Old Testament Isagogics

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2nd Rev. Ed.

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List of Effective Pages

18. Chronology of the Divided Monarchy
19. A Chronology of the Ancient Near East
20. "Wisdom", Proverbs 1-9
21. Prophets, Prophecy
22. Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament
23. Maier, Nahum

Old Testament Isagogics - Syllabus

I. Course Overview and Purpose

General introduction to the questions of the canon and text of the Old Testament. Authorship, time of composition, purpose, content and nature of the books of the Pentateuch, with attention to questions of Pentateuchal Criticism. Authorship, time of composition, purpose, content and nature of the Prophets (Former and Latter) and the Writings. Special attention to Messianic prophecy throughout the Old Testament.

II. Introduction

The DELTO Old Testament Isagogics course is a combining, and condensing, of the on-campus seminary courses Old Testament Isagogics I and Old Testament Isagogics II, each of which is a thirty-hour course. The former course covers the Pentateuch and Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings), which is the subject matter of Units 1-4 of this DELTO course. Isagogics II covers the remaining books of the Old Testament, which is the subject matter of Units 5-8 of this course.

The books in Units 1-4 are studied basically in the order in which they were written. The same holds true for most of the books in Units 5-8. With some of the books in that unit, however, there is a question as to when exactly they were composed or completed. This is true especially for Obadiah, which is the reason this prophetic book is studied first. Why the other books are studied when they are will be clear with the reading of the discussion of each one.

This course assumes as part of the student's background what was learned in the DELTO Old Testament Bible and Hermeneutics courses. At a few places references will be made to those courses. There will be some overlap with the Old Testament Bible course, which is unavoidable; the student can consider this to be helpful review.

The book by Dillard and Longman is an important supplement to the printed notes, and it is assumed that the student will read this required text. There has been an attempt to minimize the overlap between the notes and the textbook. The student will notice points of difference between the notes and what has been written by Dillard and Longman, notably concerning the authorship of certain of the Old Testament books, and a few of their theological comments. Always assume that the position of the course is what is in the printed notes. If the student has a question about something he has read in the textbook (or in the notes), he is encouraged to present the question to his mentor and/or to the instructor.

The exams will cover what the student has read in the notes and the textbook, with the emphasis on the former. There is a combination of types of questions on the exams: true-false, multiple choice, short identification and short answer.

Mentors will assist students primarily by sharing with them their insights into the various Old Testament books, how they have used these books in their ministry, and by answering any

questions students might have. May the Lord bless both students and mentors, as they together study His precious Word which is contained in the Old Testament!

III. Course Objectives

A. Pastoral knowledge When students complete this course, they will know the:

1. Basic history of the canon and text of the Old Testament.
2. Content and message of the Pentateuch, the Former and Latter Prophets, and the Writings; and authorship, date of composition, purpose and structure of the books of the Old Testament.
3. The theological and Christological character of the individual books.
4. Unity of the Bible as evidenced by these books.
5. Modern theories of higher criticism concerning the books, and responses to these theories.

B. Pastoral skills When students complete this course, they will be able to:

1. Employ Old Testament texts in their preaching and teaching with greater understanding and insight.
2. Articulate the relevancy of Old Testament texts to doctrines and life of the Church.
3. Evaluate critically the works of exegetical scholars and benefit from their research.

C. Pastoral attitudes When students complete this course, they will have gained:

1. A deepened respect for the Old Testament as the Word of God.
2. A deepened respect for the Old Testament as a source and norm of doctrine in the Christian Church.
3. A growing eagerness to bring God's message as proclaimed in these books to today's people.

IV. How This Course Works

A. Teaching Methodology and Time-frame

- Lecture
- Reflective readings

This course will be taught in an eight-week time period.

B. Course Assignments - provided at the beginning of each unit.

C. CTS Instructor Visit - the first week of the course.

D. Coordinating Instruction with Mentors - The instructor and mentors can be in contact via telephone, e-mail, and letter, as necessary.

E. Materials

Required Text

Dillard, Raymond B. and Longman III, Tremper. An Introduction to the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

Handouts: These documents are provided at the end of the booklet.

V. How This Course Is Graded

The following is an explanation of the DELTO grading policy:

A Superior work, over and above the required assignments, reserved for those whose work is exceptional.
B Excellent work. Average grade expected for graduate level work. Nothing of exception to note. Nothing missing, all assignments complete and a reasonable depth of reflection observed.
C Minimal Passing. Adequate, sufficient, meets minimum requirements.
F Unacceptable work or work missing

Grades of A, B, C, and F will be given. Pluses and minuses can also be added to the first three grades.

Four exams will be given. They are a combination of true/false, multiple choice, short identification, and short answer.

Exam 1 covers units 1 and 2 and will be given at the end of week 2.
Exam 2 covers units 3 and 4 and will be given at the end of week 4.
Exam 3 covers units 5 and 6 and will be given at the end of week 6.
Exam 4 covers units 7 and 8 and will be given at the end of week 8.

A student's scores for the four exams will be added up. The percentage he has of the possible

total points (for the four exams) will determine his grade. No copies are to be made of the exams. Only the **original** exams are to be sent to the instructor (no faxes).

VI. Lesson Summary

Unit 1- Week 1
- Introduction
- Revelation and Inspiration
- Inerrancy
- Textual Criticism
- Texts and Manuscripts
- Canon, Canonicity and Apocrypha

Unit 2 -Week 2
- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- The Ceremonial Law
- Numbers

Unit 3- Week 3
- Deuteronomy
- Authorship of the Pentateuch

Unit 4 - Week 4
- Joshua
- Judges
- 1 Samuel
- 2 Samuel
- 1 & 2 Kings

Unit 5 - Week 5
- Ruth
- Proverbs
- Song of Solomon
- Ecclesiastes
- Job
- Prophets and Prophecy
- Obadiah
- Joel

Unit 6 - Week 6
- Amos
- Jonah
- Hosea
- Micah
- Isaiah
- Nahum

Unit 7- Week 7
- Zephaniah
- Habakkuk
- Jeremiah
- Lamentations
- Ezekiel
- Daniel
- Post Exilic Period

Unit 8- Week 8
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Esther
- 1 & 2 Chronicles
- Ezra
- Nehemiah
- Malachi
- Psalms

Old Testament Isagogics
Unit 1

1. **Revelation, Inspiration, Inerrancy**
2. **Transmission and Textual Criticism**
3. **Canonicity**
4. **The Apocrypha**

Unit 1 - Old Testament Isagogics

Objectives

When students complete this lesson they will

Know:

1. About the subjects which are fundamental to a study of the Old Testatment.

Be able to:

1. Read about these subjects with greater understanding, and discuss them with their peers and the people they are serving.

Reading Assignments

1. Unit 1 material in this student guide.
2. Handout, Threefold Division of the Old Testament
3. Handout, The Apocrypha

Writing Assignments

None

Unit 1 - Old Testament Isagogics

1. Revelation, Inspiration, Inerrancy

At the beginning of this course it is important to review the fundamental concepts of revelation, inspiration, and inerrancy.

How do we know about God? How does God reveal Himself to the human race? Everyone is born with a certain amount of natural knowledge of God. Further, this innate knowledge is supplemented by what we can tell about God from the world around us (from nature). The ancient Greek philosophers, without having Scripture, knew that the Supreme Being was a god of order, wisdom, knowledge, power, and beauty.

However, people could never know about God's grace, and His plan of salvation for fallen humanity, simply from the natural knowledge they have at birth, or by taking a walk along the beach, or a hike in the mountains. God has made this known to us in His Word.

How did Scripture come about? The answer: via inspiration. Inspiration is that divine act whereby God selected writers, worked in them the will to write, moved them to write, and so guided the writing process that what they recorded was the very thoughts, indeed, the very words God wanted recorded. Therefore, we speak of *verbal inspiration*. God is the actual author of all of Scripture; it is His Word.

Inspiration was not a mechanical process. That is, the writer was not *zapped* by God and did not become merely a human recording machine (with the Holy Spirit moving the writer's arms and fingers to record God's Word). The human author's individuality comes through in what he wrote. God purposely chose the writers with their specific personalities, backgrounds, training, interests, and writing styles. Thus, for example, the style of Isaiah differs somewhat from that of Jeremiah and Malachi; the style of Paul differs to a certain extent from that of Peter and John.

Also, some of the authors made use of oral tradition (reliable information handed down orally from generation to generation), and/or previously written records which have not been preserved for us. Cf. the first four verses of Luke, where the author explains that he consulted those who were eyewitnesses of the ministry of Christ. Nevertheless, whatever went into the writing of a book of Scripture, the Holy Spirit was guiding the whole process so that in the end what was recorded was indeed the Word of God.

Why is this concept of inspiration taught? What is the evidence for inspiration? First, there is an amazing unity throughout all of Scripture, despite the fact that the various books were written over a long period of time, by many different human authors. The Old Testament books were written from about 1440 B.C. - 420 B.C.; the New Testament books from about 45 A.D. - 95 A.D. There is a golden thread running throughout all of Scripture: God's plan of salvation for fallen humanity based on the Deliverer, His Son, who would become man.

Another reason inspiration is taught is that this is what Scripture claims for itself. The Holy Spirit has brought us to faith in Jesus through the Gospel. The Holy Spirt has caused us to believe Scripture. We believe all the teachings of Scripture, including what Scripture says about its own origin.

The following are sample passages which indicate the inspiration of the Old Testament books, by speaking of their divine authority, by describing them as *God-breathed,* or by saying that God spoke by the Old Testament prophets (recall how many times these prophets proclaim in their writings, "Thus says the Lord ..."). Of course, what is true for the Old Testament books is also true for those of the New.

Matthew 5:18
Mark 12:36
John 10:35
Romans 3:2
2 Timothy 3:16 (also speaking about the New Testament books written by that point in time)
Hebrews 1:1-2
1 Peter 1:10-11
2 Peter 1:21

John 14:26 and 1 Corinthians 2:13, for example, indicate the inspiration of the New Testament books. More passages could be cited in this regard.

Since Scripture comes from God, since He is The Author, we speak about the *inerrancy* (being without error) of Scripture. We use this term *inerrancy* for all of Scripture, not only those portions dealing with faith, salvation, and morals. The basic fact is that God does not make mistakes or proclaim falsehoods. Scripture is true, accurate, reliable, and authoritative because God is responsible for these words. Technically speaking, we use the term *inerrancy* with regard to the autographs, the original manuscripts from the inspired authors themselves (not copies made from the originals).

Not all Old Testament scholars share this view of Scripture's inspiration. That is, not all hold to what Scripture says concerning its divine origin, as we do. Further, one's stance concerning inspiration determines one's approach to Scripture. Recall the discussion in the Hermeneutics course. In this course, Old Testament Isagogics, we will follow the Historical-Grammatical Method. Others, however, follow the Historical-Critical Method. By way of review, it should be stated that the latter method has two basic presuppositions.

- All of history operates in a closed continuum; divine intervention in the affairs of this world must be ruled out.

- All religions are a product of people's minds, and most underwent evolutionary development. This was the case for the religion of Israel in the Old Testament era, and this was the case for Christianity.

Those holding to the Historical-Critical Method, however, vary somewhat in their theological position, that is, how completely or consistently they hold to this method. They may be thought of as falling somewhere on a spectrum, at either end or somewhere in between. At one end are those who rule out any supernatural intervention whatsoever in this world's history. Thus they deny divine inspiration, and explain that the Bible, while a great book (in the same category as the Iliad and the Odyssey and the works of Shakespeare, for example), is only a human book, and so has errors and contradictions. They also deny all miracles, explaining that while there is some historical event ("kernel of truth") behind the miracle story, that story took on mythic embellishment over the centuries. Those in this group *pick and choose* what portions of Scripture they accept as accurate and reliable (in their judgment, there are relatively few such portions).

At the other end of the spectrum are those who will say that Scripture is inspired, but who actually hold to a *watered-down* viewpoint concerning inspiration (compared to the position of this course). They believe that parts of Scripture are inspired. They teach that portions of Scripture are accurate and reliable - especially those which deal with salvation. They will even talk about the *inerrancy of Scripture*, but mean by that phrase that Scripture is inerrant in its purpose - to lead people to salvation. Those in this group also *pick and choose* what in Scripture is accurate and reliable, and what is not. Generally, they deny, for example, that Adam and Eve were historical persons, that there was a miracle at the sea in the time of Moses, that Christ turned water into wine, and fed the five thousand. In this there is overlap with the previous group (described in the preceding paragraph).

Nevertheless, many in the second group (who believe that there was/is some divine intervention in this world's history) confess the virgin birth of Christ, and His physical resurrection from the dead. Why they accept these miracles and not others in Scripture cannot be answered with certainty. Their position is an inconsistent one, in which they are not adhering strictly and completely to the Historical-Critical method.

Further, questioning the reliability of one portion of Scripture ultimately will affect another portion, since Scripture is *inter-connected.* For example, both Christ (Matthew 19:4-6) and Paul (Romans 5:12-19) assume the historicity of Adam and Eve, and base their teachings on this assumption.

The following quote from Gleason Archer is pertinent. He writes (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 28):

> In the last analysis, then, every man must settle for one of two alternatives: the inerrancy of Holy Scripture, or the inerrancy of his own personal judgment. If the Bible contains errors in the autographa, then it requires an infallible human judgment to distinguish validly between the false and the true in Scripture; it is necessary for every affirmation in the sacred text to receive endorsement from the human critic himself before it may be accepted as true. Since men disagree in their critical judgments, it requires absolute inerrancy on the part of each individual to render a valid judgment in each instance ... the only alternatives available to us as we confront the Scriptures [are]: either they are inerrant, or else we are.

Again, this course will proceed on the basis of the former alternative.

2. Transmission and Textual Criticism

As mentioned earlier, we hold (technically speaking) to the inerrancy of the autographs (or autographa), the original manuscripts from the inspired authors themselves. Copies were made by scribes of these originals, and later, copies of the copies. As far as we can tell, the autographs have not been preserved for us (that they are not extant is due perhaps to manuscripts deteriorating from age, or being lost in a fire or other calamity, or for some other reason). However, Scripture was preserved by the copying, or transmission, process of scribes.

In the course of transmission various scribal errors, or variations, crept into the text of the copies (many of these we can identify with from our own experience as proofreaders). Textual Criticism (or Lower Criticism) is the discipline which deals with these errors/variations in the preserved copies. Very simply, Textual Criticism studies the manuscripts that have been preserved for a book of Scripture, notes the differences in these manuscripts, and on the basis of certain rules (or canons) establishes how the original text read. This criticism is practiced by all those who study Scripture using the original languages, no matter what their theological position is.

Textual criticism is both a science (for example, in that there are established canons) and an art. It is an art, for example, in that the text critic must decide which of the canons are to be applied in a particular situation, or in that the critic develops a sense of the style and diction of the original writer, or in that the critic *weighs* the manuscripts (deciding which are more valuable or accurate for a book of Scripture, and which are less valuable).

The following four points put the subjects of variations and textual criticism into proper perspective.

1. Only a small percentage of the biblical text is involved in textual criticism. It is amazing how much the preserved manuscripts are in agreement. Where there are variants, these are usually over minor points in the text (for example, "Jesus entered the boat," or "He entered the boat").

2. Concerning variants in the preserved manuscripts, the majority of these can be resolved. That is, textual critics can determine with a reasonable amount of certainty what the original reading was.

3. In only relatively few passages is the original reading still uncertain.

4. No teaching or doctrine of Scripture is affected by variations in the extant manuscripts.

Again, with regard to the production of the autographs, we use the term *inspiration*. With regard to the copying process, through which God's Word was preserved for us, we use the phrase *a remarkable divine providence*. Because of this providence, we can use the biblical text today (especially in the original languages) with the utmost confidence and proclaim to the members of our congregations, "Thus says the Lord."

Concerning the preserved manuscripts for the Old Testament, these are usually divided into two categories: the pre-Christian manuscripts, and the post-Christian manuscripts. The pre-Christian manuscripts consist mainly of those discovered in caves near the Dead Sea. These are called the Dead Sea Scrolls, or the Qumran Texts (since the various caves in which they were found are located near the canyon of the Wady Qumran, near the northwest coast of the Dead Sea). The Qumran texts date from ca. the third century B.C. to the first century A.D.

Of the post-Christian manuscripts, the most important is Leningrad Manuscript B-19A, which is dated to ca. 1010 A.D. It is a faithful copy of a manuscript dated to ca. 980 A.D. (which has since been lost). B-19A furnished the basis for the standard Hebrew/Aramaic text used by Old Testament scholars today. B-19A is also known as the Masoretic Text (MT). Actually, the MT was standardized about 100 A.D., but the roots for this text go back earlier, perhaps to ca. 100 B.C. Gleason Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 65), concludes:

> ... we have today a form of the Hebrew text which in all essentials duplicates the recension which was considered authoritative in the days of Christ and the apostles, if not a century earlier. And this in turn, judging from Qumran evidence, goes back to an authoritative revision of the Old Testament text which was drawn up on the basis of the most reliable manuscripts available for collation from previous centuries. These bring us very close in all essentials to the original autographs themselves, and furnish us with an authentic record of God's revelation.

Early translations of the Old Testament also are used in textual criticism, that is, in attempting to establish the original text. These include the following.

Greek Versions - Of these the most important is the Septuagint (LXX). This was produced in Alexandria, Egypt ca. 250-150 B.C. The Septuagint is preserved for us in various manuscripts and manuscript fragments. The LXX varies in quality and value (for textual criticism) from (Old Testament) book to book. At times it seems to be a literal translation of the Hebrew text used; at other times it seems to be more paraphrastic. Further, as Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 47) comments, "it must be remembered that the LXX text has come down to us in various and divergent forms...and betrays a rather low standard of scribal fidelity in its own transmission."

Aramaic Versions - During the Babylonian exile and following the Jews began to speak more and more in Aramaic, which had become the international language for diplomacy and commerce (and is very similar to Hebrew). Interpreters of the Hebrew text for Jewish congregations often would not simply translate into Aramaic but also would explain the message for the hearers through paraphrasing. After a period of oral tradition these Aramaic paraphrases were committed to writing starting ca. 200 A.D., and are known as *Targums* (*targum* means *paraphrase* or *interpretation*).

Latin Versions - Of these the most important is Jerome's Vulgate, of which the Old Testament portion was produced ca. 390-404 A.D. The Vulgate varies as to its value for textual criticism.

Syriac Versions - The Syriac Christians began to produce a more or less standard translation of Scripture in their Eastern Aramaic dialect. Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 51-52) explains:

> The Aramaic spoken by the Jews of Palestine and Babylon was of the Western type, and was written in the same square Hebrew characters as the Hebrew Scriptures themselves. But the Christian Aramaic speakers adopted a quite dissimilar alphabet of their own, bearing some superficial resemblances to Arabic script...The Peshitta (i.e., the simple) Syriac Old Testament must have been composed in the second or third century A.D., since it was quoted already in fourth-century Syriac writings. At first the Old Testament portion was translated from the Hebrew original, but later it underwent some revision in order to make it conform more closely to the Septuagint...The Peshitta achieved an official status for the Syriac-speaking church when it was revised and published...ca. A.D. 400...The Syriac Hexapla is the only other [partly] extant Old Testament translation...it...was published...in A.D. 616.

