

The
OLD
TESTAMENT

For
“DUMMIES”

FIRST ASSEMBLY MINISTRIES

Instructor

Pastor Dan Betzer

SESSION DATES AND TOPICS

Session # 1 / January 4, 2006

“Overview Of Entire Old Testament”

Session # 2 / January 11, 2006

“The Torah” (The Five Books of Moses)
Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

Session # 3 / January 25, 2006

“The Historical Books”
Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, Ezra,
Nehemiah, Esther

Session # 4 / February 8, 2006

“The Poetic Books”
Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

Session # 5 / February 15, 2006

“The Major and Minor Prophets”
Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah,
Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Session # 6 / February 22, 2006

“Conclusion and Review”

“WELCOME TO ‘THE OLD TESTAMENT’ FOR DUMMIES!

I am so delighted you have chosen to study the wondrous Old Testament (or Old Covenant) with me over these next six weeks.

I believe you will be a better Bible student because of your investment of time. And one thing is sure, the New Testament will be much better “grounded” in your mind because of the Old Testament foundations we learn together here.

As Dr. Samuel J. Schultz (of Wheaton University) wrote:

“Interest in the Old Testament is universal. Millions of people turn to its pages to trace the beginnings of Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. Countless others are allured by its literary excellence. Scholars diligently study the Old Testament for the archeological, historical, geographical, and linguistic contribution it makes toward a better understanding of the Near East culture preceding the Christian Era.

“In world literature the place of the Old Testament is unique. No book – ancient or modern – has had such world-wide appeal, been transmitted with such exacting care, and been accorded such extensive distribution. Acclaimed by statesman and servitor, learned and illiterate, rich and poor, the Old Testament comes to us as a living book. Poignantly it speaks to each generation.”

In the next six weeks, you and I will travel from the creative words of the Master Designer, “Let there be light!” to His last words to mankind before the 400 year interval between the Testaments. In our journey we will encounter God’s greatest and Earth’s worst. We will see the formation of the solid foundation upon which God’s New Covenant (Testament) was formed when “in the fullness of time,” He would send His Son.

It’s going to be a fabulous trip. Let’s get started.

The OLD TESTAMENT For Dummies
Session One
AN OVERVIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Wednesday Evening, January 4, 2006

Henry van Dyke: (Presbyterian clergyman, poet, novelist, essayist from 100 years ago)
“Born in the east and clothed in Oriental form and imagery, the Bible walks the ways of all the world and with familiar feet, and enters land after land to find its own everywhere. It has learned to speak in hundreds of languages to the heart of man. It comes in the palace to tell the monarch that he is a servant of the Most High, and into the cottage to assure the peasant that he is a son of God. Children listen to its stories with wonder and delight, and wise men ponder them as parables of life. It has a word of peace for the time of peril, a word of comfort for the time of calamity, a word of light for the hour of darkness. Its oracles are repeated in the assembly of the people and its counsels are whispered in the ear of the lonely. The wicked and the proud tremble at its warnings, but to the wounded and the penitent it has a mother’s voice. The wilderness and the solitary place have been made glad by it, and the fire on the hearth has lit the reading of its well-worn pages. It has woven itself into our dearest dreams; so that love, friendship, sympathy and devotion, memory and hope put on the beautiful garments of its treasured speech, breathing of frankincense and myrrh.”

The Bible is a most unusual book:

1. It has dual authorship - both God and man.
2. The Bible was written by some 40 writers over a period of about 1500 years.
(Each author expressed his own feelings in his own generation.)
3. It is without error.

How do we know the Bible is from God?

1. Its preservation. There have been so many attacks on the Bible, yet it endures and remains even now earth’s best-seller.
2. Archeology - it seems that each new discovery adds new credibility to Scripture.

3. Fulfilled prophecy.
4. Transformed lives

WHY NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS SHOULD KNOW THE OLD TESTAMENT WELL

1. The Old Testament is the basis for the New Testament (Agreement or Covenant)

Matthew 5:17

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to **fulfil**. - Jesus

How would you know what Jesus came to fulfill if you didn't understand the Old Testament?

2. The stories of the patriarchs (the fathers) and matriarchs (mothers) of Israel are basic to our faith. (Hebrews 11)

Hebrews 11:29-40

The people of Israel trusted God and went right through the Red Sea as though they were on dry ground. But when the Egyptians chasing them tried it, they all were drowned.

[30] It was faith that brought the walls of Jericho tumbling down after the people of Israel had walked around them seven days as God had commanded them. [31] By faith--because she believed in God and his power--Rahab the harlot did not die with all the others in her city when they refused to obey God, for she gave a friendly welcome to the spies.

