

Old Testament Survey Class



Part 1 – Old Testament Facts and History

Part 2 – Why it's important and Keys

This is Part Two of the OT Survey Series "Why it's Important and Keys"

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Part 2 – Why it's important and Keys

Biblical Understanding

- In 2 short sessions there is no way to adequately cover the contents of the OT in any detail
- Therefore I will be taking a higher view of the scripture pointing out keys and suggested readings, as well as some context and positioning.
- Ask Questions if something needs clarification.

Questions to ponder

- Last week I ended the lesson with 2 questions for you to think about
 1. Why did Jesus have to come back as a man and die on the cross ?
 2. Where did we come from and where are we going from a human perspective?

Question 1

- Why did Jesus have to come to earth as a man to die?
 - Discuss ideas

As we deal the first Question, what do you think the reasons are?

Forgive us of our sins?

Redeem us for God?

qualify us for Heaven?

Others?

Couldn't God have done these things without sending Jesus to die here on earth ?

Where would we find the answers to this Question?

Question 2

- Where did we come from and where are we going from a human perspective
 - Discuss Ideas

This is an interesting question. When you think of Mankind, what do you think are our origins? Don't give me the answer you think I want, but what do you really think?

Do you think you evolved from a more primitive human, and before that a sub human, or ape? Or do you

If you think we evolved from a more primitive being to now, where do you think we are evolving to next? We are going to hold these questions for a bit and see if there is a way to look at them differently To answer them.

So what are we to think about the OT ?

- Is it a History book?
- Is it a Science book?
- Is it a fairytale book?

- What kind of a book is it really ?

What kind of book do you think the OT is? We looked last week at the types of literature there are in the OT and the dates it was written, but we didn't ask the deeper questions.

Would you call it a History Book? It certainly contains some stories about the Patriarchs and some legacy of Israel.

Would you call it a Science book. This is a little less obvious but it deals with origins, miracles, things that Defy normal science.

Is it True, is it fiction, is it stories common to all religions of the area (Like the flood)

Would you call it a book of Myths, or Legends, or Fairytales?

Is it a mix of truth and allegory.? Which part is true and which is allegory?

Did the characters in the Bible really exist? Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Moses, Saul, David, Solomon

Did the Exodus really happen? Did the Red Sea really part for the children of Israel?

These questions and more are ones we need to answer so we can see what we really think about this book.

What do you think ?

Purpose of the Bible

- Lets begin by talking about the Bibles purpose for mankind
 - Does it contain history? Science ? Fairytales?
 - Why is it useful to us?
 - What does it tell us about God?
 - What does it tell us about us?
- What does the Bible say about itself ?

Certainly the Bible contains the History of the Jews, although many would argue that some of it is not provable by science and archeology. It also contains scientific reference in the miracles, the creation story, the floods, the supernatural occurrences like the writing of the 10 commandments.

Fairytales – my vote is NO. Just because science cannot prove something, it does not make it false. Science cannot prove life, but we know it exists. Science cannot prove prayer works or that miracles happen, but we witness them everyday

What does the Bible say about itself?

- a) It is inspired-** "God breathed" 2TI 3:16 "All Scripture is God-breathed... and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness"
- b) It is authoritative-** "thus saith the LORD"- 933 times in the O. T.."
- c) It is eternal-** PSA 119:89 "Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.
MAT 24:35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away"
- d) It is infallible** MAT 5:18 "... It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." PSA 19:7
- e) It is inerrant-** it needs no revision PSA 19:7 "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul."
- f) It is complete** JUDE 1:3 ; REV 22:18,19
- g) It is profitable** JOS 1:8 ; 2TI 3:15
- h) It is binding** MAT 5:19 ; ISA 45:23
- i) It is effective** ISA 55:10,11 ; 1TH 1:5

What kind of book is the Bible?

- A narrative that is God revealing himself to man
- A select set of history that shows Gods intervention into the world for man
- A set of laws, prophecy, psalms, and stories that reveal the nature of man and of God.
- A set of guidelines for man to follow until God returns for us
- OT and NT revelations are a continuum

Why is this important?

- People who do not believe the Bible will always argue the facts of history against the Bible accounts
 - Not all history is in the Bible and as archeology progresses, the historical accuracy of the facts that ARE in the Bible are being verified
 - King David, Solomon, Exodus, Moses
 - Locations of cities, rulers, wars, etc.
- People will argue the science in the Bible
 - God does not prove Himself, He asserts his Being (I AM the I AM)
 - Genesis story of creation, Noah and the Ark, the great flood, Jonah and the great fish (whale?)
 - The Bible was not authored by scientists nor was it trying to display scientific knowledge, it was displaying spiritual truth
 - Science has many theories that are unprovable by the scientific method, but are accepted by many as fact. Our faith must always provide for God to be God and not get into these endless and pointless arguments.

