

# BETHEL GOSPEL CHAPEL HOME BIBLE STUDY GUIDE INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

There are two passages in the New Testament which specifically recommend that we read and meditate on the Old Testament Scriptures. We will find in the Old Testament material that will encourage us, as God's faithfulness to His promises is repeatedly demonstrated. There are also examples that will serve as warnings to us and reminders that our personal choices also have consequences.

*For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (Romans 15:4 N.I.V.)*

*These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings to us on whom the fulfilment of the ages are come. (I Corinthians 10:11 N.I.V.)*

**Part I** — These lessons are designed to provide you with the information that is essential to understanding the ministry of the Prophets

**Part II** — An Introduction to the Old Testament

Study 1 — The Old Testament Canon — *Tape by Dr. Bruce Waltke*

Study 2 — The Old Testament Covenants

Study 3 — The Old Testament Covenants concluded

Study 4 — Prophets, True or False

Study 5 — The Nature of Prophecy

**PLEASE TAKE NOTE!!** It will not be possible to read all the Scripture references used in these lessons when your group meets. It will therefore be essential that you read this material and answer the questions before coming together for discussion.

You are encouraged to write down any other questions that come to mind as you work through these studies. Your personal observations and questions will be an important part of bringing us all to a better understanding of the Scriptures.

## **PART I**

### **Study 1 - The Old Testament Canon (Tape by Dr. Bruce Waltke)**

The following questions should be answered while listening to the message "The Old Testament Canon" by Dr. Bruce Waltke. After listening to the tape review your answers with the study group and discuss the ways in which this material can help you in your reading and study of the

Old Testament.

1. What is the unifying idea of the Old Testament?
2. These books were written in what languages?
3. How are the books arranged in the Hebrew Bible?
4. What are the divisions of the books in the Hebrew Bible?

5. How are the books arranged in the English Bible?
6. What are the divisions of the books in the English Bible (Old Testament)?
7. Who was the author of the books of the Law?
8. The prophetic books are divided into what two categories?
9. The former prophets were noted for?
10. The latter prophets all had?
11. How many books are there in the Hebrew Bible?
12. Why this difference?
13. How many books are there in the English Bible (Old Testament)? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Why this difference between the Hebrew and English Bible?
15. Regardless of the number of books, what important point should be remembered?
16. What is the meaning of the word "canon"?
17. Why are these books authoritative?
18. In discussing the extent of the Canon, Dr. Waltke offers three arguments that can be made in favour of the exclusion of the apocryphal books. List these arguments.
19. In your opinion, which of these arguments is most important?

Supplementary Questions:

1. Have you read all of the books in the Old Testament?
2. What books in the Old Testament do you find the most difficult to read and why?

*The following charts are included to help you to put the Old Testament books in their chronological order. The prophetic books should be read against the historical background in which the prophet lived. (see example bottom of second chart)*

## **Study 2 - The Old Testament Covenants**

A knowledge of these covenants will equip you to understand something of the character of God whose “*gifts and call are irrevocable.*” (Rom. 11:29 NIV) You will also gain an insight into the preaching and teaching of the prophets for it is against the background of these covenants that their ministry comes alive. The history of Israel, their successes and failures, can be traced to obedience or disobedience, to their regard or neglect of the word of the Lord as it came to the people - “*Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised!*” (Romans 9:4-5)

*NOTE: Bible references in brackets are for supplementary reading.*

READ: Genesis 8:20-22 and 9:1-17

1. What is promised in Genesis 8:20—22?
2. Make a list of the obligations given to man after the flood.
3. List the things to which God commits Himself.
4. What is the sign of this covenant?

READ: Genesis 12:1-3; 15:18-21; 17:1-14

5. Put into your own words the covenant which God makes with Abram.
6. What are the conditions of this covenant?
7. To what does God commit Himself?
8. What is the sign of this covenant?

READ: Exodus 2:24-25 and 6:8

9. Why are the Israelites delivered from Egypt?

READ: Exodus 19:1-8 (Exodus 24:3—8; Deuteronomy 5:1-33)

10. List the promises made.
11. What does the fulfilment of this covenant depend upon?
12. What is the sign of this covenant? (see Exodus 31:12-18)

READ: II Samuel 7:1-16 (I Chronicles 17:1-14; Psalm 89)

13. What is promised?
14. On what basis is the covenant to be fulfilled?

READ: Jeremiah 31:31-37

15. Make a list of the promises given in the covenant.

16. On what conditions is this covenant established?

### **Study 3- The Old Testament Covenants**

The disciples of Jesus were well aware of the fact that many of the Old Testament promises were never fulfilled. This is why throughout the public ministry of our Lord they repeatedly asked Jesus the question: "When?" We see their expectation expressed, for instance, in their question recorded in Acts 1:6. When they met together they asked him: "*Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?*"

In this study we will examine the way in which the writers of the New Testament handled this problem of the covenants, because in them God has clearly committed Himself to special promises in regard to our world, to Abraham, to Israel, and to David. Supplementary reading in brackets.

1. Review last week's lesson and make a list of the promises that have been fulfilled and a list of those to be fulfilled.

READ: II Peter 3:1-9

2. What is the point of the argument that Peter makes in these verses?

READ: Galatians 3:6-29 (Romans 4:1-25)

3. What is Paul saying about the Abrahamic Covenant in these Scriptures?

READ: Hebrews 3:1-19 (I Corinthians 10:1-13)

4. What reasons are given for the failure of the Israelites to enter God's Rest?

READ: Hebrews 8:1-13; 9:15; 10:1-18

5. What covenant is referred to as "the Old Covenant or First Covenant?"

6. Why is this covenant set aside?

7. List the provisions of the New Covenant.

8. On what basis are these provisions made available to us?

9. Why is the New Covenant effective?

READ: Matthew 1:1; 22:41-46; Luke 1:26-33

10. Why is the information given in these Scriptures important?

READ: Acts 2:14-36

11. List the promises which Peter identifies as fulfilled by the resurrection of Jesus.

READ: Acts 15:1-18

12. The decision of the Jerusalem Council that the Gentiles were not bound to keep the law was based on what two principles?