3. **Canonicity** (the right to be included in the biblical canon, that is, the official list of books of God's Word)

(The sections "Source of Canonicity" and "Criteria of Canonicity" are taken in part from notes by Dr. Douglas Judisch.)

Source of Canonicity - There are erroneous theories concerning the source of canonicity, which include the following.

a. From a book's antiquity. A book is venerated because of its age. However, age does not bestow canonicity. The Pentateuch as soon as it was written was regarded as canonical. The same was true for other books of the Old Testament.

b. The Hebrew language as a source of canonicity. The rationale: after the Jews began to speak Aramaic, anything written in Hebrew was regarded as canonical. This thinking is incorrect: the books 1 Maccabees, Ecclesiasticus, and Tobit were written originally in Hebrew, yet they are non-canonical. Further, the books Daniel and Ezra were written in part in Aramaic.

c. Agreement with the Torah/Pentateuch (the ultimate norm and standard of truth). However, some books agreed with the Torah but were not accepted as canonical; for example, 2 Maccabees.

d. Religious content or value determines canonicity (for some, a book's Christocentricity). However, canonicity has nothing to do with a book's purpose. Also, who determines the *value* of a book? Not all canonical books talk directly about Christ. On the other hand, there are many Gospel-orientated books which are non-canonical. A book which proclaims the Gospel may contain errors and contradict canonical books.

e. The Church, or the people of God (in both the Old and New Testament periods), is the source of canonicity. A variation on this theory is that the *inspired community* is the source

of canonicity. However, if the *Church bestows* canonicity, the result is self-contradiction, since in the history of the canon the *Church* has proposed different lists of the official books.

The correct understanding is that the source of canonicty is God. His words are supremely authoritative; because something comes from God it is infallible. Canonicity, and authority, have to do with the origin of a book. If a book comes from God, it is canonical. Another way of saying this is that if a book is inspired, it is canonical. How do we know if a book came from God? If the book's author was inspired.

Criteria of Canonicity - How do we know that a book came from an inspired author, from an authorized spokesman of God? For the Old Testament era the question could be phrased, "How do we know that an author was a genuine prophet of God (one who received word directly from God, and communicated it to others)?" A negative criterion was that if a book disagreed with the Torah, it was regarded as non-canonical, and its author as not a genuine prophet.

Some say that the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit (the witness of the Holy Spirit in an individual's heart) is a/the criterion of canonicity. The logical conclusion is that a person accepts only those books as canonical which *impress* him/her. This position must be rejected because it is hopelessly subjective, and because God provides historical evidence for canonicity, thus rendering this internal testimony as unnecessary.

The biblical criteria for canonicity may be determined from an examination of Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and 18:21-22. There was historical evidence for recognizing if a person was a genuine prophet/ prophetess of the Lord: a) his/her message agreed with previous Word of God, starting with the Torah, and b) he/she gave the proper sign(s) to authenticate his/her claim to be a prophet. A sign could be a supernatural wonder (e.g., the signs God gave Moses in Exodus 4) or a prediction of a future event (which then takes place).

These criteria were more helpful to the contemporaries of the prophets than they are to us today. For example, we cannot see the supernatural wonders of the prophets. A book by a prophet may actually foretell a future event, and that event may already have taken place (the prediction has been fulfilled); this would be a sign for that book. But not all the books of the Old Testament do this.

There is also the testimony, found in Scripture, of reliable witnesses who lived close to the time of various prophets. However, in the Old Testament there is not an abundance of such testimony, except for Moses, the author of the Torah. There is also testimony for Micah (Jeremiah 26:18-19), Jeremiah (Dan. 9:2), and Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5:1).

The most important criterion for us is the testimony of Christ and His apostles. They identify as deriving from inspired writers, and thus as authoritative, both a) individual books from their contemporary Palestinian Jewish canon, and b) their whole contemporary Palestinian Jewish canon.

This canon was accepted by the Jews living in Palestine during the first century A.D. (except for the Sadducees, who accepted only the Torah). All the evidence points to the canon of Christ and His apostles being identical with the canon of the Jews of His day, namely, their Palestinian Jewish canon. As Edward Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 31, n.) states,

> there is no evidence whatever of any dispute between Him [Jesus] and the Jews as to the canonicity of any Old Testament book. What Christ opposed was not the Canon which the Pharisees accepted but the oral tradition which would make this Canon void. From statements in Josephus and the Talmud, it is possible to learn the extent of the Jewish Canon of Christ's day.

What Was This Contemporary Palestinian Jewish canon? - The most important Jewish reference to the canon comes in a **baraitha** (a tradition from the period 70-199 A.D.; some scholars, however, date this particular tradition to the first or second century B.C.) quoted in the Babylonian Talmud, in the tractate Baba Bathra (14b-15a).
[[Excursus: The Talmud consists of the Mishnah and the Gemara. The Mishnah is the Hebrew code of laws, at first transmitted orally, and then compiled in writing about 200 A.D. under Rabbi Judah the Prince. The Gemara is commentary on the Mishnah. Two versions of the Gemara exist, one compiled in Israel (or Palestine) and the other in Babylon (where an important Jewish community had been living ever since the time of the Babylonian Exile). The bulk of the Gemara is written in Aramaic, the vernacular of the Jews of the time, but some traditions such as the **baraithoth** (plural of **baraitha**), which claim to be tannaitic (before 200 A.D.), are in Hebrew. Thus there are actually two Talmuds, the Palestinian Talmud, and the Babylonian Talmud.

The Gemara of the Palestinian Talmud covers the first four orders of the Mishnah which dealt with agriculture, feasts, women, and damages. It was completed in the mid-fifth century A.D. The Gemara of the Babylonian Talmud covers the Mishnaic orders of feasts, women, damages, and sacrifices and was completed in the mid-sixth century A.D., with many additions and modifications being made in the succeeding few centuries. The Babylonian Talmud, more fully edited than the Palestinian, became authoritative for most of Judaism because of the dominance of the Babylonian community well into the Islamic period. (Adapted from "Talmud," by Anthony J. Saldarini, in Harper's Bible Dictionary, 1985, p. 1016.)]]

The **baraitha** from Baba Bathra, with the exclusion of interpolated comments, is as follows: "The order of the prophets is Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, the Twelve [Minor Prophets]. That of the Kethubhim is Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Daniel, the roll of Esther, Ezra, Chronicles" (from Roland K. Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 271). To be added at the head of this list, of course, are the five books of Moses (Genesis-Deuteronomy), the Torah.

From this **baraitha** we see that the Jewish canon consisted of 24 books. This list never changed over the centuries. These 24 equal the 39 of the Protestant Old Testament canon (the Hebrew canon has as one book our 1 and 2 Samuel, our 1 and 2 Kings, our 12 individual Minor Prophets, our Ezra and Nehemiah, and our 1 and 2 Chronicles). In this **baraitha** we also see implied the traditional three-part division of the Jewish canon (about which more will be said later): the Torah, the Prophets, and the Kethubim/Kethubhim (or Writings). This **baraitha** goes on to assign inspired authors to all 24 books, and discusses their order.

[[Excursus: The order of the Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve Minor Prophets) and the Kethubim varied somewhat in the history of the canon. F. F. Bruce (The Canon of Scripture, 1988, p. 30) explains: "The order of the five books in the first division is fixed, because they are set in a historical framework in which each has its chronological position; this is true also of the four Former Prophets [Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings]. But the order of the books in the Latter Prophets and in the Writings was not so firmly fixed. This is inevitable when separate scrolls are kept together in a container. It is different when a number of documents can be bound together in a volume of modern shape - a codex, to use the technical term. Here the first must precede the second and the second must precede the third, whether there is any logical or chronological basis for that sequence or not. The codex began to come into use early in the Christian era, but even after its introduction religious conservatism ensured that the Jewish scriptures continued for long to be written on scrolls. If the eleven books making up the Writings - or, to take one subdivision of them, the five *Megillôṯ* -were kept in one box, there was no particular reason why they should be mentioned in one order rather than another."]]

Similarly, though the exact contents of the canon of the Jewish authors Philo (ca. 20 B.C.-50 A.D.) and Josephus (ca. 37-95 A.D.) cannot be determined, no evidence suggests that the canon of Philo (On the Contemplative Life, 2.475) and the canon of Josephus (Against Apion, 1.38-42) differed from each other or from the present Jewish-Protestant Old Testament canon. Josephus (Against Apion, 1.38-42), writing about the Jewish nation, states:

> For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine...Since Artaxerxes [Persian emperor, reigning ca. 465/4-425/4 B.C.] to our own time a detailed record has been made of our history, but this has not been thought worthy of equal credit with the earlier records because there has not been since then the exact succession of prophets. But what faith we have placed in our own writings is evident by our conduct; for though so long a time has now passed, no one has dared to add anything to them, or to take anything from them, or to alter anything in them.

This statement of Josephus indicates the following.

a. In his day there was a biblical canon, and the number of books in that canon was fixed.

b. No more canonical writings had been composed since the reign of Artaxerxes, that is, since the time of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi.

c. No additional material was ever included in the canonical 22 books from the time of Artaxerxes down to Josephus' day (i.e., from ca. 425 B.C. to ca. 90 A.D.).

Josephus writes about a 22-book canon. Apparently his canon involved the inclusion of Ruth with Judges (the story of Ruth took place during the period of the judges) and Lamentations with Jeremiah (the prophet Jeremiah probably was the author of Lamentations). An explanation for these being four separate books in the list of 24 is that Ruth and Lamentations, because of their use in the Jewish liturgical year, were on separate scrolls (being two of the five Megilloth, or Scrolls, each read during particular festivals).

Therefore, the Jews had a canon, which they regarded as sacred. This canon consisted of 24 books (undoubtedly equaling the 22 books mentioned by Josephus). This was the canon of Christ and His apostles. This is the canon of the Jews today and the Protestant Old Testament. The standard Hebrew Bible (the Masoretic Text, with text critical apparatus), used by scholars, consists of these 24 books.

Divisions of the Canon - The standard Hebrew Bible used today has the threefold division of the canon: the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. See the handout Threefold Division of the Old Testament, which lists the books as they occur in each division of the standard Hebrew Bible. The Former Prophets evidently were written by prophets. With regard to the Latter Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are known as the Major Prophets (because of the length of these books), and the Twelve are known as the Minor Prophets (because of the brevity of each of these books, especially in comparison to the Major Prophets). Within the Writings, Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Esther are known as the Megilloth, or Scrolls. Again, each, written on an individual scroll, was read during a particular feast in the Jewish religious calendar.

Song of Solomon.....Passover
Ruth..... Pentecost
Lamentations.....9th of Ab, the day Jerusalem was destroyed in 587/6 B.C.
Ecclesiastes.....Tabernacles
Esther.....Purim

From evidence in the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus (Ecclesiasticus is a non-canonical book) it seems that the threefold division goes back at least to the beginning of the second century B.C. However, exactly which books were in the Prophets and the Writings was not fixed or standardized, until after 100 A.D., judging from statements in Josephus.

There is much evidence for assuming that early in the history of the canon a twofold division was in use: the Law/Torah and the Prophets (the Writings being included under Prophets). This division probably was older than the threefold division. New Testament evidence indicates that the twofold division was still in use in the first century A.D., thus existing side-by-side with the threefold division.

In conclusion, it may be said that the division of the Hebrew Bible as it has come down to us - in three parts, with the specific books in the Prophets section and the Writings section - did not become fixed, or standardized, until after the first century A.D. Nevertheless, while the divisions of the canon for a time varied, the contents of the canon always remained the same.

Questions About Books in the Canon - We may assume that the inspired books were added to the canon as soon as, or not long after, they were written. Therefore the canon was completed in the last quarter of the fifth century B.C., and was accepted by the great majority of Jews without question from that time forward.

The older notion that the Old Testament canon was not finalized until the so-called "Council of Jamnia" (which is usually dated to ca. 90 A.D.) has been completely refuted by recent research. Actually, very little is known about this supposed synod or council (the term "Synod" or "Council"

of Jamnia is inappropriate). As Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 278-279) explains,

> after Jerusalem was destroyed...in A.D. 70, Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai obtained permission from the Romans to settle in Jamnia [in southwestern Judah], where he proposed to carry on his literary activities. The location soon became an established center of Scriptural study, and from time to time certain discussions took place relating to the canonicity of specific Old Testament books including Ezekiel, Esther, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs. There can be little doubt that such conversations took place both before and after this period, and it seems probable that nothing of a formal or binding nature was decided in these discussions...the conversations seem to have centered upon the question as to whether specific books should be *excluded* from what was to be regarded as the Scriptural corpus...The fact is that the works under discussion were already accorded canonical status in popular esteem, so that...the 'Council' was actually confirming public opinion, not forming it. The conversations that took place were strictly academic, and in consequence it is very questionable if the doubts that they raised in connection with certain compositions actually represented the general attitude of the populace as a whole to any significant extent...It ought to be concluded, therefore, that no formal pronouncement as to the limits of the Old Testament canon was ever made in rabbinic circles at Jamnia.

There was no formal setting of the canon at any Council or Synod of Jamnia.

Yet it must be noted that in the history of the canon some Jews, certainly not representing the general public thinking, did raise questions particularly about the canonicity of Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Esther, Ezekiel, and Proverbs. These questions were raised in the years before Christ and, as indicated in the preceding paragraph, continued into the Christian era.

Norman Geisler and William Nix (A General Introduction to the Bible, pp. 236-237) explain:

> Immediate recognition of a book as inspired did not thereby guarantee subsequent recognition by all...The fact that a book had been accepted hundreds of years earlier did not guarantee that someone in succeeding generations would [n]ever raise questions about it, since they did not have access to the original evidence to its prophetic credentials.

Some of the questions raised were part of a dispute which took place between two great rabbinical schools - that of Shammai, and that of Hillel.

Questions were raised about Song of Solomon because of its descriptions of the human body and sex. Yet the Song may be interpreted as a dramatic parable, depicting God's love for His people, and His people's love for God.

Questions were raised about Ecclesiastes because of its notes of skepticism, and hints of hedonism. Further, it was thought not to agree with the Torah. However, Ecclesiastes sets forth many ways of finding the meaning of life, but rejects them all except for the proper one, concluding, "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (12:13).

Questions were raised about Proverbs because of a supposed contradiction in the book - 26:4,5. However, both verses are true, each applying to a different situation.

Questions were raised about Ezekiel because of it apparent anti- Mosaical teachings (especially in the last nine chapters with the vision of the temple and city). Actually, no specific examples of Ezekiel contradicting the Torah have ever been provided.

Questions were raised about Esther because the book never mentions God. Yet God certainly is in the background of Esther. His grace, providence, and power are evident.

Again, these questions did not affect the make-up of the canon. This canon of 24 books (= the 39 of the Protestant Old Testament) was the canon of Christ and the apostles. The bottom line for us is that Christ and His apostles gave their approval to this canon; they regarded the books in it as inspired and authoritative. This is seen by their statements in the New Testament concerning the canon as a whole (e.g., *Scriptures*, *prophets*, *Moses and the Prophets*), and by their citing from individual books. In the New Testament there are quotes from or direct allusions to all the books of the Old Testament canon, except for Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Nahum (but Nahum was one of the Twelve, which was one book).

Since there were questions by some in the first century A.D. concerning Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Esther, Proverbs, and Ezekiel, did Christ and His apostles also have questions about these books? Because Christ and His apostles quote from Proverbs and Ezekiel, it is clear that they regarded them as authoritative, as canonical.

It is uncertain if Christ and the apostles had questions about Esther, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Perhaps because Jesus and the apostles cited from Proverbs and Ezekiel, this indicates that they would have also regarded Esther, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon as canonical.

4. The Apocrypha

While five books were the subject of periodic discussion by the Jews as to their canonicity, there were no questions at all in connection with the books of the Apocrypha: there was agreement that they were non-canonical. Read the handout "The Apocrypha."

Combining the manuscripts and manuscript fragments of the Septuagint (LXX), we see that all of the books of the Apocrypha, except for 2 Esdras, are represented. That they are included in the LXX is not evidence for their canonicity. The three earliest manuscripts of the LXX show much uncertainty as to which books constitute the list of Apocrypha. They vary as to which books of the 15(/14) they have and do not have. Also, as Geisler and Nix (A General Introduction to the Bible, p. 268) report, no Greek manuscript has the exact list of apocryphal books accepted by the Council of Trent (1545-1563).

In fact, it is not certain that the LXX of the first century A.D. contained books of the Apocrypha. The earliest extant copies of the LXX date from ca. the fourth century A.D. Though the apocryphal books might have been in the LXX of the first century A.D., Jesus and the apostles never once quoted from them.

Some say that the presence of the apocryphal books in the LXX indicates the existence of a so-called Alexandrian Canon (the LXX was produced in Alexandria, Egypt) - which included these 15(/14) extra books - as opposed to the Palestinian canon, which did not have the 15. However, no one has ever proven that there was an Alexandrian Canon which was different from the Palestinian Canon. As Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 73) notes, although Philo of Alexandria (mentioned above; ca. 20 B.C.-50 A.D.)

> quotes frequently from the canonical books of the 'Palestinian Canon,' he never once quotes from any of the apocryphal books...Secondly, it is reliably reported that Aquila's Greek Version [a Greek translation of the Old Testament, later than the LXX, published ca. 130 A.D., and surviving only in quotations and fragments] was accepted by the Alexandrian Jews in the second century A.D., even though it did not contain the Apocrypha.

It is reasonable to conclude that although the books of the Apocrypha came to be included in the LXX, they certainly were recognized as non-canonical, but were included because they were considered valuable and edifying reading. An analogy would be Luther, while regarding the apocryphal books as non-canonical, including them in his German translation of Scripture because they were "useful and good to read."

The majority of the authors of the apocryphal books were Greek-speaking Jews. Most of these books were written in Greek.

There are two basic points which can be made concerning the value of the Apocrypha.

1. They trace the history of the Jews during the inter-testamental era (and give us a glimpse into their culture and life during that era). In this regard, the best of the books is 1 Maccabees, which reports the fight of the Jews against oppression from Greco-Syrian rulers in the period ca. 175-135 B.C.

2. These books have a religious value in that they report on many heroes of the faith. These heroes suffered bravely for their faith in the true God, which included their belief in the coming Messiah and the resurrection of the dead. Also, the apocryphal books contain many wise summaries of biblical truths.

The following points pertain to the non-canonicity of the books of the Apocrypha (points #2-#11 are taken from the discussion of Geisler and Nix, A General Introduction to the Bible, pp. 267-275).

1. As already mentioned, the Jews never considered these books as inspired.

2. Again, Jesus and the New Testament writers never quoted any of these books; they never referred to any of the 15(/14) as authoritative or canonical.