Example from Genesis

- Modern science text books explain the existence of Man in terms of evolution not creation
 - If you discount and cannot accept God, then you are left with no existence of a higher plane, no reason to believe man is more important than animals, no reason to believe in an eternal life, or any spiritual side of our being.
 - Evolution is the expression for this idea
- Genesis simply declares that God created Man in His Image
- Genesis starts with “In the beginning God...”
 - If you can believe this, the rest of the Bible is pretty easy

Evolution thoughts

- Creationists and Evolutionists believe in evolution **within species**
(wolves to dogs – canines)
- Evolutionists believe in **cross species** evolution
(reptiles to birds, ape to man)
– *Creationists do not*
- Evolutionists believe in **cross Kingdom** evolution
(pond scum to man)
– *Creationists do not*

I ask you...which takes more faith to believe ?

There are many orders within the study of life on earth. These are called Taxonomy. The smallest subdivision of groups is the species and one of the largest is Kingdom (Plant, Animal, Insect, etc)

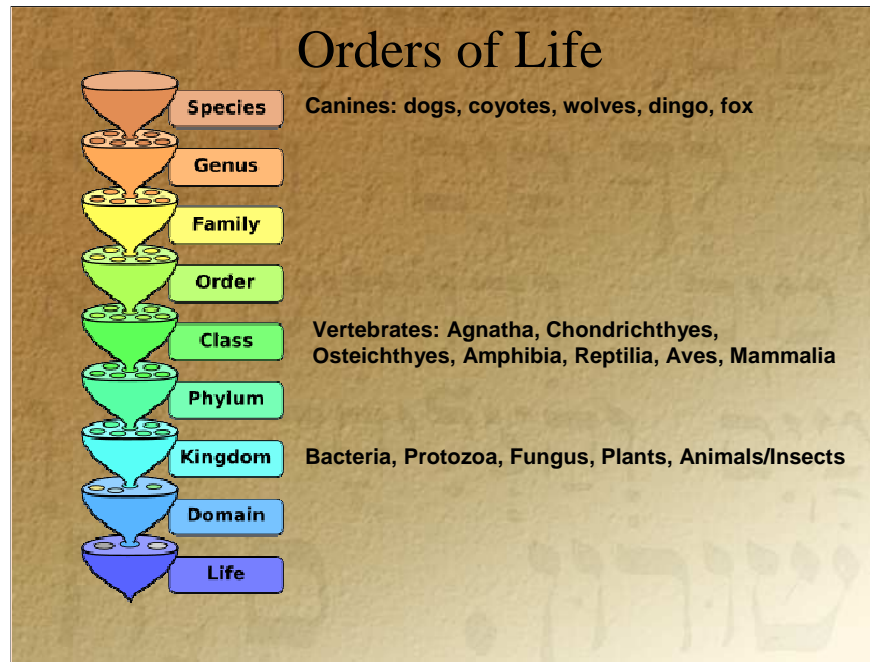
This is a whole study in itself, but almost all students of the study of life, believe in species evolution. We see it in adaptations of birds to local coloring, in fish to adapt to water conditions, in dogs getting thicker and longer fur in cold climates. Even this happens over many generations. Part of it is through the process called Natural Selection. If long haired dogs and short haired dogs and extant on an hot tropical island and interbreed, over time the short haired dogs dominate and the long haired doge will die out due to their lack of adaptability. Thus over time the species will "evolve" into mostly short haired dogs.

Creationists draw the line there however, and we do not think these same dogs will evolve gills or wings to fly away to another island. The gills and wings are not part of the dog gene pool.

In the same way, creationists do not believe that pond scum evolved into fish, then reptiles, then mammals, then apes, then man. If that is so, where are the intermediate half reptile-half dogs.

Deep subject, but creationists believe that God created the particular orders, kingdoms, and species he wanted when the earth and all its living elements were created, and some died out, and some evolved with species, but man was created in Gods image and not as pond scum.

I guess you know where I stand on the subject.



I put this chart in just so you know I didn't make this stuff up.

Harmonizing with Genesis

- In Genesis, we learn how the heavens and earth were formed, how life began, how man was formed by God
 - Science has no solution for life and no solution for higher order thinking in creation (If billions of monkeys sat at typewriters, one would eventually write Darwins Theory of Evolution)
- If Adam wasn't created and the story is a fairytale, what are we to think about the fall of man?
- If the fall of man never happened, how do we explain original sin?
- If original sin did not occur, why did Jesus need to come to save us.
- Anyway, if God did not create us, why are we praying to Him and why does he care for us and want to redeem us?

Genesis is the basis for the grace and salvation in the New Testament

Sometimes in our mind we can accept part of the Bible and not be so sure about other Parts. For example, the creation, or the story of Adam and Eve, or the Garden of Eden, Or the Flood, or the Parting of the Red Sea, or the idea of the Death Angel in the Passover story, or David and Goliath.

