

# OLD TESTAMENT EXPERT

## Old Testament Chronology

### Lesson # 3

I. **QUIZ FOR TESTING YOUR FAITHFULNESS TO THE LORD IN DOING YOUR HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT. FILL OUT THE 5/12/5/5/12 CHART BELOW WITH THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. LABEL EACH GROUP WITH THE APPROPRIATE CATEGORY.**

1		1		1		1	
2		2		2		2	
3		3		3		3	
4		4		4		4	
5		5		5		5	
		6				6	
		7				7	
		8		1		8	
		9		2		9	
		10		3		10	
		11		4		11	
		12		5		12	

II. **SEE IF YOU CAN FILL OUT THE CHART BELOW SUMMARIZING THE CONTENT OF THE CHAPTERS ASSIGNED FOR READING IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS**

Exodus	General content of chapter/s
1	
2	
3	
4	
12-13	
14	
18	
19-20:21	
32	
35	
40	

One of the confusing things about studying the Old Testament is trying to figure out how all the books relate to each other and how they fit into Israel's history. Our English Bibles, following the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) and organize the books of the Bible according to subject matter. When you read through the Old Testament you will discover that some books are in chronological order, others are not. This can be perplexing when you are trying to understand a particular Old Testament book. But there is a simple solution to all of this – learn the chronology of the Old Testament.

At first this may sound scary. There are, after all, thirty-nine books in the Old Testament! But don't let that discourage you because about half the books can be arranged in groups under other books and many books of the Old Testament already appear in chronological order. For these reasons, with very little effort, anyone can study and learn the chronology of the Old Testament.

But there are some challenges when studying Old Testament chronology that need to be mentioned. These challenges don't have anything to do with the amount of material to be studied but the accuracy of what is studied. Scholars disagree on the date of some books. You might notice that one Old Testament chronological time line might differ from another in some places. Now you know why. The date of some books is uncertain.

Also, some books were written after the events they record. So the question is, do we organize them according to the historical time period they describe or the time they were written? For instance, Ezra the scribe wrote I & II Chronicles after Israel returned from the Babylonian exile but he wrote about the times of the kings before they were taken captive to Babylon. Should Chronicles be placed with first and second Kings or at the time of Ezra? Things like this make writing chronologies a challenge. Though there is no consensus about Old Testament chronology we will learn a simplified form of Old Testament chronology that is commonly accepted by most conservative, Bible believing scholars.

### III. THE OLD TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGICAL BACKBONE BOOKS

Old Testament chronology has a backbone or spine which the other books of the Old Testament are connected to. Just as our backbone contains a spinal cord which all the nerves in our body are connected to, so the Old Testament has books which make up a chronological spinal cord or backbone and all the other books connect to it.

- A. **Backbone books** are books that make up the chronological spine of the Old Testament.
  - 1. *Genesis – Exodus – Numbers – Joshua – Judges – I Samuel – II Samuel – I Kings – II Kings – Ezra – Nehemiah*
  - 2. These books are the backbone books which describe the entirety of Old Testament history. All the other books of the Old Testament happen during the historical time period encompassed by these books.
  
- B. **Books that connect to the backbone** are books that were written or record events during the time of the backbone books of the Old Testament.

1. Job – Leviticus – Deuteronomy – Ruth – Psalms – I Chronicles – Proverbs – Ecclesiastes – Song of Solomon – II Chronicles – Hosea – Amos – Habakkuk – Isaiah – Jeremiah – Lamentations – Joel – Micah – Zephaniah – Jonah – Nahum – Obadiah – Ezekiel – Daniel – Haggai – Zechariah – Esther – Malachi

C. **Backbone books and those that connect to them are in outline form** below with the backbone books to the left and those that connect to them chronologically to the right.