13. Look back to the list which you made in answer to question 1. On the basis of the information given in the New Testament what promises can be moved from the unfulfilled to the fulfilled column?

14. How do the New Testament writers express their confidence in God and resolve the problem of unfulfilled prophecy?

#### **Study 4 - Prophets, True or False**

READ: Deuteronomy 18:9-22 and 13:1-5

1. List the methods used to forecast the future which were not acceptable to God and were not to be practiced by Israel.

2. How were the Children of Israel to be directed?

3. Not all prophetic messages were to be accepted as originating with God. What tests were to be made?

READ: Amos 3:7-8 and 7:10-19

4. What is the motivation of a true prophet?

5. What charge is made against Amos?

6. Put his defense in your own words.

READ: Ezekiel 2:1-10

7. Who commissioned Ezekiel?

8. Is he responsible for the response to his prophecies?

READ: Ezekiel 33:21-33

9. Why is the confidence of the people that God had given them the land of Canaan for a possession inappropriate?

10. What is wrong with the peoples' attitude toward Ezekiel's prophecies?

11. What sign will authenticate Ezekiel's prophecies?

READ: Jeremiah 23:25-32

12. What is the origin of these prophetic messages?

13. Why should they have been recognized as false?

14. How is the true Word of God described?

READ: Isaiah 8:19-22

15. Forecasts in regard to the future are to be judged true or false by what standard?

READ: Hebrews 1:1; II Peter 1:20-21

16. What is the origin of true prophecy?

17. Should we be looking for a further revelation from God today? Why or why not?

### **Study 5 - Understanding Old Testament Prophecy**

READ: Isaiah 39:1-8

1. Locate on the accompanying chart the approximate date when this prophecy was made. Record Scripture references on chart.

2. List the specific things that are to take place.

3. Is there any indication given as to the time of the fulfillment of this prophecy?

READ: II Chronicles 36:5-20

4. Locate on the accompanying chart the approximate date when these events occurred. Write in the Scripture reference on the chart.

5. Approximately how many years intervene between this prophecy and its fulfillment?

READ: Jeremiah 29:1-14

6. List the specific events that are to take place according to Jeremiah.

7. Locate on the chart the approximate date when this prophecy was made. (During the reign of Zedekiah.) Record the Scripture reference on the chart.

*NOTE: We are now in the time period where the events prophesied by Isaiah are taking place.*

READ: Jeremiah 28:1-17

8. List the specific events that are to occur (note time frame.)

9. Why does Jeremiah object to this prophecy?

10. What event proves him right?

READ: Daniel 9:1-4; 9:20-27

11. Why does Daniel make this particular prayer?

12. List the specific events which are to occur according to this revelation given to Daniel.

13. What parts of the prophecy have never been fulfilled?

READ: Isaiah 61:1-11

14. List the promises made in this prophecy.

15. Is there any indication as to the time of its fulfillment?

READ: Luke 4:16—21

16. What claim does Jesus make?

17. The original prophecy refers to events that Jesus does not include in his reading of Isaiah 61. Why does he exclude part of the prophecy?

18. If a person challenges you on the question of unfulfilled prophecy in the Old Testament and doubts the reliability of the Bible on this issue, how would you respond?

Name of Prophet	Approx Date of Ministry	Contemporary Ruler in Judah	Contemporary Ruler in Israel	Contemporary Ruler in Babylon	Historical Setting
Joel	? 810 - 750 BC	Joash (=Jehoash) Amaziah, Uzziah (=Azzariah)			2 Ki. 11:1 - 15:7
Amos	760 BC	Uzziah (=Azzariah)	Jeroboam II		2 Ki 14:23-15:7
Jonah	760 BC		Jeroboam II		2 Ki 14:23-29
Hosea	760 - 722 BC		Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pehahiah, Pekah, Hoshea		2 Ki. 14:23- 18:37
Micah	742 - 687 BC	Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah			2 Ki. 15:32-20:21, 2 Ch 27:1 - 32:33 Is 7:1 - 8:22 Je 26:17-19
Isaiah	740 - 700 BC	Uzziah(=Azariah) Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah			2 Ki 15:1 - 20:21 2 Ch 26:1 - 32:33
Nahum	Sometime between 664 - 612 BC	Josiah			2 Ki 22:1 - 23:30 2 Ch 34:1 - 36:1 Zep 2:13 - 15
Zephaniah	640 BC onwards	Josiah			2 Ki. 22:1 - 23:34 2 Ch 34:1- 36:4
Jeremiah	626 - 587 BC	Josiah, Jehohaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah			2 Ki 22:1-25:30 2 Ch 34:1 - 36:21
Habakkuk	605 BC	Jehoiakim			2 Ki 23:31 - 24:7
Daniel	605 - 535 BC	Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah		Nebuchadnezzar Belshazzar, Darius, Cyrus	2 Ki. 24:1 - 25:30 2 Ch 36:5-23
Ezekiel	593 - 570 BC			Nebuchadnezzar	2 Ki 24:8-25:26 2 Ch 36:9-21
Obadiah	?587 BC onwards			Nebuchadnezzar	2 Ki 25 2 Ch 36:11-21
Haggai	520 BC			Darius	Ezr 5:1-6:22
Zechariah	520 BC onwards			Darius Onwards	Ezr 5:1-6:22
Malachi	433 BC			Artaxerxes I	Neh 13