We need to be careful because by not understanding the foundations of the Bible We can trade away a key part of the framework that fits together.

For want of a nail, the shoe was lost, for want of a shoe the horse was lost.....

Where are we going ?

- Isn't it funny that as long as Man has been around, we have not evolved wings, or gills, or some other adaptation as we evolve?
- Of course, the Christian believes that God has provided that destination to us.
 - From Man we change to a Son of God
 - We acquire the spirit of God and the nature of God, so far as we can
 - We become not just a physical being, but a citizen of Gods Kingdom with the spiritual characteristics of that kingdom

If you ever talk to unbelievers, ask them where they are going after they die. You will probably get some answers about “nothing after death” or some blather about being good and going to Heaven...what kind of a God would want people to go to Hell”.

For Christians, we believe we have already made the transition and are citizens of God's Kingdom, just awaiting the call to come home. For us, we can be certain about our Destination and route Home

Other things we learn from the OT

- We learn that God loves us and wants us to have faith in Him and follow Him
- We learn that God has given us a guide on how we are to live
- We have the 10 commandments which form the basis of our governmental laws and behavior
- We see God stepping down from Heaven to pick people and empower them to save His people
- We see failure and consequence from not following God and we see redemption and deliverance for those who do.
- We see men and women of the Bible that teach us the faith, determination, steadfastness and hope we need to survive in life
- We see courage of the 3 in the fiery furnace
- We see God use ungodly nations to teach Israel tough lessons
- We see glimpses of Christ (protoevangelism) in Genesis through Isaiah in preparing the Jews and us for the coming of the Lord

...and much much more

You will make your own list as you read and study the scriptures. Some are much easier To understand than others, but in a good, modern translation, you find comfort, Love, understanding, a willing ear, and a searching heart as you release yourself in Prayer and study. Pray about what God wants to teach you as you read the OT Scriptures.

Why did I ask you these 2 Questions?

- To show you that the NT we study is built on the foundations of the OT
- Without the OT, we lose the context and meaning of much of the NT
- Are we agreed that the OT is worthy to study and understand ?

Grace versus Law

- The OT is based on keeping covenants with God, and the laws that go with them
- In a world without laws, man will not be focused and will need direction
 - The laws provided a standard for men so that they could tell if they were meeting Gods requirements or not
 - As we know, and the Jews never really learned, the laws are impossible to keep fully, and their salvation was in Faith.
- Under the NT, the laws are not held against us by God since his covenants are written on our hearts and Christ has not only saved us from sin, but freed us from the law.

While reading about the law is instructive and provides guidance to us as to things that are good for us, we clearly understand that the Law of Moses is not a requirement for the Christian under the Covenant of Grace.

Rom 7:4 *So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. (NLT)*

Eph 2:8-9 *(Phi) For it is by grace that you are saved, through faith. This does not depend on anything you have achieved, it is the free gift of God; and because it is not earned no man can boast about it.*

Gal 5:18 (NAS) *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.*

Keys to the OT

- Book that sets the platform for our faith
- It defines who we are, how we got here, our purpose in being here
- It provides the context of the Universe, Heaven, Hell, and all the Earth, Angels and Demons
- It provides the God Stories of Gods stepping into time and space to guide, discipline, deliver, encourage, and teach the faithful
- It is not a history book, a science book, or fairytale book, but is a rich and rewarding book that reveals God to us and reveals who we really are and how to do better.
- It is a book of Faith, Hope, Obedience, Disappointment, Encouragement, Discipline, plus Wisdom and Understanding
- While the stories are instructive, this book is Gods Word in human words provided to us so we can have Faith in Him

These are the things I think about when I think of the keys to the OT. It is more than a set of stories, it is God in action and it is defined by God's love for His People.

Suggested Readings

- I would read Genesis 1-12 (Beginnings)
- I would read Exodus (Deliverance)
- I would read Joshua (Promised Land)
- Psalms (Soul Food)
- Proverbs (pithy sayings)
- Hosea (God loves us, even when our wives don't)
- Isaiah, especially Isa. 53 (Christ)
- I would read the highlights of the other books and read them over time and the need they address seems to fit your situation

Providing a suggested reading list is only a starting point. The whole of the Bible scripture is profitable for reading and understanding. However, there are some passages and books that lay the foundation for understanding.

Some of the other books are helpful as well in seeing God and Man in the correct light. I would just start with Genesis, Exodus, and Joshua. These books provide much of the glory of God's creation and his mighty hand in the affairs of Israel. So many lessons can be learned in these books. I would get a modern English translation so I could understand them. I use the NIV, but a Message Bible (a paraphrase) would be very helpful as well.

I know in the Women's ministries, the study of Ruth and Esther are also important books because of the prominent and powerful women God uses to further his Kingdom and purposes.