3. No council of the entire Church favored them during the first four centuries A.D. Many of the Church Fathers spoke out against them, including Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, and Jerome.

4. When they began to be accepted by some Christians, it was under the questionable authority of the Church Father Augustine, who was refuted by Jerome, the biblical scholar of his day.

5. The Syrian church did not accept these books until the fourth century A.D. In the second century A.D. the Syrian Bible (Peshitta) did not contain the Apocrypha.

6. Roman Catholic scholars through the Reformation period up to 1546 made the distinction between the Apocrypha and the canon.

7. Apocryphal books did not receive full canonical status from the Roman Catholic church until 1546 (during the counter-Reformation Council of Trent), in an obvious polemical action against Protestantism, only twenty-nine years after Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses. These books were included because they supported such doctrines as prayers for the dead (2 Maccabees 12:45) and salvation by works (Tobit 12:9; Ecclesiasticus 3:30).

8. Not all of the Apocrypha was accepted by the Roman Catholic church. Further, one of the books rejected by that church has a verse against praying for the dead (2 Esdras 7:105).

9. In the books accepted by the Council of Trent, and in the Apocrypha as a whole, there are passages which are not only unbiblical or heretical (see point #7 above), but also sub-biblical. Judith allegedly was assisted by God in a deed of falsehood (Judith 9:10, 13), and both Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom of Solomon teach a morality based on expedience. Also, books of the Apocrypha have historical, chronological, and geographical errors.

10. The books of the Apocrypha are postbiblical, in that they were written after 400 B.C. As mentioned above, Josephus stated that the writings of the true prophets of his people ceased after the time of Artaxerxes. The Talmud has a similar position: "After the latter prophets Haggai, Zechariah...and Malachi, the Holy Spirit departed from Israel" (Babylonian Talmud, VII-VIII, 24, Tractate Sanhedrin). The time of Malachi overlapped with that of Artaxerxes.

11. There is no claim within the Apocrypha that it is the Word of God; the Apocrypha never claims to be inspired. On the contrary, there are indications in 1 Maccabees that there were no prophets of God at the time of the Maccabean revolt during the intertestamental period (4:46; 9:27). The latter verse reads: "Thus there was great distress in Israel, such as had not been since the time that prophets ceased to appear among them."

12. The Apocrypha adds nothing to our knowledge about Christ.

Old Testament Isagogics
Unit 2

1. **Genesis**
2. **Exodus**
3. **Leviticus**
4. **The Ceremonial Law**
5. **Numbers**

Unit 2 - Old Testament Isagogics

Objectives

When students complete this lesson they will

Know:

1. About the isagogical matters pertaining to Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, and more about the ceremonial law.

Be able to:

1. Read these subjects with greater understanding, and discuss them with their peers and the people they are serving.

Reading Assignments

1. Skim the contents of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.
2. Unit 2 material in this student guide.
3. Dillard and Longman, pp. 37, 48-90.
4. Handout, Chronology of Patriarchal Period
5. Handout, The Length of the Sojourn (Stay in Egypt)
6. Handout, Chronology of Egyptian and Israelite History
7. Handout, Chronology of Egyptian History
8. Handout, Date of the Exodus
9. Handout, The Six Blood Sacrifices Differentiated
10. Handout, The Numbers in Numbers

Writing Assignments

None

1. Genesis

Author: Moses (more will be said about the authorship of this and the other four books of the Pentateuch in Unit 3).

Time of Composition: Approximately during the last half of the 15th century B.C.

Purpose: To give a brief history of God's dealing with mankind from the beginning of the universe until Jacob and the Israelites go down into Egypt.

Genesis relates:
- the creation of the world, and everything in it, including man;
- the fall into sin;
- the promise of the Deliverer, and the covenant of grace;
- the flood;
- the origin of languages;
- the history of the patriarchs and their family (the covenant family, the chosen people).

Contents:

Chapters	1-11	Period from creation up to the time of Abraham.
	12-50	Period from the call of Abraham to the death of Joseph (in other words, the patriarchal history).

Subdivisions of the two major parts:

Chapters	1-6	Period before the flood.
	7	Flood.
	8-11	Ending of the flood, and period after the flood.
Chapters	12-26	Story of Abraham and, to a lesser extent, of Isaac.
	27-36	Story of Jacob and, to a much lesser extent, of Esau.
	37-50	Story of Joseph and, to a lesser extent, of Jacob.

Chapters 1-11 set the stage for the patriarchal history, and God's covenant with Abraham. Chapter 12 and following focus on one man, Abraham, and his family. Chapters 46-50, reporting on the Israelites coming down to live in Egypt, lead naturally into the next book, Exodus.

Selected Comments:
Chapters 1-11 report real history. The rest of Scripture takes what is related in these chapters as historical.

Chapter 3:15 presents the first Gospel of Scripture (therefore this verse is known as the *Protevangelium*). God promises a Deliverer, who will be a descendant of Eve (and Adam), and who will defeat the evil agent (Satan) inside the serpent.

The Bible does not have the only account of a world-wide flood. In various pieces of extra-biblical literature there are stories that all mankind was destroyed by a great flood (usually represented as world-wide), and that a single man with his family or a few friends survived the flood by means of some sort of a ship, raft, or large canoe. For example, the Babylonian Flood Account (coming from Babylonia in southern Mesopotamia) has a number of parallels with the Genesis account. However, the differences between the accounts are more numerous and striking.

That different peoples had a memory of such a flood is due to a common oral tradition shared by the various branches of the human race, all of which go back to the three sons of Noah. The totally true and accurate account is preserved only in Genesis; over the course of centuries inaccuracies and false theology have crept into the other accounts.

The flood was universal (world-wide), and not a limited, local flood (perhaps in the Mesopotamian valley). Consider the following factors.

1. The most natural reading of Genesis 6-9 is to understand the flood as universal.
2. The purpose of the flood was to destroy all mankind: Genesis 6:7, 17; 7:22; 1 Pet. 3:20.
3. The purpose of the flood also was to destroy all animal life on dry land: Genesis 6:7, 17; 7:22.
4. The flood covered "all the high mountains under the entire heavens": Genesis 7:19, 20.
5. The flood lasted a little over a year: Genesis 7:11, 8:13-14.
6. Other passages of Scripture indicate the flood was world-wide: e.g., Psalm 104:5-9; 2 Peter 3:5-7.
7. The ark would have been unnecessary for Noah, the animals, and especially the birds to escape from a mere local flood.
8. There was memory of a world-wide flood outside of Scripture, as already mentioned.

Genesis 9:8-17 gives the account of God's covenant with Noah.
[[Excursus: A *covenant* was a solemn promise accompanied by an oath, a sign, and/or a symbolic action indicating that the covenant was in effect. In the ancient Near East a covenant could be between nations (a treaty or alliance of friendship), between individuals (a pledge or agreement between, for example, a strong king and a weaker king), and between a ruler and his subjects. In the Old Testament we see covenants between God and a person (or people).]]

Concerning God's covenant with Noah, the sign was the rainbow. This covenant seems to have been one-sided (God's). But in the other biblical formulations of covenants between God and man, both sides are involved. God promises to fulfill His Word, and man is committed to obedience and faithfulness to God. However, in any formulation, one side can be emphasized over the other. When the emphasis is on man's side, there are often accompanying promises of blessing (for keeping the covenant) and punishment (for breaking it).

Genesis 9:25-27 is another important link in the Old Testament chain of Messianic prophecies. This prophecy indicates that the Messianic line will continue from Noah through Shem. (This text was terribly misused in our country's history as a pro-slavery passage.)

With the patriarchal history (Genesis 12-50) approximate dates can be assigned to biblical events. See the handout "Chronology of Patriarchal Period." Archaeological finds have shown that the customs described in Gen. 12-50 were authentic customs of the ancient Near East at about the same period when the patriarchs lived. One example of a key archaeological find, as John Bright (A History of Israel, pp. 78-79) explains, is texts uncovered at Nuzi. These texts reflect the customary law of a predominately Hurrian population in the East-Tigris region in the 15th century B.C. Although the Nuzi texts come from a later period and from an area where the patriarchs never lived, there is agreement that the texts embody a legal tradition that was much more widespread and ancient.

Genesis 15:1-4-Abraham was going to adopt his servant Eliezer and make him his heir. Servant adoption was practiced at Nuzi: childless couples would adopt a son who would serve them as long as they lived and then inherit their property when they died. If a natural son was born after the adoption, the adopted son would have to yield the right of inheritance.

Genesis 16:1-4-Sarah gave her handmaid Hagar to Abraham so that he could have a son by Hagar (think also of Rachel and Leah giving their handmaids to Jacob). At Nuzi a marriage contract obliged a wife, if she remained childless, to provide her husband with a substitute. Various events in the Jacob-Laban stories are illustrated by Nuzian customs.

Genesis 12:1-3, 7 (13:14-16; 15:1-6, 7-21; 17:1-19; 18:9-14; 22:15-18) relates God's covenant with Abraham (God's side is emphasized). God promises that:

- Abraham will have a son;
- that Abraham's descendants will be numerous;
- that his descendants will possess the Land of Canaan; and
- that in Abraham all peoples will be blessed.

This last promise is another important link in the Messianic chain, indicating that the Messiah will be a descendant of Abraham. The main sign of the covenant is circumcision (Genesis 17). This covenant (particularly the promises of numerous descendants, possession of Canaan, and the universal blessing) was renewed with Isaac and Jacob. The Messianic line continues through them, and not through Ishmael and Esau.

Notice how God led Abraham along on his spiritual journey, at just the right times speaking to the patriarch for the strengthening of his faith. In these chapters we see Abraham as both *saint and sinner*. The climax of his spiritual journey is in Genesis 22 (see Hebrews 11:17-19). Notice also the character development in Jacob and Joseph.

Genesis 49:8-12 relates the blessing Judah received from Jacob. This is another important link in the Messianic chain, indicating that the Messiah will be a descendant of Judah.

At the end of Genesis the Israelites come down to live in the land of Goshen in northeastern Egypt. This had the benefit of preventing their intermarrying with the Canaanites (and with the Egyptians). Also, Goshen was a good land for them in which they could grow as a people.

Much more will be said about this first book of Scripture in the Genesis course.

2. Exodus

Author: Moses (more will be said about the authorship of this and the other four books of the Pentateuch in Unit 3).

Time of Composition: Approximately during the last half of the 15th century B.C.

Purpose: This book relates the freeing of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery and their traveling to Mt. Sinai, where they received legislation from God. As Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 62) explains, Exodus serves as a connecting link between the preparatory history contained in Genesis and the remaining books of the Torah.

Contents:
Chapters 1-19 (as described by Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 62):

a. The book begins with a brief statement of the rapid growth of the Israelites.
b. Exodus describes preparations for the exodus.
   1. Negative: the people were prepared for deliverance by the hard bondage imposed on them, causing them to long for freedom.
   2. Positive: the people were prepared by the mighty miracles which God performed on their behalf, convincing them that He was indeed the Lord, their covenant-redeemer. God's covenant name: Yahweh.
c. The book gives the account of the exodus, the miracle at the sea, and the journey to Mt. Sinai.

Chapters 20-40:

d. Exodus has a legal section (legislation given by God). After delivering them from slavery God makes a covenant with the Israelites to be His nation. Actually, God is renewing the covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, on a national basis. He organizes them into the theocratic nation, the nation ruled by Yahweh. He gives them laws necessary for such organization, to maintain them as His covenant people. God promises to bring them to Canaan, and the people promise to be obedient to the laws of the covenant.

Laws God gave to Israel are seen in the remaining three books of the Pentateuch. Altogether, the legislation of the Torah consists of three parts:

1. that given at Mt. Sinai (Exodus, Leviticus);
2. that given in the wilderness wandering (Numbers);
3. that delivered/reviewed in the plains of Moab (Deuteronomy).

e. Exodus 32 recounts how the people were unfaithful to the covenant.

Selected Comments:
The legislation given at Sinai (Chapters 20-40) consisted of the moral law (exemplified by the Ten Commandments), the civil law (guidelines concerning the people living with one another in the Israelite society), and the ceremonial law. The ceremonial law in Exodus included

instructions concerning the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the ark of the covenant. The ark, placed in the tabernacle (in the Holy of Holies), was the most sacred object in the religion of Israel. The cover of the ark was called the atonement cover (some translations: the mercy seat). The ark represented the presence of God; God was present in a special way above the ark. More will be said about the ceremonial law of the Pentateuch as a whole at the end of this unit.

Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 220) notes that Exodus

> relates how God fulfilled His ancient promise to Abraham by multiplying his descendants into a great nation, redeeming them from the land of bondage, and renewing the covenant of grace with them on a national basis. At the foot of the holy mountain, He bestows on them the promises of the covenant and provides them with a rule of conduct by which they may lead a holy life, and also with a sanctuary in which they may make offerings for sin and renew fellowship with Him on the basis of forgiving grace.

Read the handout "The Length of the Sojourn (Stay in Egypt)."

The plagues were mighty miracles of God, not simply natural disasters. Remember that most of these plagues did not affect the Israelites, and they happened exactly when Moses said they would happen. There have been studies of the plagues which compare them to the religion and gods of the Egyptians, and which propose that the plagues were blows to the beliefs of the Egyptians.
Pharaoh had asked, "Who is Yahweh, that I should obey him and let Israel go [Exodus 5:2]?" The God of Israel seemed to him to be a weak god, judging from the fact that His people were slaves; the Egyptian gods must be much stronger. Indeed, Yahweh showed Pharaoh and the Egyptians who He was. Later, God said that Pharaoh's rule was to the end that God's power might be demonstrated and that God's name might be know throughout all the earth (Exodus 9:16). That this was accomplished is shown by the Philistines' repeated mention of these plagues some four hundred years later, in Palestine (1 Samuel 4:7-9; 6:5-6). Compare also Joshua 2:10.

The route of the exodus is for the most part uncertain, as also is the location of Mt. Sinai. The large body of water where the miracle took place probably was not the Red Sea (Gulf of Suez), as that sea appears on our maps today. The following are reasons for consideration.

a. The Gulf of Suez is too far south for leaving Egypt.
b. Exodus 13:20 - 14:3, and Numbers 33:6-8, imply that the body of water divided between productive Egyptian soil and the desert. If the Israelites went as far south as the Gulf of Suez, they would have encountered much desert before reaching the body of water.
c. When the Israelites crossed through the body of water, they were in the desert of Shur (Exodus 15:22), in the northwest part of the Sinai peninsula, which is not as far south as the Gulf of Suez.

The miracle may have taken place at the Bitter Lakes, or Lake Timsah (both north of the Gulf of Suez on modern maps). The Bitter Lakes (and also Lake Timsah?) perhaps were an extension of the Gulf of Suez in Moses' day.

Read the handouts "Chronology of Egyptian and Israelite History," "Chronology of Egyptian

History," and "Date of the Exodus."

The following are theological truths which can be drawn from Exodus.

1. **God** acts. He does the delivering (via the plagues, and the miracle at the sea), by His almighty power.

2. God acts in grace. He shows undeserved kindness toward Israel.

3. In His grace God is keeping His promises to Abraham (Genesis 15). At the same time, God is working out His plan of salvation (first set forth in Genesis 3:15). God fulfills all His promises.

4. Faith is founded on historical reality, it is rooted in history. God shows Himself as the God of grace and the faithful God. He also demonstrates that He is Lord of all the earth. The plagues are proof of His superiority to the Egyptian gods. Further, the Israelites "spoiled" the Egyptians (Exodus 3:21-22; 11:2-3; 12:35-36). Egypt was one of the greatest powers in the world at this time.

5. God's demonstrations of His grace, faithfulness, and power are the background for His giving the law to Israel at Mt. Sinai. He is the Almighty Ruler of the universe, and so has the right to command. He delivers, and there can be fellowship with Him, because of His grace. Thus, the basis of the Sinaitic legislation is God's grace. These regulations are guidelines for how God wants His covenant people to live, setting them apart to worship and serve Him. These covenant laws reminded the people of their special relationship with God, which they had because of His grace. Also, many of these laws reminded them specifically of the coming Savior. Because of God's grace, and through His Gospel Word, they not only had saving faith, but also the power to live as God's people.

6. If deliverance is due to God's grace and power, it is not due to man's works. Man contributes nothing; this is seen in the exodus event, this is also the case for spiritual deliverance. People are saved from hell and given everlasting life simply by grace through faith - faith in the one, true God who is revealed in His Word, and in His actions in history.

7. God is gracious and loving, but also holy and righteous. The latter two attributes are seen especially in His dealings with the Egyptians.

8. God can use the same action, or event, for two purposes.
   a. With the plagues, God revealed Himself to Israel as the covenant God, able to accomplish anything, including their deliverance from slavery. Yet these plagues also were judgments on the Egyptians.
   b. Again, the miracle at the sea was deliverance for the Israelites and judgment for the Egyptians.

9. The Passover event (the slain lamb, the shed blood) pointed ahead to the work of Christ,

who is the Paschal Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7). Christ institutes the Lord's Supper during the Passover meal.

10. Hosea 11:1 indicates that the exodus event was prophetic of what would happen in the life of Christ. Therefore the exodus is a type. (Review the discussion of Hosea 11:1 in the Hermeneutics course).

11. Many years after the time of Moses, the prophet Isaiah recalls the exodus from Egypt and the events in the wilderness in his foretelling the release of Israelite exiles from their Babylonian captivity and their return to Judah (Isaiah 43:14-21; 48:17-21).

12. The apostle Paul refers to the Israelites' passing through the sea as a baptism into Moses (1 Corinthians 10:1-6). This was a type, of which Christian baptism is the antitype. See the discussion of R. C. H. Lenski in his commentary The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1937), pp. 389-397.

13. The author of Hebrews refers to the exodus, the wilderness wandering, and the entry into Canaan when writing about people entering (or not entering) God's kingdom (Hebrews 3:7 - 4:13).

14. The Ten Commandments are still in effect today, having carried over from the Old Testament into the New Testament era.

3. Leviticus

Author: Moses.

Time of Composition: Approximately during the last half of the 15th century B.C.

Purpose: As seen in Exodus, the Israelites at Sinai had been formally organized into the covenant nation, into a nation ruled by Yahweh (a theocracy). The basic law had been given and the tabernacle had been erected, the place where God dwelt among His people. However, before the Israelites could continue their journey to the Promised Land, they needed additional laws regarding worship in the tabernacle and the life of faithfulness to Yahweh. Leviticus contains these laws. Thus, Leviticus presupposes for its correct understanding the contents of Exodus. (Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 75)

Contents:
Chapters 1-16
Most of the chapters record laws concerning the removal of the people's moral, physical, and ceremonial defilement (uncleanness).

Chapters 17-27
These chapters contain laws summarizing and illustrating the behavior appropriate to the

purified people of God.

The first major section can be subdivided as follows.