[32] Well, how much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah and David and Samuel and all the other prophets. [33] These people all trusted God and as a result won battles, overthrew kingdoms, ruled their people well, and received what God had promised them; they were kept from harm in a den of lions [34] and in a fiery furnace. Some, through their faith, escaped death by the sword. Some were made strong again after they had been weak or sick. Others were given great power in battle; they made whole armies turn and run away. [35] And some women, through faith, received their loved ones back again from death. But others trusted God and were beaten to death, preferring to die rather than turn from God and be free--trusting that they would rise to a better life afterwards.

[36] Some were laughed at and their backs cut open with whips, and others were chained in dungeons. [37] Some died by stoning and some by being sawed in two; others

were promised freedom if they would renounce their faith, then were killed with the sword. [38] Some went about in skins of sheep and goats, wandering over deserts and mountains, hiding in dens and caves. They were hungry and sick and ill-treated--too good for this world. [39] And these men of faith, though they trusted God and won his approval, none of them received all that God had promised them; [40] for God wanted them to wait and share the even better rewards that were prepared for us.

It is easy to understand - reading these scriptures - that following Christ is not the patty-cake religion so often passed off on unsuspecting congregations today. These men and women were heroes. WE NEED TO KNOW WELL THOSE STORIES.

A. There is a philosophy of Christian education in many churches today that baffles me: Teaching courses in home economics, child raising, ceramics, and many other issues that have a place.....but the church needs to stay with the basics of teaching The Word of God! **IT IS A FACT THAT TODAY'S GENERATION OF BELIEVERS - AT THEIR PRESENT AGE - DO NOT KNOW THE WORD OF GOD AS WELL AS THE PREVIOUS GENERATION OF BELIEVERS AT THE SAME AGE.**

3. Still a third reason for studying the Old Testament is that our knowledge of it well-acquaints us with the secular history of that time.

It is essential to know history for, as it has often been said, "People who do not know history are doomed or destined to relive it."

Here is a basic historical outline of the Old Testament:

PRE-JEWISH TIMES

????? to The Tower of Babel about 2,000 years B.C.

(How old the Earth is merely anyone's guess. I personally believe it is millions of years old with recorded history of man (Damascus and Jericho) going back about 10,000 BC. You may well disagree with the early date, and you may well be right. No one knows for sure. However, I truly disagree with Bishop Usher's estimate that the earth was created 7,000 years ago.

THE JEWS 2000-587 B.C.

1900 B.C. Abraham, the patriarch, enters Palestine, then known as Canaan for it was controlled by the Amorites and Canaanites.

- 1630 B.C. Jacob moves patriarchal family to Egypt to be with Joseph. (End of Genesis)
- 1250 B.C. Joshua and the Israelites re-enter the land of Canaan (Joshua)
- 1025 B.C. Saul crowned Israel's first king (I Samuel)
- 1004 B.C. David ascends to the throne of Israel
- 965 B.C. Solomon succeeds David as King
- 920 B.C. Israel divided into Northern and Southern Tribes
- 721 B.C. Assyrians capture Samaria, capital of Northern Tribes. Captives taken. 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles.

THE BABYLONIANS 605-562 B.C.

- 587 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, sacks Jerusalem and takes Judah captive.

THE PERSIANS 549 - 332 B.C.

- 439 B.C. Cyrus, king who conquered Babylon (see Daniel), decrees that Jewish captives may return to Israel.

(Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther)

THE GREEKS 332 - 167 B. C.

- 334 B.C. Alexander the Great vanquishes Palestine. After his death, the Ptolmies and Seleucids rule
- 175 B.C. The Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes desecrates the temple altar in Jerusalem by offering a pig on it.

THE HASMONEANS 175 - 63 B. C.

- 167 B.C. The aged priest Mattathias and his sons revolt against the Seleucids and give nearly 100 years of peace to Palestine.

The Jews refused to accept the Hellenistic (Greek) rulership of their nation - especially after Antiochus desecrated the Temple. The entire Jewish people now engaged in acts of mass martyrdom, choosing torture and death rather than embrace paganism. Things came to a head when Mattathias, the aged head of a respected priestly clan, the Hasmoneans, struck down both the royal representative and a Jew preparing to offer pagan sacrifice in Mattathias' native village, Modi'in. The elder's five sons embarked upon a guerilla campaign against both Greek forces and renegade Jews. At Mattathias' death, his son Judah (The Hammer) the Maccabee assumed leadership of the revolt. In quick succession he defeated a series of Seleucid commanders. His brilliant campaigns, waged at the outset with inferior numbers and equipment, made him one of the outstanding military leaders of Antiquity. Within 3 years (164 B.C.) he recaptured Jerusalem, and purified and rededicated the Temple. This is the origin of the Hanukkah festival celebrated to this day.

THE ROMANS 63 B.C. - A.D. 330

THE INTER-TESTAMENT PERIOD (MALACHI TO MATTHEW) LASTED FROM THE TIME OF THE GREEKS TO JOHN THE BAPTIST.