1. *Genesis* – records history from creation to the twelve tribes settling in Egypt
  - a. Job – a story that happened around the time of Abraham as recorded in Genesis
2. *Exodus* – records the slavery and redemption of Israel from Egypt
  - a. Leviticus – was written while camped at Mt. Sinai after leaving Egypt
3. *Numbers* – records the wandering of Israel in the desert after they failed to have faith that God would bring them into the promised land
  - a. Deuteronomy – written at the end of the book of Numbers right before entering the promised land
4. *Joshua* – records Israel’s conquest of the promised land and the tribal allotments
5. *Judges* – follows Joshua and records cycles of spiritual apostasy, repentance, deliverance, and restoration as Israel’s blessings from God caused them to forget the Lord
  - a. Ruth – records a love story of the righteous remnant during the time of the Judges
6. *I Samuel* – records the transition time when Israel switched from being ruled by judges to being ruled by a king
7. *II Samuel* – records David’s reign as king
  - a. Psalms – is about half the songs of David
  - b. I Chronicles – is Ezra’s selective history of David’s reign as king

8. *I Kings* – records the reign of Solomon and subsequent split of the kingdom after Solomon’s reign and deeds of kings of Israel and Judah both good and bad
  - a. Song of Solomon – is a love story written by Solomon early in his life
  - b. Proverbs – is wisdom sayings written mostly by Solomon in the middle of his life
  - c. Ecclesiastes – is a description of how vain life without God is and the blessing of life when God is feared and His commandments are obeyed, written by Solomon later in his life
  - d. II Chronicles – is Ezra’s selected history of good kings during the time of I and II Kings following Solomon’s reign
  
9. *II Kings* – records history of Israel and Judah’s Kings both good and bad
  - a. Joel – calls Judah to repentance and warns of judgment
  - b. Micah – warns Judah of judgment and offers hope for the future
  - c. Isaiah – lets the people of Israel know that salvation and comfort are in the Lord
  - d. Zephaniah – judgment prophesied to Judah and the nations
  - e. Amos – Israel accused and judged for not showing mercy
  - f. Hosea – man with an unfaithful wife pictures God with unfaithful Israel
  - g. Jeremiah – warn Judah of coming judgment by Babylon
  - h. Lamentations – Jeremiah’s sadness over Jerusalem’s destruction and the captivity of Judah
  - i. Habakkuk – the wicked will not prevail, God is sovereign
  - j. Obadiah – Edom condemned because they participated in Judah’s captivity by Babylon
  - k. Jonah – God’s mercy and compassion to undeserving sinners in Nineveh
  - l. Nahum – God’s judgment on Nineveh for their sin

10. *Daniel* – story of a boy who was taken captive to Babylon, grew up in the kings court, and prophesied about the history of the world from that time to the Kingdom of God
11. *Ezekiel* – prophesied to common people during Babylonian captivity, called Israel to repentance and offered hope to those who turned from their sin
12. *Ezra* – used by God to rebuild the temple and spiritual lives of the people who returned from the Babylonian Exile
  - a. *Esther* – records a story that happened to one of the exiles who did not return to Jerusalem but stayed in Persia
13. *Nehemiah* – records the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem after the Babylonian Captivity
  - a. *Haggai* – prophet sent to rebuke those who returned from the Babylonian captivity
  - b. *Zechariah* – prophet sent to encourage those who returned from the Babylonian captivity
  - c. *Malachi* – prophecies of hope and judgment

IV. **GENERAL DATES OF OLD TESTAMENT BACKBONE BOOKS**

Genesis	Exodus	Leviticus	Numbers	Deuteronomy	Joshua	Judges	Ruth	1st Samuel	2nd Samuel	1st Kings	2nd Kings	1st Chronicles	2nd Chronicles	Ezra	Nehemiah	Esther

V. **HOMEWORK**

- A. **Memorize the Old Testament chronological backbone books as listed above and which appear in the Old Testament time line chart in between the two bold lines. Be able to fill in a chart with the names of the backbone books. If you feel really frisky, you can try to memorize the dates.**
- B. **Read the following chapters of Leviticus and Numbers**
1. Leviticus chapters 10, 11, 16, 17, 23
  2. Numbers chapters 13, 14, 16, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 33, 35