Chapters 1-7
These chapters deal with the various kinds of sacrifices, or offerings. Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 81) explains:

> "Sacrifices serve a two-fold end, that of expiation and that of consecration. It will be seen, therefore, that sacrifice, particularly as it serves the end of expiation, has to do with sin. In the Bible, sacrifices are regarded as offerings, i.e., that which is brought near to the Lord, gifts of holiness. These holy gifts are brought to the altar where the Lord dwells, and the Lord directly consumes the sacrifices. This, of course, must be understood symbolically and not in any crass, naturalistic sense."

Everything brought to the Lord as an offering had to be ceremonially clean. With regard to the animal kingdom, oxen (/cattle), sheep, goats, doves, and pigeons might be sacrificed; from the vegetable kingdom, grain, wine, and oils.

An animal sacrifice was offered up in the place of, or as a substitute for, the sinner(s). The slaying of the animal, and the animal's blood, did not, of course, actually atone for sin. Rather, the sacrifice pointed ahead to (foreshadowed) the Sacrifice to come, the shedding of whose blood would actually atone for the sins of the whole world. Through the animal sacrifice, **and** through faith in what the sacrifice symbolized, the Old Testament believer received forgiveness of sins. It was never a matter of the offerer "earning" forgiveness simply by going through a mechanical act (sacrificing an animal to God). The sacrifice had to be accompanied by a truly repentant, believing heart. Further, the fruit of faith was the life of repentance and godliness.

More will be said about the sacrifices in the next section of this unit, "The Ceremonial Law."

Chapters 8-10
These chapters record the institution of the Aaronic priesthood. Chapters in Exodus also dealt with the priesthood.

Chapters 11-16
These chapters contain laws concerning purification, and climax in the chapter (16) describing the Day of Atonement, the most solemn day of the whole year, when ritual atonement was made for the entire nation.

Selected Comments:
As the chosen people of God, Israel was set apart from the unbelieving, idolatrous world unto the service and worship of Yahweh (Archer, A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 240). This was one purpose for the covenantal laws: to maintain Israel's holiness (that is, the nation's being separated out for sacred purposes).

Leviticus shows that access to, and fellowship with, God was maintained on the basis of substitutionary atonement. By the shedding of the blood of the sacrifice an "innocent" life was substituted for the life of the guilty person(s) (Archer, A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 240). Thus, fellowship with God was made possible by God's grace alone, through faith. Again, through faith in the coming Sacrifice, Who was symbolized in sacrifices of the Mosaic covenant, an Old Testament believer had forgiveness and everlasting life. The way of salvation is the same in both testaments: by grace through faith. In the Old Testament era, they believed in the Messiah (Savior) to come; in the New Testament era, we believe in the Messiah who has come.

As the holy, covenant people the Israelites were required to abstain from all sexual unchastity, and to avoid contact with corruption and decay (such as corpses or defiling disease). As Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 241) points out, "these provisions are to be understood as giving expression to a fundamental attitude of love toward God and man. The second great commandment as defined by the Lord Jesus (Matthew 22:39) was derived from Leviticus 19:18: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'"

Nothing unclean, corrupt, or liable to speedy decay could be presented as an offering to God. This, then, excluded leaven, milk (which quickly sours), and honey (which ferments) (Archer, A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 241).

The Hebrew religious calendar was dominated by the number seven (symbolizing God interacting with humanity), as outlined by Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 241).

a. Every seventh day was a sabbath.
b. Every seventh year was a sabbath year of rest for the crop-bearing land.
c. After seven sevens of years the fiftieth year was hallowed as a jubilee.
d. The Passover was held on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month Abib.
e. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was celebrated for the next seven days after Passover.
f. The Festival of Pentecost was celebrated seven weeks and one day after Passover.
g. The seventh month, Tishri, especially was hallowed by three observances: the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles.
h. The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated seven days, plus an eighth day for the final convocation.

The moral laws, best summed up in the Ten Commandments, are still in force for the Church of the New Testament era because God's moral nature does not change (cf. Romans 13:9).

4. The Ceremonial Law

At this point, after having examined Leviticus, it is appropriate to have an extended discussion of the ceremonial law, taking into consideration what is seen in Leviticus, but also in the books Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The ceremonial law included the guidelines concerning

- how Israel was to worship Yahweh, and

- the lifestyle of the Israelites (e.g., laws concerning cleanliness and diet).

This ceremonial law was of a different kind and on a different level than the moral law. In the Pentateuch the ceremonial laws and moral laws are to a certain extent mixed together, although there are passages where one type clearly stands forth in its context: e.g., Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21 (moral), and Leviticus 1-7, 11-17 (ceremonial). The distinction between the two types came especially when people, having fulfilled the ceremonial guidelines, did not follow through with obedience to the moral law. Cf. 1 Samuel 15:22, Amos 5:21-24, Micah 6:6-8, and Isaiah 1:11-17. The New Testament also clearly distinguishes between the two types, indicating that while the moral is still in effect (e.g., Romans 13:9), the ceremonial came to an end with Christ accomplishing His redeeming work (e.g., Colossians 2:16-17, and many passages in the book Hebrews).

The ceremonial law, as well as the civil law, as part of the covenant, were not an option for the Israelites. Thus God had requirements of His people in the Old Testament period which are not in effect today. Nevertheless, the covenant, and God's having fellowship with Israel, were from God's grace. As discussed earlier, an Old Testament believer had forgiveness and everlasting life by grace through faith (just as we, who are still bound to the moral law, do).

Various purposes of the ceremonial law (some overlapping) have already been indicated and can now be summarized.

1. It was through the means of the ceremonies, particularly the animal sacrifices, that God granted, out of His grace, His forgiveness, His imputed righteousness. See, for example, Leviticus 6:2-7. This was not unlike a believer today receiving forgiveness through the means of the Lord's Supper. Of course, the people also had forgiveness apart from the ceremonies, through faith.

2. Certain aspects of the ceremonial law foreshadowed the person and work of Jesus Christ. More will be said about the animal sacrifices.

3. The ceremonial law served as a means by which faith in the coming Savior could be exhibited, before His actual incarnation (J. Barton Payne, The Theology of the Older Testament, p. 351). However, the ceremonies had effectiveness only as they showed a person's faith. They had value for a person only if he/she believed in what the ceremonies symbolized. The sacrifices of unbelievers, who were not repentant, were an abomination to God: e.g., Proverbs 15:8; 21:27.

4. Another purpose of the ceremonial law was to keep the Israelites as a people separated unto Yahweh, to worship and serve Him. The Israelites were to keep separate from the surrounding pagan, Gentile peoples in that they were not to adopt the wicked practices of these Gentiles, disregard God's covenant, and so lose their spiritual heritage. Thus the ceremonial law served to express the holiness of those who were in fellowship with Yahweh, of those who were separated out from the profane. The ceremonial law was quite complex, but God knew what was necessary to maintain the Israelites as His special people.

Review the discussion in the Hermeneutics course concerning the tabernacle and the sacred items associated with the tabernacle, including the ark of the covenant.

One part of the ceremonial law was regulations dealing with cleanness and uncleanness, and related regulations.

1. Some things are classified as unclean for hygienic reasons: e.g., infectious skin diseases (Leviticus 13-14).

2. Certain laws are in part a safeguard against bodily injury: e.g., Leviticus 19:28.

3. Certain insects and animals were naturally loathsome as far as food is concerned: e.g., Leviticus 11:20, 41.

4. Ethical matters apparently entered into some of the prohibitions regarding uncleanness: e.g., Deuteronomy 22:5 (which may be a safeguard against homosexuality).

5. Humanitarian reasons seem to be partly involved in prohibitions regarding uncleanness: e.g., Leviticus 12 (to give a woman the chance to recover from the labor of child birth).

6. Some regulations apparently were given simply to emphasize the idea of Israel being a holy people, and needing to avoid anything that might have pagan connotations: e.g., Leviticus 19:19, Exodus 23:19b. Concerning clothing made of two kinds of material, Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 241) thinks this symbolized a commingling of the holy and the profane.

Indeed, some of these laws overlap from one category into another.

The priests served at God's altars, offered up sacrifices for the people, and made intercession for the people to God. Following are other matters concerning the priesthood, as outlined by Payne, The Theology of the Older Testament, p. 373.

1. The priests were expected, in personal living, to set an example of faithfulness to God's will.

2. The High Priest had the Urim and Thumim, by which God gave decisions to the Israelites: e.g., Exodus 28:30; Numbers 27:21.
   (The Urim and Thumim may have been superseded by prophetic oracles after the time of David.)

3. The priests were responsible for teaching the Word of God: e.g., Leviticus 10:11; Micah 3:11; Malachi 2:7.

At Mt. Sinai God restricted the legitimate priesthood to the family and descendants of Aaron, who was of the tribe of Levi (Exodus 28:1; 40:12-15; Leviticus 6:14 - 7:36; Numbers 16 - 17). Aaron was the first high priest. The four sons of Aaron were designated as priests. Two of Aaron's sons were slain by the Lord for violating their office (Leviticus 10:1-2), leaving the other two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, as priests. Descendants of these two men were regarded as divinely authorized priests (the priesthood was hereditary). The high priesthood continued

through Eleazar.

Another, lower rank of tabernacle worker consisted of the Levites, fellow tribesmen of the Aaronic priests (Numbers 8:13-14; 18:2-6). The Levites were assistants to the Aaronic priests.

Especially according to the Book of Hebrews (e.g., Hebrews 8:1), the Old Testament priesthood was a type of Christ, who was (and is) Prophet, Priest, and King. The priests offered sacrifices; Christ offered a sacrifice, the sacrifice that actually atoned for the sins of the world. The priests made intercession for the people; Christ intercedes for His people (e.g., Romans 8:34). Because the priesthood was typical of Christ, the priests had to be without defect (Leviticus 21:17-23).

Review the discussion in the Hermeneutics class concerning the Day of Atonement (**yom kippur**).

With regard to animal sacrifices and ceremonial atonement, the Hebrew word for atonement comes from the verb **kafar**, which has the root meaning *to cover*. The idea with atonement is that the punishment that is due the sinner is transferred to another *covering* object. With ceremonial atonement the animal was slain by the shedding of its blood, depicting God's judgment of death as the punishment for sin. Each stage of the sacrificial ceremony typified some aspect of the atoning work of Christ (Hebrews 10:11-12), as outlined by Payne (The Theology of the Older Testament, pp. 383-385).

1. Only an animal without defect, unblemished, could be offered to Yahweh (Leviticus 22:21). Cf. 1 Peter 1:19. Only One who was holy, perfectly pure, without any imperfection, could bear the sins of others.

2. In the ritual the offerer, the one who brought the animal, placed his hand on the head of the animal (e.g., Leviticus 1:4). This depicted symbolical transfer of guilt, from the guilty one (the offerer) to the innocent one (the animal). Thus the animal was the symbolical substitute for the offerer. Christ was made to be sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21).

3. Then the animal was slain, in the sinner's stead. The blood symbolized the life of the animal: Leviticus 17:11. Again, this pointed ahead to Christ's sacrifice (which, however, took place only once).

4. The sacrificed life was then committed to God by sprinkling and burning on the altar: e.g., Leviticus 1:6-9; Exodus 24:6. Cf. Ephesians 5:2.

5. There was a ceremonial indication that God's fellowship with men was maintained. Some of the sacrificial blood could be gathered and sprinkled over the people (e.g., Exodus 24:6, 8). A communion meal followed certain sacrifices (e.g., Leviticus 7:15-18; 19:6-8; cf. Exodus 24:11). Payne (The Theology of the Older Testament, p. 384) explains: "The eating of the sacrifice served as a tangible proof of reconciliation, as God and the...sinner sat down together at the same table."

Concerning the blood sacrifices, see the handout "The Six Blood Sacrifices Differentiated"

(taken from Archer, A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 244).

Taking all the sacrifices together (including those which were non-bloody), more than one could be involved in a particular situation. Cf. Leviticus 14:10-20.

Circumcision was part of the ceremonial law, but it was instituted already in the time of Abraham (Genesis 17). Circumcision was practiced by other nations besides Israel. For example, among the Egyptians the operation was performed on a boy about thirteen years old, probably being used as a puberty rite marking the passage of a son to the privileges of manhood. God told Abraham that the males who would be born in the future were to be circumcised when they were eight days old, thus removing circumcision from a puberty rite and making it an act with strictly religious significance. This practice of infant circumcision by the Israelites seems to have been unique in the ancient Near East. The following points summarize the significance of circumcision.

1. It depicted mankind's natural unfitness before God. Cf. Leviticus 26:41; Deuteronomy 10:16; Jeremiah 4:4.

2. Circumcision was a mark of submission to the will of God.

3. The covenant was connected to circumcision; circumcision was the seal of the covenant God made with Abraham, and with his descendants. God told Abraham (and Israel as a whole) concerning this shedding of blood, "This is my covenant" (Genesis 17:10). Under ordinary circumstances, for a male to have covenantal fellowship with Yahweh, he had to be circumcised (Genesis 17:9-13; Exodus 12:44, 48)). To neglect circumcision was a very serious offense (Exodus 4:24-26); it actually was a breaking of the covenant (Ezekiel 44:7). God said to Abraham that any man who refused to be circumcised was to be cut off from the people, and he would not be living under the covenant (Genesis 17:14).

Again, male babies were circumcised when they were eight days old (that is, as soon after birth as was practical). This had a two-fold significance.

1. This showed humanity's need for regeneration and salvation from the time of birth.

2. This showed that babies and little children could be among the saved, that they could have saving faith. Circumcision put the male babies under the covenant of grace, it brought them into covenantal fellowship with Yahweh. Another way of saying this is that through circumcision the male babies were brought to faith.

Thus, circumcision can be considered to have been an Old Testament sacrament. Colossians 2:11-12 indicates that baptism has supplanted the Old Testament sacrament of circumcision. This, then, is one reason why we practice infant baptism today - as male babies were circumcised in the Old Testament period, so babies (male and female) are to be baptized today.

God certainly included Israelite female infants and little girls under His covenant by a method not revealed to us. That they also had saving faith is indicated in Mark 10:13-16. On the basis of this understanding Francis Pieper (Christian Dogmatics, Vol. 3, p. 278; St. Louis: Concordia,

1953) writes:

> Are children of Christians who die without Baptism saved? There is some basis for the hope that God has a method, not revealed to us, by which He works faith in the children of Christians dying without Baptism, as certainly He did in the case of girls in the Old Testament (Mark 10:13-16). For children of unbelievers we do not venture to hold out such a hope. We are here entering the field of the unsearchable judgments of God (Romans 11:33).

There arose a perversion of the true spiritual significance of circumcision in Israel. For some it became an automatic guarantee of salvation, even for a male beyond the stage of infancy and early childhood who did not have saving faith. As a person's baptism does not save him or her if that person is an unbeliever, so it was for circumcision. For those whose hearts were in rebellion against the Lord, the external ceremony was not to be considered as mechanically effective, just as hypocritical offering up of sacrifices was not effective before God. See, for example, Jeremiah 9:25-26.

Concerning ceremonial times, the Sabbath day regulation was part of the moral law in that:

a. it guaranteed to men and animals a needed day of rest from labor (Exodus 23:12; Deuteronomy 5:12, 14-15), and
b. it was a day of special religious assembly (Leviticus 23:3).

It was part of the ceremonial law in that:

a. the seventh day was to be observed, and
b. it symbolized both God's "resting" after creation (Exodus 20:11; 31:17) and the future rest anticipated by those under the covenant (Psalm 95:11; Hebrews 3:16 - 4:11).

With regard to ceremonial times, Payne (The Theology of the Older Testament, p. 400) further explains:

> At Sinai God also ordained a series of seven special `convocation sabbaths' in the calendar of Israel. These sabbaths were days of rest from labor and of special sacrifices. They were to be observed in connection with the five Mosaic annual feasts: passover, pentecost, trumpets, the day of atonement, and tabernacles. The first and the last of these feasts, moreover, were assigned two such convocation sabbaths (Levitcus. 23:7, 8, 35, 36).

Every seventh year was a sabbatic year, when land lay fallow, debts were canceled and Israelite servants were freed (Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 25:1-7; Deuteronomy 15:1-15, 31:10-13). The last aspect especially symbolized the freedom the Messiah would acquire. Once every fifty years was the jubilee year, which had features of a sabbatic year, plus the requirement of returning all properties to the original possessing families (Leviticus 25).

Concerning the five annual feasts (see, e.g., Leviticus 23), three of them were pilgrimage feasts: passover and unleavened bread, pentecost, and tabernacles. Every adult male was expected to travel to the central sanctuary and appear before the Lord (Exodus 23:14-17).

Concerning purposes of the annual festivals, the following are brief comments (based on Exodus 23:14-17, 34:18-24; Leviticus 16, 23:4-44; Numbers 28:16 - 29:40; and Deuteronomy 16:1-17), in addition to those already made. See also the Concordia Self-Study Bible, pp. 102 and 176.

1. Passover (Abib 14) and Unleavened Bread (Abib 15-21): to commemorate Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and the hardship of the hurried flight from Egypt.

2. Weeks/Pentecost/Harvest (seven weeks and one day after the Passover; Sivan 6): to dedicate to God the firstfruits of the wheat harvest. Recognizing Yahweh as the source of daily bread.

3. Trumpets (Tishri 1): may have marked, at least originally, the new year's day of the Hebrews. To "remind" the Lord of the needs of His people.

4. Day of Atonement (Tishri 10): day of national repentance, of Israel humbling itself before God.

5. Tabernacles/Booths/Ingathering (Tishri 15-21): to commemorate the Exodus and wilderness wandering, when Israel camped in the wilderness under the leadership of Moses; and, to rejoice in the completion of all the harvests. Recognizing Yahweh as the source of daily bread.

One other element in the ceremonial law should be mentioned: *tithing*. The tithe was a tenth part of one's yearly income set aside for certain purposes. This practice was common throughout the ancient Near East, and was practiced for both sacred and secular reasons. In the Old Testament tithing was done for sacred purposes. The patriarchs practiced tithing, before the Mosaic legislation (Genesis 14:20; 28:22). This tithing was voluntary on the part of the patriarchs. Tithing became mandatory with the Mosaic covenant. Leviticus 27:30-33 tells what is to be tithed (the description fits an agricultural community). The tithes were to be given to the Levites, the workers at the tabernacle (Numbers 18:21-32). The tithe would serve as compensation for the Levites' non-participation in the tribal distribution of the Land of Canaan. The Levites would then give a tithe of their income (Numbers 18:26), which would be used in part for the support of Israel's priests. The tithes were to be given at the central sanctuary (the tabernacle): Deuteronomy 12:1-14; 14:22-27.

There are, however, complexities regarding the laws of tithing, including a question about how many tithes Israel was expected to pay. Passages relevant to the discussion are Leviticus 27:30-34; Numbers 18:21-32; Deuteronomy 12:1-14; 14:22-29; 26:12-15.

Throughout the history of Israel it appears that the Israelites vascillated between two extremes with regard to tithing.

1. The tithe could be overpaid and become a basis of false religious security, being seen as a bribe to compensate for a faithless life.

2. The extreme which was more common was not paying the tithe, but neglecting it. As a result, the Levites would have to find secular employment and the worship life carried on at

the central sanctuary would suffer.

Underlying the practice of tithing was the principal of stewardship, which carries over into the New Testament era. Payne (The Theology of the Older Testament, pp. 434-435) outlines the following concepts involved in tithing and stewardship.

1. All things come from God and belong to God.

2. People are simply managers, stewards of what is God's.

3. God only requires a portion, out of His grace. Offerings are only tokens, just a tiny portion of the whole to which God is entitled.

Read Malachi 3:8-10. Today God does not demand a tenth portion, but He does request stewardship of His people, and their giving willingly, joyfully, for the work of His kingdom.

5. Numbers

Author: Moses.

Time of Composition: Approximately during the last half of the fifteenth century B.C.

Purpose: To relate the history of Israel from the departure of the nation from Mt. Sinai to events which took place in the plains of Moab shortly before the last speeches (in Deuteronomy) and death of Moses.

Contents: (as outlined by Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 84-91).
Chapters 1:1 - 10:10 The preparations which were made for the departure from Sinai.

Chapters 10:11 - 21:35 The departure from Sinai, the journey to the border of Canaan, the rebellion, the wilderness wandering, and the journey to the plains of Moab.

Chapters 22:1 - 36:13 Events in the plains of Moab.

Selected Comments:
Historical narrative occupies a larger proportion of this book than is the case in Leviticus or Deuteronomy. Review especially the following chapters:

a. 13-14 (the rebellion at the border of Canaan, and consequent judgment from God);
b. 16 (the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram against the priesthood established by God);
c. 20 (the death of Miriam; the sin of Moses and Aaron; the death of Aaron);
d. 21 (vv. 4-9; cf. John 3:14);
e. 22-24 (the Balaam story);
f. 32, 34 (taking possession of the Promised Land east of the Jordan, and distributing it to two and one-half tribes; see also Deuteronomy 2:24 - 3:20).

Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 246) has this pertinent observation:

> The spiritual lesson enforced throughout the book is that God's people can move forward only so far as they trust His promises and lean upon His strength. The tragedy of Kadesh-barnea [the rebellion and consequent wilderness wandering] was the unavoidable consequence of unbelief...The purpose of the census prior to the failure at Kadesh (Numbers 1-4) and of the census of the later generation at the plains of Moab (Numbers 26) was to show that they were not kept out of Canaan by their insufficient numbers. It was not the size of their army that mattered, but only the size of their faith. Although no more numerous than their fathers, the younger generation was able to conquer the Canaanites because they were willing to trust God all the way and to obey His marching orders (in a way that their fathers failed to do at Kadesh-barnea).

Read the handout "The Numbers in Numbers."

Numbers shows God's care for His people. He wonderfully provided for their physical needs. See Deuteronomy 8:4.

Numbers shows that God's redemptive plan will prevail, despite the people's sinfulness.

Old Testament Isagogics
Unit 3

1. Deuteronomy

2. Authorship of the Pentateuch

A. The Reasons for the Position that Moses Authored the Pentateuch.
B. The Historical Development of the Documentary Hypothesis.
C. A Summary of the Reasons for the Development of, and A Brief Description of, the Documentary Hypothesis.
D. A Response to the Documentary Hypothesis in the Form of General Comments.
E. A Response to the Documentary Hypothesis in the Form of Specific Comments.

Unit 3 - Old Testament Isagogics

Objectives

When students complete this lesson they will

Know:

1. The isagogical matters pertaining to Deuteronomy, and the issue of authorship of the Pentateuch (or Pentateuchal Criticism).

Be able to:

1. Read these subjects with greater understanding and discuss them with their peers and the people they are serving.

Reading Assignments

1. Skim the contents of Deuteronomy.
2. Unit 3 material in this student guide
3. Dillard and Longman, pp. 91-106, 38-48.
4. Handout, Young, pp. 41-45, 107-154.

Writing Assignments

None

1. Deuteronomy

Author: Moses.

Time of Composition: Approximately during the last half of the 15th century B.C.

Purpose: To give a record of Moses' last speeches/discourses to the Israelites (in the plains of northern Moab), his death, and events after his death.

Contents:

Chapters 1:1 - 4:43
The first discourse of Moses. To a large extent this functions as a historical prologue for what follows in the book. Moses is appealing to the Israelites to learn from their history and be faithful to the Lord.

Chapters 4:44 - 26:19
The second discourse of Moses, in which he discusses laws by which Israel is to live. 4:44-49 provides the historical setting for the speeches of Moses. In Chapter 5 Moses gives an exposition of the Ten Commandments. In 6:1 - 11:32 Moses exhorts the Israelites to fear and love God, and to show this in a life of faithful, humble obedience. The section 12:1 - 26:19, as Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 96) explains, consists of laws, part of which are repetitions of the Sinaitic legislation and part of which have regard to circumstances not considered by that legislation. Their purpose is to regulate the entire life of Israel, when the nation crosses the Jordan and settles in the Land of Canaan.

Chapters 27:1 - 28:68
The third discourse of Moses. He describes a ceremony which is to take place across the Jordan at Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, involving pronouncements of curses for disobedience to the covenant, and blessings for obedience.

Chapters 29:1 - 30:20
The fourth discourse of Moses. He urges the people to pledge themselves anew to the covenant, setting before them the conditions for blessing and judgment from the Lord.

Chapter 31:1-29
The inauguration of Joshua to succeed Moses as leader of Israel, description of writing activity by Moses, and final directions from Moses to the priests, Levites, and elders.

Chapters 31:30 - 32:47
The song of Moses, in which he contrasts the faithfulness of God with the faithlessness of Israel, and impresses on the people their responsibility to the covenant.

Chapters 32:48 - 33:29
God's final command to Moses (32:48-52), and the last words of Moses (33:1-29). God directs Moses to leave the Israelites and climb Mt. Nebo, where he will see the Land of Canaan, and then die. Moses, before leaving, blesses the tribes of Israel (no mention is made of Simeon), and

reminds them that God is their everlasting, almighty Refuge.

Chapter 34:1-12
The death of Moses, events following his death, and evaluation of his prophetic ministry.

Selected Comments:
In these discourses, as Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 251) explains, Moses is impressing upon the Israelites their special privileges and obligations as the covenant people of Yahweh. Looking ahead to the conquest of Canaan, and envisioning Israel as a theocracy, he sets forth the covenant as the nation's God-given constitution. Moses lays the responsibility for the preservation of this theocracy upon the conscience of each individual citizen and worshipper.

In Deuteronomy Moses is not only reviewing much of what was already contained in the previous three books (although this review was important, because Moses was dealing with a new generation). Moses is also providing an exposition of the most essential contents of the covenant, and developing to a certain extent laws previously given. Moses speaks in hortatory form; that is, his addresses served to give the people strong encouragement, urging them on to faithfulness to God and His covenant.

Certain emphases are characteristic of Deuteronomy. Among these are the following, as outlined by Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, pp. 252-253).

1. The book sets forth that God is a spirit (4:12, 15- 16), and also God's uniqueness and oneness (4:35, 39; 6:4; 7:9; 10:17).

2. God's relationship to His people under the covenant is one of love rather than of legalism (4:37; 7:8, 13; 33:3). The grace of God is also emphasized (7:7; 9:4-6).

3. The believer is to fear and love God, both of which are motivations for godly living (6:5; 10:12, 20; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:3; 19:9; 28:15-68; 30:6, 16, 20).

4. Israel's greatest danger is idolatry, which is to be resisted and suppressed with uncompromising severity (6:14, 15; 7:4; 8:19, 20; 11:16-20; 13:1-18; 30:17-18).

5. Because of their close relation to the holy God, the Israelites must live as a holy people (7:6; 26:19; 28:9). This holiness involves abstinence from unclean foods, and is safeguarded by restricting sacrificial worship to a chosen central sanctuary; it finds expression in love toward the neighbor, and in giving help to the poor and underprivileged (widows, orphans, and foreigners).

6. Faithfulness to the covenant will be blessed with material benefits; disregard and disobedience of the covenant will be punished with material disaster, loss, and ultimate exile (Chapters 28-30).

7. A characteristic admonition is: "Remember, and do not forget!" Israel is to retain and obey the revealed truth which it has received from God.

Basically, Deuteronomy has a positive, optimistic futuristic outlook. Two frequently occurring phrases in the book are "*go in and possess*" (35 times), and "*the land which the Lord your God gives you*" (34 times).

In Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and 18:9-22 God gives instructions as to how the Israelites are to discern between true and false prophets. 18:14-19 foretells the prophetic institution, or the line of prophets, which culminates with Jesus Christ, who was and is the Prophet, Priest, and King.

2. Authorship of the Pentateuch

The position of this course, as already indicated, is that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch. However, there is another position in Old Testament scholarship which denies Mosaic authorship and attributes the Pentateuch to a number of writers, all of whom lived long after the lifetime of Moses. This second position is very prevalent and is encountered frequently in commentaries, journal articles, theological dictionaries and wordbooks, newspaper articles, educational programs on television, courses in secular universities, and courses in seminaries of various denominations. The debate over authorship of the Pentateuch also was part of the doctrinal controversy taking place in our synod in the late 1960's and first half of the 1970's.

In covering the subject of authorship of the Pentateuch, the discussion will proceed as follows:

A. the reasons for the position of this course;
B. the historical development of the other position, which is also known as the Documentary Hypothesis (and popularly referred to as JEDP);
C. a summary of the reasons for the development of the Documentary Hypothesis;
D. a response to the Documentary Hypothesis in the form of general comments;
E. a response to the Documentary Hypothesis in the form of specific comments.

A. The Reasons for the Position that Moses Authored the Pentateuch

Read Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 41-45 (conclusion of section b.).

There are passages in the Apocrypha, and the writings of Philo of Alexandria, Josephus, and the rabbis, which indicate Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

Noteworthy are the assertions of Jews quoted in the New Testament (the following passages are taken from notes of Dr. Douglas Judisch).

a. Sadducees: Matthew 22:24 (Mark 12:19; Luke 20:28)
b. Pharisees: Matthew 19:7 (Mark 10:4), John 8:5; 9:28-29
c. Jews perhaps of the Synagogue of the Freedmen: Acts 6:11, 14

d. Judaizers: Acts 15:1, 5

Read Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 45 (section c.). With regard to passages from the Gospels, note also John 1:17, 45. With regard to passages from the remainder of the New Testament, note also Hebrews 10:28.

Higher Critical scholars attempt to circumvent the testimony of Christ concerning the authorship of the Pentateuch with the following explanations.

1. The Gospel writers misrepresented Christ.
   These authors, it is claimed, were not actually eyewitnesses of the public ministry of Christ, and they are not providing us with the actual words of Christ. Rather, the authors are making up Christ's teachings and the stories about Him. Since they considered Moses to be the author of the Pentateuch, they had Christ refer to Moses as the author.

Response: Those holding to this explanation have a wrong conception of the Gospel writers, who were inspired by God.

2. Christ was limited in His knowledge, or He simply was ignorant on this matter.
For example, Raymond Brown (Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible [Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1990], pp. 104-105) writes:
   It is worth emphasizing that to deny the full humanity of Jesus is just as serious as to deny the full divinity, and one may argue that it is truly human to be limited and time-conditioned in our knowledge. Thus we may have in Jesus the strange combination of absolute surety about what God wants of us if God's kingdom is to come, and a limited human way of phrasing the message.

A variation on this theme is that Christ, when indicating authorship of the Pentateuch, was speaking in His state of humiliation.

Response: This explanation says basically that Christ spoke error. Are His other teachings in error? God never errs; is Christ not God? Further, we have the testimony of Christ spoken when He was in His state of exaltation (Luke 24:44).

3. Christ was speaking as a *child of His time* - that is, accommodating Himself to the thinking of His contemporaries, who were in error.

Response: Christ never accommodated Himself to the errors of His contemporaries; many times He courageously pointed out their wrong thinking. Further, what does this explanation say about Christ? Was He not concerned about always speaking the truth? This explanation does away with Christ's argument in Mark 7:10; 12:26 (Luke 20:37); Luke 24:44; John 5:45-47 (passages taken from notes of Dr. Judisch).

The main reason for the position that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch is the abundant, clear, consistent testimony of Scripture. That is why the subject of authorship of the first five books is an important one, for when one denies Mosaic authorship, what is that person saying about Scripture?

There is secondary evidence from the five books which harmonizes with the position that Moses is the author. Judging from this internal evidence, one is led to the conclusion that the author must have been originally a resident of Egypt, a contemporary eyewitness of the exodus and wilderness wandering, and possessed of a very high degree of education, learning, and literary skill (= Moses). The following points are a summary and abbreviation of Archer, A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, pp. 110-118.

a. Eyewitness details in the account of the exodus suggest an actual participant in the events. For example, Exodus 15:27 gives the exact number of fountains (twelve) and of palm trees (seventy) at Elim. Numbers 11:7-8 describes the appearance and taste of the manna with which God fed Israel.

b. The author of Genesis and Exodus, as one would expect of a participant in the Exodus, shows a thorough acquaintance with Egypt. He is familiar with Egyptian language (there is a large number of Egyptian loanwords and idioms in the Hebrew text), names, titles, and the polite language used in interviews with Pharaoh. Following the Egyptian custom of the 18th Dynasty, the author refers to the king of Egypt simply as "Pharaoh" ("Great House"), without mentioning his name in proximity to that particular title.

c. Both Egypt and Sinai are very familiar to the author from the standpoint of geography - more so than Palestine. The narrative of the exodus route is filled with authentic local references; on the other hand, the geography of Palestine is comparatively unknown except by patriarchal tradition (in the Genesis narratives). See Genesis 13:10. Cf. Numbers 13:22.

d. There is a remarkable unity of arrangement which underlies the entire Pentateuch and links it together into a progressive whole, even though successive stages in revelation (Moses wrote over a period of decades) result in a certain amount of overlapping and restatement.

Those who uphold Mosaic authorship at the same time admit that there are a **few** examples of additions to, and updating, the Pentateuch which took place after the lifetime of Moses (see Dillard and Longman, pp. 39-40). Yet these "post"- and "a-Mosaica" are very limited in extent (cf. Dillard and Longman, p. 47). Also, sources perhaps used by Moses are not to be identified along the lines of the Documentary Hypothesis (cf. Dillard and Longman, p. 47).

B. The Historical Development of the Documentary Hypothesis

Dillard and Longman basically are correct in their analysis of the present state of the Documentary Hypothesis (p. 47). Nevertheless this approach to authorship of the Pentateuch is still widely taught and encountered in various publications. Therefore it is important to have an acquaintance with this hypothesis.

For an understanding of the historical development of the Documentary Hypothesis, read Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 107-154. Note especially the discussion concerning Witter, Astruc, Eichhorn, Vater, De Wette, Hupfeld, Hengstenberg, Keil, Graf, Kuenen,

Wellhausen, Green.

C. A Summary of the Reasons for the Development of, and A Brief Description of, the Documentary Hypothesis

Again, this hypothesis says that there were a number of authors behind the Pentateuch, all of whom lived long after the lifetime of Moses. Some of the main reasons for the development and maintaining of this hypothesis are the following.

1. The hypothesis as it has come down to us and is taught today is a product of the Historical-Critical Method, which holds to the closed continuum theory for world history, and to the evolutionary development of religion. Since there was no divine revelation and inspiration, there could be no prophecies which had a future fulfillment. For example, the words of Genesis 15:18 could not have been spoken to Abraham, nor could they have been written by Moses, but they must have been written by an author living during or after the time of the empire of David and Solomon (which equaled the territory described in v. 18).

2. The use of different titles or names for God, specifically, "Yahweh" (often translated as "Lord"/ "LORD") and "Elohim" ("God"), indicates different authors behind the Pentateuch.

3. Other alternate names, for example "Sinai" and "Horeb," "Canaanites" and "Amorites" (as a general term for the inhabitants of Canaan) indicate different authors behind the Pentateuch.

4. Variations in writing style and vocabulary indicate different authors behind the Pentateuch.

5. Repetition, and supposed doublets (or parallel accounts) indicate different authors behind the Pentateuch. Doublets are understood to be two different accounts (varying to a greater or lesser extent) of the same incident or event. Examples of supposed doublets are the following.
   a. Genesis 1:1 - 2:4a, and 2:4b-25: two accounts of creation, by two different authors.
   b. Genesis 20:1-18 and 26:6-11: two accounts of the same incident (a patriarch passing off his wife as his sister to Abimelech, king of Gerar).
   c. Genesis 37:25 and 28: two accounts of Joseph's being taken to Egypt (the Ishmaelites, or the Midianites, took him).
   d. Genesis 16:4-14 and 21:9-21: two accounts of the same incident (Hagar leaving the camp of Abraham).

6. Supposed differences in theology indicate different authors (see the discussion of Dillard and Longman, p. 41, #4).

A *standard* or *representative* presentation of the *traditional* Documentary Hypothesis would affirm that the Pentateuch is made up of four sources or documents (JEDP).

1. The **J** document was written by the Yahwist (in German this is spelled with a J as the first letter). It was composed sometime in the period ca. 960-850 B.C., in the south, in Judah (because of its expansionist attitude [Genesis 15:18; 27:40]), and the preeminence of Judah

[Genesis 49:8-12]). The Yahwist consistently uses the name "Yahweh" for God. He also uses the names "Sinai" and "Canaanite." This document is an epic history from creation to the Israelites about to enter Canaan. It shows an interest in personal biography, and is characterized by anthropomorphisms (seen in terms and theophanies).

2. The **E** document was written by the Elohist. It was composed sometime in the period ca. 850-750 B.C. (perhaps closer to 750), in the Northern Kingdom (because of the prominence it gives to Joseph [father of Ephraim and Manasseh], Bethel, and Shechem). The Elohist consistently uses the name "Elohim" for God, to the exclusion of "Yahweh," prior to Exodus 3. He also uses the names "Horeb" and "Amorite." This document has less continuous narrative than does J, and it tends to dwell on the origins of names and customs of particular importance to Israelite culture. In Genesis, the Elohist represents God as communicating through dreams and visions (rather than through direct anthropomorphic contact, as does the Yahwist).

3. Sometime after the fall of the Northern Kingdom (722 B.C.), perhaps about 650 B.C., an unknown redactor combined J and E into a single document: JE.

4. The **D** document was written by the Deuteronomist. Basically, this document is the book Deuteronomy, with scattered passages in previous books of the Pentateuch. D had its beginnings ca. 700 B.C., but it was completed in 622/1 B.C. That precise date is proposed because D is held to be the book found in the temple in the reign of Josiah during his eighteenth year (2 Kings 22:3-13). This identification is made because of similar interests seen in Deuteronomy and Josiah's reform.
    a. Centralization of worship and the cult (Deuteronomy 12; 2 Kings 23). D was composed to give impetus, and guidance, to the reform movement sponsored by Josiah. D in essence ordered all Josiah's subjects to abandon their local sanctuaries on the *high places* and bring their sacrifices and religious contributions to the temple in Jerusalem.
    b. Purification of the cult (Deuteronomy 16, etc.; 2 Kings 23).

Another characteristic of D is its interpretation of history in terms of punishment or blessing from God on the basis of faithfulness or unfaithfulness to the covenant. The Deuteronomist's usual designation of God is "Yahweh your God."

5. According to some, JE was combined with D by an unknown redactor ca. 550 B.C. (on this matter there are variations in the formulation of the Documentary Hypothesis).

6. The **P** document was written by a Levitical priest or priests. It was composed sometime in the period ca. 550-450 B.C. It is so late because of the complexity of the legal and ritual material contained in this source (evolutionary development of religion). The Priestly document has relatively little narrative material, and to a large extent is a collection of legal, ritual, and genealogical material dating from various periods in the history of Israel. It has a major interest in the priesthood, and with the duties of priests. P also shows an interest in origins and genealogical lists. The usual designations of God in P are "Elohim" ("God") and

"God Almighty."

For some who hold to the Documentary Hypothesis, P is not a separate document, but rather an editing of JED.

7. JED was combined with P (or JE was combined with D and P) by an unknown redactor(s), who was/were the P writer(s) or a later editor(s), ca. 450-400 B.C.

8. There were further modifications in the Pentateuch, until it reached its final form ca. 200 B.C.

If each of the four documents was represented by a different color, on some of the pages of the Pentateuch all four colors would be present, on some pages three of the four colors, on others two of the four, and still on others only one color (e.g., in most of Deuteronomy). The same verse could be divided into two colors.

D. A Response to the Documentary Hypothesis in the Form of General Comments

To a large extent, the comments in this and the following section are a summary and abbreviation of portions in Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction) and Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament) dealing with Pentateuchal authorship.

1. Archer (p. 90) points out the contradictions and reversals which characterize the development of the Documentary Hypothesis.
   a. Different divine names indicate different authors (Astruc, Eichhorn), each with his own circle of interest, style, and vocabulary.

   b. There is the same divine name (Elohim) but different authors (Hupfeld), the earlier Elohist 1 (who came to be known as the Priestly writer) and the later Elohist 2 (who more closely resembles the Yahwist). Some passages from Elohist 2 do not greatly differ from those of the Yahwist in circle of interest, style, or vocabulary.

   c. Elohist 1 (P), who most differs from the Yahwist in interest and style, must be the earliest ("Yahweh" being a later name for God than "Elohim").

   d. No, on the contrary this Priestly writer must be the latest instead of the earliest (for this fits in better with evolutionary theory about the development of Hebrew religion from primitive polytheism to priest-ridden monotheism).

   e. The Yahwist of course is later than the Elohist (all the critics up to Graf); no, the Yahwist is really earlier than the Elohist (Kuenen and Wellhausen). Kuenen gave JEDP as the order of the documents. Wellhausen gave the Documentary Hypothesis its popular expression (Young's "development hypothesis" [p. 138] equals "Documentary Hypothesis" as used in this course).

2. The Documentary Hypothesis completely rejects the testimony of Scripture (that Scripture is

inspired, and that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch). It does not examine Scripture on Scripture's own terms. The hypothesis rules out the supernatural, including supernatural revelation. It does not accept the reality of miracles, and prophecies accurately foretelling the future.

3. The hypothesis allegedly is based on the evidence of the text itself, yet the evidence of the text is consistently evaded whenever it goes counter to the hypothesis. For example, the documentarians insisted that the historical books of the Old Testament show no recognition of the existence of P legislation or a written *Mosaic* code until after the exile. When numerous references to the *Mosaic* law and the P legislation were then discovered in the historical books, the documentarians replied that all those references were later insertions made by priestly scribes who reworked those books after the exile. Archer (p. 106) comments:

   > This means that the same body of evidence which is relied upon to prove the theory is rejected when it conflicts with the theory. Or to put it in another way, whenever the theory is opposed by the very data it is supposed to explain, the troubleshooting team of Redactor and Interpolator, Inc. is called to the rescue. Elusive tactics like these hardly beget justifiable confidence in the soundness of the result.

4. The hypothesis says that Israel's religion was merely of human origin as was any other (see response #2 above); it is to be explained as a product of evolution in thought (evolving from polytheism to monotheism). Why, then, should Israel's religion be considered the one true religion of the Old Testament era? As Young asks (p. 140), "why did Israel alone develop such sublime doctrines? There were deep thinkers elsewhere, and philosophers of ability also, but no other nation produced conceptions of God such as those which are contained in the Old Testament."

5. The documentarians often judge books of the Old Testament from a twentieth-century A.D., western standpoint. However, these books were written in the ancient Near East. Extra-biblical parallels show that the ancient Near Eastern writer did not always present his material in the same manner as is typical for a twentieth-century western writer. As Young states (p. 153), "The fact that the Pentateuch is, considered from the human side, a product of the Orient [Near East], may to some extent account for its form. One thing at least is clear. The elaborate 'scissors-and-paste' method which the documentary analysis postulates is without parallel anywhere in the ancient Oriental world."

   Further, the documentarians presume that scholars living in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries A.D. can more reliably reconstruct the way things happened than could the ancient writers themselves (no matter when they are dated), who were not as perceptive (or who were not telling the truth).

6. The ironic fact is that while the Documentary Hypothesis is widely taught and assumed today in Old Testament studies, there is actually much disagreement among critical scholars themselves concerning this hypothesis.
   a. The documentarians are not always consistent in their dividing up of the Pentateuch, that

is, in how they apportion passages to the various authors (and in how many sources they see behind the Pentateuch).

b. There is debate among critical scholars as to where J and E end. Some have spoken of the JE story as spanning eight books (an Octateuch); others, as spanning six books (a Hexateuch); still others hold to the classical viewpoint (a Pentateuch); while some have proposed that J and E end near the conclusion of the Book of Numbers (a Tetrateuch). As Lloyd R. Bailey (The Pentateuch [Nashville: Abingdon, 1981], p.52) explains, if one cannot be confident about where the sources end, "then certainly the list of their possible characteristics will be restricted and the overall purpose will remain clouded."

c. Later criticisms, such as tradition criticism (see Dillard and Longman, pp. 43-44) and rhetorical criticism, present challenges to the Documentary Hypothesis (which is connected with literary criticism).

E. A Response to the Documentary Hypothesis in the Form of Specific Comments

1. The Alternation Between "Yahweh" and "Elohim."
   a. It is incredible to think that an author could have used only one name or title for God. In any one sermon we can have four or five different names for Jesus. Moses could have had this alternation at times simply for the sake of variety, to avoid needless repetition.

   b. There are many examples in the religious literature of Israel's pagan neighbors where an important god is referred to by more than one name or title (but which are not taken as evidence for multiple authorship). At Ugarit, Baal was also called *Hadad, Aliyan, Rider on the Clouds, the Prince,* and *the Lord of the Earth.* El had the epithets *Bull, Father of Years, the Kind, the Compassionate, Creator of All, Holy One.* Kothar-wa-Hasis was also known as *Hayyin.*

   c. In the Koran (the sacred book of Islam), for which no one questions the unity of authorship, there is alternation between the names *Allahu* and *Rabbu* for the same god. In some passages the two names are intermingled. In some chapters, however, only one of the names appears.

   d. In the Old Testament it can often be determined that *Yahweh* or *Elohim* was chosen because of the theological context. *Elohim* was used to refer to God as the almighty Creator of the universe and Ruler over nature and mankind in general. This was the *generic* name of the Deity, containing the element **el**, which was the common Semitic word for *god. Yahweh* was the personal, covenant name of the Deity, often used in contexts describing a special relationship between Yahweh and a person or persons.

[[Excursus: Those holding to the Documentary Hypothesis focus on Exodus 6:2-3 and explain that, according to the author of this passage (the Elohist), the name "Yahweh" was first revealed to Moses. The Yahwist, however, did not know about this tradition and assumed that "Yahweh" was known by people before the time of Moses (see, e.g., the J passages Genesis 4:1; 18:14;

22:14; 28:13; 29:35; and 30:24). Thus, the documentarians conclude that this is evidence for two different authors. The following is a response to this conclusion.

a. Cf. Exodus 14:4 - it is absurd to think that the Egyptians by now did not know that the God of the Hebrews was named "Yahweh" ("the LORD").

b. One must have a proper understanding of the Hebrew verb "to know" and the concept of "name." Throughout Scripture "name" can have the sense of that which reveals character (or being) and work (so here in Exodus 6:2-3). "To know" in this passage (and, e.g, in Exodus 14:4) does not mean simply to know the name "Yahweh" as a vocable. Those before Moses had such knowledge of this name. Rather, Exodus 6 indicates that Yahweh would now reveal Himself by mighty deeds (the plagues, the miracle at the sea) He had not performed in the days of the patriarchs. He would show Himself as the covenant-redeemer God in a new, dramatic way. The Israelites would know Him as the covenant-keeping God, as "Yahweh," in a manner that the patriarchs never knew Him.]]

2. The Alternation of Other Names.
   Again, it is incredible to think that a writer was incapable of using alternate names (besides those related to God). Think of our everyday experience, how we speak/have spoken.
   "New York City," "The Big Apple"
   "Chicago," "The Windy City"
   "United States," "America" (in common language)
   "Russia," "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," "Soviet Union" (previously)
   "England," "Great Britain" (in common language)
   "Federal Republic of Germany," "West Germany" (previously)
   "Cape Canaveral", "Cape Kennedy"
   "Rocky Mountains," "Great Divide"
   In Cambridge, MA there is a street which had the name "Boylston St." Later, the name was changed to "Kennedy St." From that time on the street was referred to in conversations either by its original name or its new name.
   See Deuteronomy 3:9; 4:48.

3. The Variations in Style and Vocabulary.
   To maintain that a writer was incapable of having variations in his style or of using more than one type of vocabulary is not true to life. Moses would have had variations in style and vocabulary because of the different types of literature he was recording (narrative, legal, poetic, genealogical) and because of differences in subject matter. Sometimes he used different styles for the sake of emphasis or vividness. Further, Moses was writing over a period of years (styles and vocabularies can change). Also, as already mentioned, the critical scholars have been forced to posit interpolations to explain a P word in a J passage, a J word in an E passage, etc.

4. The Repetitions in the Pentateuch.
   a. Other ancient Semitic literature shows many instances of repetition and duplication by the same author in a literary piece.
   b. At times Moses used repetition for the sake of emphasis, and as a teaching technique. This use of repetition continued to be used as late as the Qumran literature.

c. Moses was writing over a number of years.
d. Moses had to repeat some material for a new generation of Israelites.
e. Sometimes the repetition noted by the documentarians is a matter of the prose version of an event being followed by the poetic version (thus, not genuine repetition or duplication).

5. The Doublets in the Pentateuch.
There are no real doublets (as the critical scholars define that term) in the Pentateuch.
a. Genesis 1:1 - 2:4a and 2:4b-25 are not two different creation accounts by two different authors. Rather, both chapters taken together exhibit a technique widely practiced in ancient Semitic literature. This technique was to give first a relatively short statement or account of a whole event or series of events, and then to give a more detailed account of a special aspect of that event or series. For Moses, Adam and Eve were the climax of the visible creation. Having provided the background of the creation week, and placed the first humans in a general historical setting (Genesis 1:1 - 2:4a), Moses proceeds to devote a more extensive treatment to them (Genesis 2:4b-25), going into more detail concerning their being made by God, and their first home (Eden).

b. The event recorded in Genesis 20 (Abraham, Sarah, and Abimelech), supposedly from E, and in Genesis 26 (Isaac, Rebekah, and Abimelech), supposedly from J, both happened. Isaac could have repeated the mistake of his father; the inhabitants of Gerar probably did not change in their conduct; and the same name ("Abimelech") could have been passed from one ruler to the next (less likely: it is the same Abimelech in Genesis 26, but by then a very old man).

c. Hagar's twice leaving the camp of Abraham - Genesis 16:4-14 (before Ishmael was born; claimed as from J) and 21:9-21 (after Ishmael was a lad; claimed as from E) is not difficult to understand and accept, considering the tensions that existed between Sarah and Hagar over the years.

d. There is no evidence in the Joseph story (Genesis 37: 25, 28) for different authors. The Midianites were accounted a sub-tribe of the Ishmaelites; see Judges 8:24.

6. The Supposed Differences in Theology.
This argument already in part has been refuted. Suffice it to say that these "differences" or "contradictions" can be harmonized with sufficient exegetical study. An example cited by the documentarians (see Dillard and Longman, p. 41), concerning a number of altars (Exodus 20:24-26) "versus" centralization of worship (Deuteronomy 12:1-26), is no such contradiction. The Exodus passage simply refers to those altars which would be built on **extraordinary** occasions, at the command of God; see, e.g., Joshua 8:30 (cf. Deuteronomy 27:5) and Judges 6:25-26.

Those holding to the Documentary Hypothesis often see "problems" in the text where there really are no problems.

Old Testament Isagogics
Unit 4

1. Joshua
2. Judges
3. 1 Samuel
4. 2 Samuel
5. 1 & 2 Kings

Unit 4 - Old Testament Isagogics

Objectives

When students complete this lesson they will

Know:

1. The isagogical matters pertaining to Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings.

Be able to:

1. Read these subjects with greater understanding and discuss them with their peers and the people they are serving.

Reading Assignments

1. Skim the contents of Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings.
2. Unit 4 material in this student guide.
3. Dillard and Longman, pp. 107-127, 135-167.
4. Handout, Map of the Ancient Near East ca. 1550-1050
5. Handout, Important Events in the Ancient Near East ca. 1550-1050
6. Handout, Time Chart of the Ancient Near East: From the Israelite Slavery to the Monarchy
7. Handout, The United Kingdom
8. Handout, Kings and Prophets of the Old Testament
9. Handout, The Sin of Jeroboam I (1 Kings 12)
10. Handout, Framework
11. Handout, A Chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel
12. Handout, Chronology of the Divided Monarchy
13. Handout, A Chronology of the Ancient Near East

Writing Assignments

None

1. Joshua

Author: Joshua evidently wrote part of the book: 24:25-26. Perhaps other parts of the book should also be attributed to him. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that the entire book, in its final form, was the product of an author other than Joshua. This unknown author, besides including material left by Joshua, added his own writing to produce the book as it has come down to us. This author was an eyewitness of the events recorded, because of evidence in Joshua 5:1 (the most probable reading is with the first person "we"). Cf. 5:6. This author continued to live, however, after the lifetime of Joshua. Consider the following passages.

a. Joshua 15:13-19 reports Caleb taking possession of his inheritance. This actually took place after Joshua's death: Judges 1:12-15.
b. Joshua 19:47 reports the Danites taking Leshem. Again, this actually took place after Joshua's death: Judges 18:27-29.
c. Joshua 24:29-30 reports Joshua's death and burial.
d. Joshua 24:31 speaks of the elders who outlived Joshua.

The cumulative effect of these passages leads to the conclusion that the book was completed after Joshua's death.

Time of Composition: This topic was covered in the discussion concerning authorship.

Purpose: The book's purpose is to relate the history of Israel from the nation's crossing over the Jordan into Canaan until Joshua's final words to the people, his death, burial and the period immediately after his death. The book shows how God kept His promise to the patriarchs that their descendants would possess the Land of Canaan. In Joshua we also see that when the Israelites trusted in Yahweh and did not break their covenant relationship with Him by disobedience, they were triumphant.

Contents:

Chapters 1 - 12 The conquest of Canaan.

a. Chapters 1 - 9: The taking of Jericho; the initial failure, and eventual victory, at Ai; the alliance with the crafty Gibeonites (the central campaign, "cutting" the land in two).
b. Chapter 10: The conquest of southern Canaan.
c. Chapter 11:1-15: The conquest of northern Canaan.
d. Chapter 11:16 - 12:24: The summary of Joshua's campaigns.

Chapters 13 - 22 The dividing up of the land among the tribes of Israel.

Chapters 23 - 24 Mainly, Joshua's final words to Israel.

Selected Comments:

The conquest of the land east of the Jordan (the Transjordan), and its distribution to two and one-half Israelite tribes, has already been reported (Numbers 32, 34).

The time for the start of the events in Joshua would be ca. 1406 B.C. (about 40 years after the

exodus). How long it took the Israelites to conquer Canaan is uncertain - about six years? Joshua 24:31 tells how Israel served Yahweh throughout the lifetime of the elders who outlived Joshua and who had experienced everything Yahweh had done for Israel - how long did this last? A rough approximation for the close of the period covered by the book would be ca. 1390/85 B.C.

It is interesting to note that the people of Jericho already were fearful of the Israelites because they had heard about Israel's conquering the territory east of the Jordan. Their fear must have increased when they saw the daily encircling of their city by the Israelite soldiers.

It is important to have the nature of the conquest in proper perspective (critical scholars claim that the account in Joshua conflicts with the story presented in Judges). Under the leadership of Joshua Israel broke the main resistance of the enemy, so that the nation could settle in the land. Pockets of Canaanites remained, however. The tribes of Israel, as each went to its portion of the land, were to complete the conquest by "taking care of" these Canaanite pockets; each tribe was to carry out a "mop-up" operation in its territory. Did the Israelites carry out the conquest to completion according to God's will? The Book of Judges supplies the answer to this question, and also indicates that the Canaanites showed resiliency (e.g., Judges 1:8, 21). The accounts in Joshua and Judges are not conflicting.

Notice that there are two covenant renewal ceremonies in Joshua (Joshua 8 and 24).

Israel encountered in Canaan a sophisticated, cosmopolitan culture characterized by skilled craftsmen, well-built cities, and extensive trade with foreign countries (including Egypt, northern Mesopotamia, and Cyprus). The Canaanites are to be credited with the invention of the linear alphabet (from Phoenicia it passed on to Greece, whence it became the ancestor of our own alphabet). From a secular standpoint the Canaanites were more advanced than the Hebrews, who had been slaves, and had just spent forty years in the wilderness. Normally less developed cultures are absorbed by those more advanced. Israel was not absorbed by Canaan, but many of the Israelites were influenced by the remaining Canaanites with regard to religious belief and practice.

Throughout Canaan were several city-states (powerful cities, each with its own territory). These cities often bickered with one another. They could, however, unite and form coalitions against a common enemy.

The religion of Canaan generally was a debasing form of paganism which included child sacrifice and fertility cult aspects. Concerning the latter, sanctuaries had *holy ones* (*"sacred"* male and female prostitutes) with whom worshipers would have sexual relations as part of their religious life (to stimulate, or remind the gods, to grant fertility to crops, animals, and humans). Deities of the Canaanite pantheon were the gods El (the head of the pantheon), Baal (the storm god, who sent the rains so necessary for life), Kothar-wa-Hasis (the craftsman of the gods), Yam (the god of the sea and chaotic forces in nature), and Mot (the god of death and the underworld), and the goddesses Asherah, Anat, and Ashtoreth.

There was a danger, then, that the Israelites would be influenced unduly, and to their detriment, by Canaanite culture. Specifically, Canaanite religion would be a great enticement to the Israelites. They would feel the *pull* to join in the false worship and wicked practices because this was the religion of the "advanced" Canaanites, because this would ensure their having good crops and abundant herds, and because of the sexual elements of this religion.

Note the two alternatives (both of which must be rejected) to viewing the conquest as a mass invasion, as explained by Dillard and Longman (pp. 111-112). Other alternatives have been proposed by scholars, also greatly differing from the biblical account.

Why did God command the Israelites to destroy completely the Canaanites (e.g., Deuteronomy 20:16-18)? The Book of Joshua reports that in certain instances, such as the capture of Jericho and Ai, the Israelites totally exterminated the inhabitants, in obedience to God's directive. This is a challenging question to answer from the standpoint of theology, and the following considerations are a partial answer.

1. Some have said that the God of the Old Testament is a primitive, barbaric, cruel, bloodthirsty God, as opposed to the loving, gracious, merciful God of the New Testament. That viewpoint is rubbish. The Old and New Testaments have exactly the same God. God is changeless. There is Law and Gospel in both testaments. There is no development of theology (from a "lower" to a "higher" level) from the first to the second testament.

2. God is always completely holy and righteous. There was no injustice or wrong on God's part in giving this command.

3. Read Genesis 15:16 (*Amorites* is a general term for all the native inhabitants of Canaan). The implication is that the Canaanites (or *Amorites*) were extremely wicked; that God, however, was longsuffering and patient; that nevertheless there would be a time in the future (predetermined by God) when their wickedness would have reached the *limit*, and God's full judgment would fall on them. That point in time coincided with the Israelites crossing the Jordan under the leadership of Joshua. Several times God, in proclaiming His statutes and forbidding wicked practices, said that it was on account of the terrible sins of the Canaanites that He was driving them out before Israel (e.g., Leviticus 18:24-30).

4. There had to be a removing and cleansing, as when dealing with a deadly, contagious virus. The virus in Canaan was the native population, with its idolatry and associated pagan lifestyle. This removing and cleansing was necessary before Israel could safely settle down in the land and continue to be a monotheistic nation, faithful to the covenant of Yahweh. Groups of Canaanites did remain in the land, and they had a strong corrupting influence on many of the Israelites, getting them to join in their religion and not be faithful to Yahweh. What would the situation have been if many more of the Canaanites had survived?

5. Thus, God knew what was necessary at that time and place for the welfare of His covenant nation, which He wanted to dwell in Canaan (part of the Promised Land). God's care for Israel was of utmost importance because His plan of salvation was connected with the nation. In addition, we see again that the same act or event can be used by God in two different

ways: here, to bring judgment on the wicked, and to deliver His people. God is righteous and loving; He is a God of justice, and a God of grace.

6. The Canaanites had repressed their consciences, and their natural knowledge of God (cf. Romans 1:18-32). Further, centuries prior to the time of Joshua there had been people in Canaan who believed and proclaimed the truth: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Melchizedek. Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-20) was a native in the land and king of the city Salem (also known as Jerusalem). Perhaps Melchizedek had successors on the throne of Salem who for several generations also worshiped the true God. It is also possible that some trace of the truth was still left in Canaan just before the conquest but was altogether rejected by the inhabitants. Such remnants of the truth may be the reason for the one exception to the situation of mass unbelief in the land: Rahab of Jericho (cf. Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25). Notice the extent of her knowledge in Joshua 2:8-13; throughout she refers to the God of Israel by His covenant name *Yahweh*. She was brought to faith in part as a result of hearing about the exodus and conquests of Israel east of the Jordan. Yet this hearing had to be coupled with her knowing or hearing the Gospel truth: her knowing vestiges of the truth which may still have remained in Canaan, and/or her hearing the truth as it came across the Jordan shortly before the conquest of the land. Concerning Rahab, the Canaanites, and the truth, Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. (Toward Old Testament Ethics [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983], p. 268) makes this pertinent observation:

   > Every forecast or prophecy of doom, like any prophetic word about the future except those few promises connected with the Noachic, Abrahamic, Davidic, and new covenants (which were unconditional and dependant solely on God's work of fulfillment), had a suppressed 'unless' attached to them. At what moment that nation turns from its evil way and repents then at that time the Lord would relent and cease to bring the threatened harm (Jeremiah 18:7-10). Thus Canaan had, as it were, a final forty-year countdown as they heard of the events in Egypt, at the crossing of the Reed Sea, and what happened to the kings who opposed Israel along the way. We know they were aware of such events, for Rahab confessed that these same events had terrorized her city of Jericho and that she, as a result, had placed her faith in the God of the Hebrews (Joshua 2:10-14). Thus God waited for the 'cup of iniquity' to fill up - and fill up it did without any signs of change in spite of the marvelous signs given so that the nations, along with Pharaoh and the Egyptians, "might know that He was the Lord".

7. One might still ask, though: "What about the infants and children? Why were they to be exterminated?" In responding to this question we take into consideration that what happened to the Canaanites was not unique. Think of the loss of life caused by the flood in the time of Noah, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Cf. other passages in Scripture; e.g., 1 Samuel 15:3.

   When a plague or famine hits a region, all suffer (whether righteous or unrighteous), including the little children. Moreover, the terrible thing about this sin-ruined world is that a particular sin can have consequences which affect both the guilty and the innocent (like a whirlpool sucking down everything close by to the bottom).

As indicated above, God had given the Canaanites ample time to repent. Perhaps He saw that instruction would be useless in the case of these wicked people, including their children.

Arndt (Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions, p. 218) comments:

> It may have been an act of great mercy that the little children were cut off before they reached the years of discretion, when they would have willfully and deliberately joined their elders in abominable practices...all should grant that according to the Scriptures it is better for one to die in infancy without having been received into the number of God's people than to grow up to adulthood and to die an unbeliever who has spent one's life defying the will of the Almighty [the Bible indicates there are degrees of suffering in hell].

8. Ultimately this discussion of the extermination of the Canaanites comes down to the question, "Why are some saved, and not others?" There is, of course, no answer to that question this side of the grave.

9. The situation is different for God's people in the New Testament era, who live throughout the world, and come from many nations. Now God wants us simply to use the "sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17) - the Word which the Israelites had (the Torah), plus all the succeeding books of Scripture - to resist temptations and to take the offensive, proclaiming God's Word to unbelievers.

Following are a few concluding observations concerning the Book of Joshua.

1. The book shows that God is the almighty Controller of history. He is to be given credit for all of Israel's victories (Chapters 10 and 11).

2. God's giving the land to Israel shows that He is faithful and trustworthy (keeping His promise to the patriarchs). This is emphasized in Joshua's farewell speeches (Chapters 22-24).

3. God's letting Israel dwell in the land also shows that He is a God of grace (undeserved kindness, unmerited favor).

4. Israel, however, was only a steward of the land, which actually continued to belong to Yahweh. Thus property could not be sold at will but was to remain with a family from generation to generation. This concept is behind the guidelines in Leviticus 25:23-28 (selling property at a time of need, in order to survive); see also the stories of Ruth and Naboth and his vineyard (1 Kings 21). Further, the dividing of the land by lot indicates it was at God's disposal, as does the demand for a tithe to be given to God (Deuteronomy 14:22-29; 26:9-15).

5. An important concept, carried over especially from Deuteronomy, is that possession and retention of the land is tied to obedience to the covenant (Joshua 23:6-16; 24:19-20). This obedience is a product of saving faith. The book emphasizes the life of sanctification.
   a. Joshua's being obedient is stressed (Joshua 1:6-8; 10:40; 11:23; 24:15).
   b. There are the two covenant renewal ceremonies.

c. The ark of the covenant is given prominence, especially in Chapters 3 and 6.
d. In Chapter 5 the Israelites carry out circumcision of the males and observe the Passover (after which the manna stopped) before starting the conquest of Canaan.
e. The Israelites were to observe the ***herem,*** the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to Yahweh, often by totally destroying them. See, e.g., Joshua 6:17-19, 21. Achan's disobedience, not observing the ***herem*** (or ban), defiled Israel, and had to be dealt with before the nation could proceed in the conquest of Canaan. God's response is couched in covenant language.

2. Judges

Author: The author is unknown. Some have attributed authorship to Samuel, but this is uncertain.

Time of Composition: The author wrote early in the period of the monarchy. Judges 18:1, 19:1 and 21:25 indicate:

a. that he wrote after the kingship had been established (and was explaining to his readers that during the time of the judges there was no king over the Israelites), and
b. that he wrote before the time of the divided kingdom ("no king in Israel" implies a united kingdom).

Also, the author wrote before David captured Jerusalem and made it his capital (ca. 1003/2 B.C.): see Judges 1:21. So Judges was composed during the reign of Saul (ca. 1052/50-1010 B.C.) or early in the reign of David; that is, in the last half of the 11th century B.C.

Purpose: Judges carries on from the point where the Book of Joshua ends. It gives an account of the history of Israel in the aftermath of the conquest of Canaan, from the time of the death of Joshua up to but not including the rise of Samuel as a prophet and judge of the Lord. Judges shows that the Israelites' welfare depended on their spiritual relationship with Yahweh.

Contents:
Chapters 1:1 - 3:6 These chapters present events which took place shortly after the death of Joshua; provide the background for the period of the judges; and serve as a summary of much of what follows in the book.

Chapters 3:7 - 16:31 This is the main section of the book, which presents the history of the judges (excluding Samuel) and the cyclical pattern of events (explained below) characteristic of this period.

Chapters 17 - 21 This section can be considered to be two historical appendices (17-18, and 19-21). It is not certain where the events in each fit chronologically in the history covered by the book.

Selected Comments:
Study the handouts "Map of the Ancient Near East ca. 1550-1050," "Important Events in the Ancient Near East ca. 1550-1050" (concentrate on paragraphs 5-17), and "Time Chart of the Ancient Near East: From the Israelite Slavery to the Monarchy." With regard to paragraphs 10-13 on the second handout, why does the Book of Judges make no mention of this Egyptian activity in Palestine? As a general response, one could say that the author of Judges writes from a religious standpoint: he focuses on Israel's sin, and the consequent chastisements from God. Those military encounters with other nations, which served as God's means of chastening or disciplining the Israelites, are mentioned, and those which did not, are omitted. Egypt, then, was not among the oppressors used by God. Egypt's military encounters in Palestine did not lead to servitude for Israel.

There are two specific responses which can be given to the preceding question. First, as Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 234) explains, it is possible that the Egyptians are not mentioned because the Israelites and Egyptians had little contact. The Egyptians were most active along the coastal plain of the Mediterranean, which the Israelites seldom held. Primarily the Israelites occupied the hills of Judah, Samaria, and Galilee. Second, archaeologist John Garstang has advanced the theory (as explained by Archer, pp. 234, 278) that the periods of "rest" mentioned in Judges were times of Egyptian supremacy in Canaan, that is, when the Egyptians exercised effective control in the area, policing the main arteries of commerce. This naturally would inhibit aggressiveness on the part of the Canaanite nations and the nations surrounding Canaan, without necessarily affecting too drastically the life of the Israelites themselves, who largely kept to the central hills at this point in their history. The author of Judges avoided mentioning the Egyptians as such because of an inveterate antipathy to the nation which had enslaved his ancestors in Goshen. Periods of oppression of the Israelites, then, came when Egyptian power in Canaan was weak and the peoples of the area became restless and aggressive.

Pharaoh Merneptah's campaign in Palestine in his fifth year mainly was close to the Mediterranean Sea, with contact principally being with Canaanite peoples. His stele in Thebes lists places and peoples in Canaan, and includes Israel. The stele says in general terms, "Israel is laid waste." This may be something of a boast, however, since Merneptah lists no Israelite cities as plundered, and for Israel uses the determinative of people and not land. On this stele elsewhere Merneptah uses the determinative of land for those conquered. From this Wood (A Survey of Israel's History, p. 180) concludes that "it would appear that he [Merneptah] defeated Israelite people in battle, but did not gain control of any significant portion of their land." Perhaps Israelite conscripts were serving in a Canaanite army(ies).

The time period covered by the Book of Judges would be ca. 1400-1080 B.C. Cf. Judges 11:26. The period of the judges, from the first (allowing time for the Israelite elders to die off, and for spiritual problems to arise) to the last (Samuel, not included in the Book of Judges), would be ca. 1380/75-1050 B.C. If all the terms of service of the judges or periods of peace (as indicated by the Book of Judges), along with the stated periods of oppression, were added up consecutively, the total would be about 410 years. That figure would be too high for the period of the judges (1375 minus 410 equals 965, about when Solomon began to build the temple in Jerusalem). The

conclusion is that many of the judges overlapped, that is, were contemporaries of each other. A number governed only portions of Israel. Judges 10:7 states that God gave the Israelites over to the Philistines and the Ammonites. This may indicate that Samson (who dealt with the Philistines in the west) and Jephthah (who dealt with the Ammonites in the east) were contemporaries.

As discussed above, in the time after the conquest under Joshua the Israelite tribes were to take possession of the land (which had been apportioned to them) by driving out and exterminating the remaining Canaanites, and establishing the theocracy. However, after the death of the elders (Joshua 24:31; Judges 2:7) the zeal of many of the people for the Lord died down, and they lost trust in Him. They grew tired of the task of getting rid of the Canaanites which God had instructed them to do. Further, because of their lack of trust in the Lord, and their entering into idolatry, God did not continue to give His people victories over the Canaanites. Again, Judges reports that the Israelites occupied the hill country, but for the most part did not take the level, or plain regions, the more valuable territory. The groups of Canaanites remaining in the land were a snare to many of the Israelites in that they influenced them to have a similar wicked, idolatrous lifestyle.

Thus, by way of chastisement, God handed the Israelites, when many fell into apostasy, over to their enemies, who oppressed them. When the people in their affliction returned to the Lord in sincere repentance and cried out to Him for deliverance, God in His mercy and grace would raise up for them a deliverer, a judge, whom the Lord would use to deliver the people from oppression. But after a period of some faithfulness to the Lord many of the Israelites again would do what was evil in His sight. Thus in the main section of the book (3:7 -16:31) there is the general cyclical pattern of apostasy, oppression, repentance and crying out to the Lord for deliverance, God raising up a judge who delivers the people, and a period of relative obedience and peace, followed by apostasy, and so forth. Moreover, this cyclical pattern was also a spiral downwards: with the passing years the Israelites became more and more wicked (Judges 2:19). The corruption in Israel is emphasized by the two historical appendices at the end of the book (Chapters 17-21; note the conclusion, 21:25). The situation in a given locality could be one of anarchy.

Judges therefore shows Israel's failure as a theocracy to remain faithful to the covenant, even though the people again and again were rescued by deliverers of God. The repeated failures of the Israelite tribes to maintain loyalty to Yahweh and the covenant led eventually to the institution of a central monarchy (in 1 Samuel).

The judges were leaders called by God to govern God's people and usually also to deliver them from oppression. The judges led and governed because of particular gifts given to them by God, qualities of leadership which the people recognized and respected.

The time of the judges was one more of tribal self-consciousness, than of national unity. A man probably would have identified himself as an Ephraimite, for example, rather than as an Israelite. Nevertheless, there was unity among the tribes. There was an ethnic unity: all had a common ancestry, which they remembered. There also was a religious unity: they had common belief in

Yahweh (or were supposed to have this); the central sanctuary (the tabernacle), where sacrifices were offered daily; the annual pilgrimage festivals (Passover and Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and Tabernacles); and the Day of Atonement. During the period of the judges the tabernacle, in which the ark of the covenant was kept, was at Shiloh.

Some classify the judges as *minor* (less written about them) and *major* (more written about them). See the list in the Concordia Self-Study Bible, p. 327, and note the different enemies of Israel encountered in the book. The Concordia Self-Study Bible has a very fine discussion of the literary features of Judges on pp. 325-327.

A famous ***crux*** (*problem*) in the book is understanding how Jephthah fulfilled his vow (Judges 11). There is a division on this point among good, conservative scholars. One group holds that he slew his daughter and offered her up on an altar. Another group holds that he fulfilled his vow in a different way: by dedicating her to full, perpetual service to the Lord, so that she would never marry. Following are reasons for the second viewpoint (the student must decide which understanding is preferable). Reasons 1-3 come from Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 279), 4-9 from the Judges portion of the Keil-Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, and reason 10 from Solomon Landers ("Jephthah's Daughter," Bible Review [August, 1991], pp. 31, 42).

1. Human sacrifice always was understood, from the days of Abraham (for whose son, Isaac, a ram was substituted by God) to be an offense and an abomination to Yahweh. The Torah expressly forbids this (Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-5; Deuteronomy 12:31; 18:10). It is inconceivable that Jephthah could have thought he would please God by committing such an abomination as sacrificing his daughter. In Judges 11 Jephthah shows himself to be a believer in Yahweh; he certainly was not depraved in a moral and religious sense.

2. Jephthah's daughter was allowed two months of mourning, not to cry over her approaching loss of life, but over the fact that she would never marry.

3. Verse 39 says literally "she did not know a man." That is, his daughter did not get married but remained a virgin. This is a pointless remark if she had been put to death. It makes sense if she was devoted to the service of Yahweh, perhaps in the tabernacle, for the rest of her life. Cf. Ex. 38:8; 1 Samuel 2:22; Luke 2:36-37. The sadness of the situation was not in her being devoted to divine service, but that she would never marry, have a child, and so continue Jephthah's line.

4. Was Jephthah saying with his vow that he would make the ultimate sacrifice to the Lord, and that it was the Lord's choice as to what or who the sacrifice would be, but if it were a human, then, of course, the person would not be slain and burned up, but dedicated to God? Jephthah was not uttering his vow without any reflection; his previous acts do not show impetuosity or rashness.

5. Jephthah vowed to offer up an ***`olah,*** a **whole** burnt offering. Since his daughter was a virgin, she remained so for the rest of her days of service to Yahweh. She was in this sense a spiritual whole burnt offering. Notice that God accepted Abraham's willingness to offer up

his son as a completed sacrifice (Genesis 22:2, 12, 16, 18; cf. the wording of Hebrews 11:17, 19).

6. Physical whole burnt offerings could only be offered up on the altar at the tabernacle, by the priests (unless there was some extraordinary manifestation of God, which is not the case here). It is highly unlikely that any priest would have offered up Jephthah's daughter.

7. It is contrary to human nature for a daughter who soon would be put to death to spend the two months before her sacrifice away from her father.

8. The daughter spent the two months on the mountains or hills, that is, in a private setting (not in the presence of men), out of modesty, because she would be mourning her perpetual virginity.

9. It is unlikely that this event would have been commemorated (Judges 11:39-40) if an abomination had been committed.

10. The law of physical whole burnt offering clearly required that the sacrificial animal be a **male** without blemish (Leviticus 1:3, 10). As a female, Jephthah's daughter would have been unacceptable as a sacrifice.

Judges gives us more insights into the personal life of Samson than any other judge (even reporting how he was set apart by God before birth). Also, four times the text says that the Spirit of God came on him (13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14). Yet Samson spent the night with a prostitute (16:1-3; apparently this was not an evangelism call). His life is one of contrasts: he slew a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey, but he himself was overcome, so to speak, by a woman; he had special endowment of the Spirit, and is mentioned as a hero of faith in Hebrews 11:32, but also gave vivid evidence of spiritual weakness. As Samuel Schultz (The Old Testament Speaks, p. 112) comments, Samson probably could have accomplished much more, were he not ensnared by sin.

Following are summarizing thoughts with regard to the theology of Judges.

- The book presents many of its characters as both sinner and saint. We learn from their lives what we are to do, and what we are to avoid.

- The book shows God as Savior and Deliverer, who is merciful, patient, and faithful. David Howard (An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books [Chicago: Moody, 1993], p. 102) writes that "as a corollary to Israel's apostasy, God emerges as the true `hero' in the book. There is a certain irony in this, since the book focuses on a succession of heroes who delivered Israel. It was God who raised up the various heroic judges to deliver Israel from its crises, and it was He who remained faithful to the covenant."

- Judges shows God as Judge. As Howard (An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books, p. 109) observes, no individual is called a *judge* in the book; the term is used only of God (11:27). This is an important part of the book's message: it is Yahweh who is the true

judge of His people, and He controls their history, both for blessing and for punishment.

- The book shows the folly of idolatry, which has terrible consequences. It warns against being influenced by, or compromising with, the unbelieving world.

3. 1 Samuel

Author: 1 and 2 Samuel are one book in the Hebrew Bible. Samuel was not the author responsible for this history, although he probably left records which were used in writing portions of 1 Samuel. This history is named *Samuel* not because he is the author but because he is the principal character in the first part, and because he anointed the other two principal characters, Saul and David. However, Samuel's death is recorded in 1 Samuel 25:1 and 28:3, and many events are mentioned which took place long after his death.

It is uncertain who wrote the history "Samuel." As Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 178-179) explains, 1 Samuel 27:6 indicates that the book was not completed until the time of the divided monarchy ("kings of Judah"). Further, the author undoubtedly made use of previously written sources, as for example the Book of Jasher referred to in 2 Samuel 1:18. He likely consulted the records of the prophets Samuel, Nathan, and Gad mentioned in 1 Chronicles 29:29-30. The conclusion is that 1 and 2 Samuel (in our English translations) were composed under divine inspiration by an author, perhaps of Judah, who lived after the division of Israel into two kingdoms and who used earlier written material.

Time of Composition: Discussed above.

Purpose: The purpose of 1 and 2 Samuel is to give an account of the end of the period of the judges, the founding of the Israelite monarchy (and Samuel's part therein), and the reigns of the first two kings, Saul (who was unfaithful to the covenant and had a tragic end) and David (the faithful king, from whose dynasty the Messiah would come).

Contents of 1 Samuel:
Chapters 1 - 7 The career of Samuel as prophet and judge.
Chapters 8 - 15 Saul becoming king, his disobedience, and his rejection by God.
Chapters 16 - 31 The decline of Saul, the rise of David, David's years as a fugitive, and the death of Saul.

Selected Comments on 1 Samuel:
Samuel was a transition figure. He was both the last judge (1 Samuel 7:6, 15-17) and a prophet (1 Samuel 3:20; 2 Chronicles 35:18); from now on prophets and kings would be connected in the history of Israel. Thus Samuel was the connecting link between the period of the judges and the early monarchy.

Hannah's song of praise to the Lord (2:1-11) exhibits much theological knowledge and insight. Her song may be compared to the Magnificat of Mary (Luke 1:46-55).

After the Philistines destroyed Shiloh (1 Samuel 4; Jeremiah 7:12), the tabernacle (apparently

moved before the Philistines arrived) came to be located in Nob (1 Samuel 21:1-9). Nevertheless, the ark of the covenant (captured by the Philistines but returned to Israel about seven months later) came to be located in Kiriath Jearim for many years. Why this irregularity continued in the time of Samuel is uncertain.

The following are reasons why the Israelites asked for a king (see 1 Samuel 8).

1. Samuel was getting old, and his sons were corrupt.

2. The people were afraid of going back to the chaotic times characteristic of their earlier history as related in the Book of Judges.

3. The Philistine threat continued. The Israelites feared these and other enemies. They wanted their king to be a military leader, who would fight their battles.

4. The people wanted to be like other nations. This was in part the opposite of God's plan for Israel: that His people be different from the other nations.

5. The Israelites did not learn from, and interpret correctly, their experience in the time of the judges. They concentrated on the negatives of that time, wrongly blamed those on the *political organization* (the theocracy), and failed to see their wickedness as the cause of all the troubles.

In asking for a king the people were not so much rejecting Samuel, as they were God. There was nothing wrong with a kingship **per se.** In fact, there had been earlier indications of a coming monarchy: Genesis 49:10; Numbers 24:17; Deuteronomy 17:14; and 1 Samuel 2:10. However, the people were not envisioning a king guided by **the** King, Yahweh, and so, in essence, a continuation of the theocracy. They wanted simply an earthly king like their neighbors, and had no concern for how Yahweh would fit into this scheme. In essence, then, they were rejecting Yahweh as their King (and the covenant relationship). They were forgetting about how Yahweh had delivered them in the past.

Critical scholars, not surprisingly, find *doublets* (or even *triplets*) in 1 Samuel as they did in the Pentateuch. The following are examples of alleged duplicate (or triplicate) accounts, as listed by Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 181-186).

a. Saul is appointed twice as king (9:1-10:16; 10:17-27).
b. Saul is twice deposed (13:14; 15:26-29).
c. David is introduced to Saul twice (16:14-23; 17:55-58).
d. David is three times offered Saul's daughter in marriage (18:17-19; 22-29a; 21b).
e. David twice spared Saul's life (24:3-7; 26:5-12).
f. David is said to have made a covenant with Jonathan three times (18:3; 20:16, 42; and 23:18).
g. David twice took refuge with Achish, King of Gath (21:10-15; 27:1-4).

These so-called doublets (or triplets) can be dealt with in the same way as were the "doublets" of the Pentateuch (through careful study of the text). They are not different accounts of the same incident written by different authors.

As Bright (A History of Israel, pp. 190-191) explains, Saul's kingship can be described as rather primitive, by the standards of the ancient Near East. No bureaucracy was developed, and the tribal organization of Israel was left intact. Saul had no large harem (if he even had one), no officer except his relative Abner, and no splendid court. His base at Gibeah was a fortress rather than a fine palace. Saul's apparent practice of obtaining promising young soldiers for permanent service was, though, the beginning of a standing army. He did this out of military necessity.

During the reign of Saul, and during the reigns of David (ca. 1010- 971/0) and Solomon (ca. 971/0-931/0) - during the time of the United Monarchy (or the United Kingdom) - Israel was undisturbed by the major Near Eastern powers to the south and north. Egypt did not interfere: after Ramses III no Egyptian king crossed the border of Palestine until the time of Rehoboam, Solomon's son and successor, during whose reign the Divided Kingdom began. Assyria at the time of the United Kingdom was going through a period of weakness, and would not threaten Israel until the 800's B.C.

The incidents in 1 Samuel 13 and 15 are perhaps representative of Saul's acts of rebellion against the Lord, which led to the negative pronouncements from Samuel. Saul had forgotten that God was still **the** King of His people.

David's life on the run from Saul further shaped his character. As Wood (A Survey of Israel's History, p. 211) explains, "he had to face a new kind of life, requiring a psychological adjustment not easy to make. He had been the favorite in the land, the leader of Israel's victorious army, and applauded on every hand. Now he was a fugitive, legally an outlaw, hunted by the king. Such an adjustment is hard, but David had to make it if he was to keep a clear mind in his new role." He always had to be on guard and thinking of how he would remain out of Saul's grasp. Further, David must have wondered how his new life would affect the people's opinion of him.

Because men joined David for various reasons, he soon had with him a tough group of warriors numbering about four-hundred men, and which would grow eventually to about six hundred (1 Samuel 23:13).

The disastrous defeat at Mt. Gilboa marked a low point in the history of Israel. The nation now basically was at the mercy of the Philistines, who occupied much Israelite territory. It is interesting to note how the city of Jabesh Gilead figures into the beginning and ending of Saul's reign (1 Samuel 11 and 31:11-13).

Saul is a dramatic example of what can happen to a man of promise and potential who does not obey God. He had a marvelous opportunity, being assured of God's blessing if only he would obey the Lord. His reign was a tragic one for the Israelites, who had wanted a king so that their land might be strong against enemy attack. When Saul died, after being king for about forty years, the land was divided, war-torn, and in a weaker condition than when he began his reign.

4. 2 Samuel

Author: Discussed above.

Time of Composition: Discussed above.

Purpose: Discussed above.

Contents of 2 Samuel:
Chapter 1 David receiving news about, and lamenting over, the deaths of Saul and Jonathan.

Chapters 2 - 5 David's establishment as king, first over Judah, then over all Israel; his making Jerusalem his capital; his crucial victories over the Philistines.

Chapters 6 - 7 David's establishing Jerusalem as the religious capital of the nation by moving into the city the ark of the covenant; God's covenant with David.

Chapters 8-10 David's victories over Israel's enemies and the establishing of the empire.

Chapters 11 - 12 David's adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah; God's word to him through Nathan; David's repentance.

Chapters 13 - 19 Turmoil in David's house, culminating in the rebellion of Absalom; the quelling of that rebellion.

Chapters 20 - 24 Sheba's rebellion and its ending; various historical appendices; psalms of David; his sin in numbering the people.

Selected Comments:
2 Samuel tells about the rise of Israel from the low point of the defeat at Mt. Gilboa to the highpoint of being the most powerful nation in the Near East. This rise took place under David, who established what has been called the Davidic Empire. These are the "glory" years of Israel's history, which continued into the reign of David's son and successor Solomon.

Wood (A Survey of Israel's History, p. 217) summarizes well David's reign: "In contrast to the rule of Saul, David's reign was one of unification and development of the kingdom. He brought the tribes together, established an efficient government, organized the priesthood, and maintained an army that scarcely lost a battle. He inherited a divided, war-torn land and, when he died, left an empire. David was not only a strong king in contrast to his predecessor, he was the strongest king Israel ever had." He was also an ardent worshiper of Yahweh. David was the faithful king, against whom later kings of Israel were measured.

1 Chronicles 10-29 is a parallel history to 2 Samuel. Schultz (The Old Testament Speaks, p. 129) describes the contents of 1 Chronicles:

By way of introduction to the establishment of the Davidic throne, the Chronicler traces

> the genealogical background of the twelve tribes over whom David ruled [Chapters 1-9]. Saul is but briefly mentioned, after which David is introduced as king of all Israel. The organization of Israel politically as well as religiously is more elaborately given and the supremacy of David over the surrounding nations receives a greater emphasis [than in 2 Samuel]. Before concluding with the death of David, the last eight chapters in this book give an extensive description of his preparation for the building of the Temple. Consequently I Chronicles is a valuable complement to the record in II Samuel.

After the assassination of Ishbosheth the northern tribes of Israel saw their need to have David as their king, also. Their reasons for taking David as king, and thus uniting all Israel under one ruler once again, are given in 2 Samuel 5.

1. They recognized that David had been divinely appointed as king over Israel (v. 2).

2. They had a common heritage with David (v. 1).

3. They recognized that David had played an important role in Israel's military history (v. 2).

David therefore was anointed as "king over Israel" (v. 3), that is, over the northern tribes. He had previously been anointed by Samuel (1 Samuel 16:12-13), and by his fellow tribesmen to be king over them (2 Samuel 2:4).

God gave David crucial victories over the Philistines early in his reign over the united kingdom (2 Samuel 5:17-25). These victories were important for the following reasons.

1. Philistine domination over Israel ended. In the course of time David goes on to subdue the Philistines, confining them to their territory, reducing their territory, and forcing them to recognize Israelite supremacy.

2. David is established as king in the eyes of the Israelites. These victories inspired confidence in and loyalty to David.

3. His defeat of the Philistines was a great encouragement to David.

As king over all of Israel, David saw the need to move his capital from Hebron, which was in the territory of his own tribe. Otherwise, the other tribes would be jealous and constantly suspicious that David would be showing favoritism to Judah. Jerusalem was a superb solution to the problem of where David should have his capital. The city was located between northern and southern Israel. It was on the border line of Judah and Benjamin, thus adjacent to both David's tribe and that of his predecessor. In addition, Jerusalem was a *neutral* site: it was possessed by none of the tribes (the Jebusites still held the city), so any tribal jealousy would be ruled out. The city would be the personal possession of David (the "City of David", 2 Samuel 5:9). David's taking of the city (2 Samuel 5:6-8; 1 Chronicles 11:4-6) was further indication of his military ability and that of his soldiers.

David, as a sign of prosperity, multiplied his wives (2 Samuel 5:13). A large harem was a sign of wealth and prestige among ancient Near Eastern kings. However, this was a violation of

Deuteronomy 17:17. As John Davis and John Whitcomb (A History of Israel, p. 288) note, "while polygamous practices are not condemned at this point, they are indirectly judged in the troubles that rise later in the royal court."

David's bringing the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem was a brilliant move, by which he made the city not only the political, but also the religious, capital of Israel. He placed the ark in a tent which he had prepared in Jerusalem. The tabernacle during David's time was located at Gibeon (2 Chronicles 1:3-5).

The Bible gives little information regarding David's consolidation of the Israelite tribes into a centralized government, but this certainly did happen. In addition, the Philistines were driven out of Israel, as has been mentioned. Although the Bible only reports the capture of Jerusalem, David must have similarly gained control of other such Canaanite city-states as still existed in Palestine. Bright (A History of Israel, p. 201) explains:

> These were quite numerous along the coastal plain both north and south of Mount Carmel, in Esdraelon, and also in Galilee (cf. Judg. 1:27-35). Though some of them no doubt already had a partly Israelite population, none had ever been in Israelite control, at least not permanently. How these city-states fell to Israel we do not know. But they were certainly taken by David and, equally certainly, early in his reign, for he would scarcely have embarked on his foreign wars while unconquered territory remained in the homeland. The probability is that most of them had been vassals or allies of the Philistines and that, when Philistine power was broken, they transferred their allegiance to David with little or no resistance. This meant a great rounding out of Israel's territory. It was, indeed, the completion of the conquest of Canaan [except for Phoenicia].

2 Samuel 7:11b-16 is an important link in the Messianic chain extending throughout the Old Testament (to be joined to Genesis 3:15; 9:26; 12:3; 49:10). David had wanted to build God a house or temple, and Nathan, responding merely as a man, encouraged the king in his plan (2 Samuel 7:1-3). However, God told Nathan what he was to speak, as a prophet, to David (7:4-17). David was not to be the one to build the temple for Yahweh. This was not due to any fault of David, but because he had been God's instrument to defeat Israel's enemies. As such, David was a man of war and bloodshed, and God wanted His temple to be built by a man of peace, since the temple symbolized God's spiritual kingdom. A chief characteristic of this kingdom was and is peace. There is a nice turn on words in verse 11. David had it in his heart to build a house for God; instead, God will build, or establish, a house for David. That is, God will preserve David's dynasty, so that it will last forever. *Offspring* or *seed* in verse 12 refers to the line of David, his descendants (*he*, *him* and *his* in English translations are better rendered as *it* or *its*). God would establish this line so kingship forever would be associated with it; this line would always have a kingdom (vv. 12, 13). Thus, David's house or dynasty would continue without end; his throne would be established forever (v. 16). There are allusions to Solomon, whose name means *man of peace*, and who built God's temple (vv.12, 13, 14), and to later descendants of David who were kings (vv. 12, 14). See also 1 Kings 2:24; 5:3-5; 8:17-20; 1 Chronicles 22:6-11; 28:6-7; 2 Chronicles 6:7-10; Psalm 89:20-37; Psalm 132:11-12. After God made this covenant with him, David proceeded to gather quantities of material toward the day when his son would build the temple of God (1 Chronicles 22:1-5, 14-16). Yet David's throne, and kingship being associated

with his line, seemed to come to an end with the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 587/6 B.C. How, then, was the concept of *forever*, so strongly emphasized in this prophecy, fulfilled? Fulfillment was possible in that the Messiah would be a son of David, from his line. This prophecy, referring to descendants of David, begins with Solomon and culminates in Jesus Christ. Because of God's covenant with David - that his throne would endure and kingship would always be associated with his line - the Israelites knew from this point on that the Messiah would be a descendant of David. This was a further *narrowing down* of the Messianic promise. This interpretation of 2 Samuel 7 is not against the hermeneutical principle "the intended sense is one." The one thing intended in the passage is the physical line of David. Also, this is not a typological interpretation. For example, Solomon is not seen as a foreshadowing of Christ, or even of kings following Solomon on the throne in Jerusalem. Rather, individuals in the one line of David are alluded to, with none foreshadowing another.

2 Samuel 7 is the background for a number of passages which follow in Scripture. For example, see Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:1, 10; Jeremiah 23:5; Ezekiel 34:20-24; Luke 1:29-33; Romans 1:3; Hebrews 1:5. Cf. John 7:42.

David during his reign carried on organizing activity important for the religious and worship life of Israel. Abiathar and Zadok were the high priests, contrary to the Torah (which allowed for only one). Later, Abiathar was expelled by Solomon (1 Kings 2:26-27). Of course, David, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, contributed greatly to the worship life of Israel with his authorship of many psalms.

Concerning David's army, it is possible to piece together information from the biblical record. In general, the army had three sections, as outlined by Wood (A Survey of Israel's History, pp. 224-225).

1. The original faithful six hundred from David's fugitive days, a group to which probably some replacements and additions were made.

2. Troops levied from the people, constituting a sort of revolving standing army.

3. Foreign mercenaries, made up of Cherethites and Pelethites. They appear to have served as David's private body guard. They may not have gone to war frequently with the regular army but stayed with the king for his personal protection.

It was probably from the *six hundred* that some, if not most, of the special *mighty men* came (2 Samuel 23:8-39; 1 Chronicles 11:10-47). Notice that Joab, David's general (and a murderer), is missing from the list of "mighty men."

Concerning David's foreign conquests, Wood (A Survey of Israel's History, p. 225) comments:

> With the home country firmly consolidated and controlled, and with an effective army available, David was in a position to wage war on foreign soil as need arose. There is no suggestion that he intentionally sought conquest, however, or that he gave himself to creating an empire. For the most part, he simply entered battle situations as they arose and sought to win them. His victories did result in the country's borders continually enlarging.

Besides controlling the Philistines, David in the course of time came to rule over the Moabites, Edomites, Amalekites, