the 40 years in the wilderness, the story is continued by others after Moses.

Joshua covers the story of the Israelites attempting to remove the other pagan peoples from the land promised by Yahweh. Joshua himself admonishes them to continue just before he dies.

Judges shows that they never did finish ridding their land of the pagan influences and all of the nations trials as a result. In here you'll find the stories of Samson, Gideon, and Deborah.

Ruth is unique as it covers the history of one small family. The reason it is here is because Ruth ends up being the grandmother of King David.

The three pairs of books begins with the last judge, Samuel, and the Israelites desire for a king “just like all the other nations”. After only three kings (Saul, David and Solomon), the land of Israel divides into two nations, Israel and Judah.

The books of Chronicles are in some ways repeats of the books of Kings, giving some additional details where the first were lacking. All of them outline the end of the nation of Israel when most went into captivity or just left.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why would it be so important to have an entire book dedicated to one woman, Ruth?

A Nation Returns

Ezra * Nehemiah * Esther

After Israel is taken into captivity, these three books cover stories related to those in captivity or coming out of it.

Ezra and Nehemiah tell the same story from two perspectives. Ezra being the priest while Nehemiah is the “governor”.

Esther is unique in that it is the only book of the Old Testament in which Yahweh's name is not used.

Discussion Questions:

1. The book of Esther contains the events are the origin of the Jewish celebration, Purim. What might be reasons not to keep this feast of Purim?

Teachings

Job * Psalms * Proverbs
Ecclesiastes * Song of Solomon

This grouping is really like the miscellaneous section of the Bible as it contains a variety of things.

Job is the story of one man going through extreme adversity and finding that he still had something to learn and change about himself. Job is the only book of the Bible in which we really do not know who wrote it or when it was written.

Psalms is the hymn section of the Bible. It is very important though because it shows the type of praise David would write and Yahweh still called him a man after his own heart.

Proverbs is a collection of sayings and advice good for any man or woman today. Much of it was written by King Solomon.

King Solomon also wrote the book of Ecclesiastes and it seems to have been written near the end of his life because of all he had seen throughout his time.

Song of Solomon is the most unusual inclusion as it is a letter of romance written to a woman.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is the book of Psalms included in the Bible when it is merely a collection of hymns originally written in Hebrew?

Major Prophets

Isaiah * Jeremiah * Lamentations
Ezekiel * Daniel

This group of books is called the major prophets only for the reason that they are the larger books of the prophets.

Jeremiah is the only author of two books of the prophets with his second book being Lamentations.

Discussion Questions:

1. Since these are books of the prophets, do they contain only prophecies, or do you remember other stories that seem to hint at more than just prophecies?

Minor Prophets

Hosea * Joel * Amos
Obadiah * Jonah * Micah
Nahum * Habakkuk * Zephaniah
Haggai * Zechariah * Malachi

These are the rest of the prophets' writings found in the Old Testament. They are a collection of short prophecies, many of which have already come to pass while others have yet to happen.

Zechariah is notable since it covers some of the end-time prophecies, but also shows that the commanded observances from back in Leviticus 23 are going to be kept after Yahshua returns.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which of these is probably the most read prophet's book?
2. Why is it important that Zechariah mention the holy days being kept in the future?

NEW TESTAMENT

The Gospels

Matthew * Mark * Luke * John

These four are the most well-known group of books other than the torah. Each tells the story of Yahshua from a different perspective. Some of them included details the other three left out.

John is the most distinct of the three as he was hesitant to mention his own name at times; usually referring to himself as “the one Yahshua loved”.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why would we have to have four different versions of the same story when one usually suffices elsewhere in the Bible?

History of the New Testament Church

Acts

This one is unique as it is the only history of the new church outside of letters that were written to various churches. Although Paul did write to various churches, it is in Acts that we find how many trips he made to various congregations and some of the trouble the apostles got into while trying to preach the truth.

Discussion Questions:

1. So why is it named “Acts”? It's not broken up into a play with various reading parts.

Paul's Letters

Romans * 1 & 2 Corinthians * Galatians
Ephesians * Philippians * Colossians
1 & 2 Thessalonians * 1 & 2 Timothy * Titus
Philemon * Hebrews (?)

All of these are letters written by Paul with the possible exception of Hebrews. It is the only letter contained in the New Testament that does not list an author. It was believed to be written by Paul and sent to those in Jerusalem who were still unsure of this new church.

Romans through Thessalonians are letters written to churches. Each of these churches has their problems

(and yet they all believed in Yahweh and Yahshua). Paul had to write whenever he received word of problems in the group. Sometimes he also mentioned when he would be soon visiting them to be sure they were doing as he suggested.

1 Timothy through Philemon are letters written to men who worked with Paul. He often had to give them advice on how to deal with problems in the congregations they were supervising.

Discussion Questions:

1. The letters are to churches that no longer exist. Why are they important now?
2. If Hebrews was written to those not in the faith, how would it differ from the other letters he wrote to those who were in the faith?

Other Letters

James * 1 & 2 Peter * 1, 2 & 3 John
Jude * Revelations

Most scholars believe that all of these except Revelations were actually written before Paul's letters. However, the King James has them at the end.

James was the brother of Yahshua and may have only started to believe he was the Messiah after his death and resurrection. After all, Yahshua might have appeared to his family after his resurrection.

Revelations was written by John who wrote all four books named after him. This is a vision of the end of this world as we know it and a lot of things are mentioned in this book that are not mentioned in the books of the prophets in the Old Testament. It is also believed to be the last book written that is included in the Bible.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why would the King James put these letters after those of Paul's?
2. Does there seem to be a parallel in how the books are organized in the Old and New Testaments? How are they similar?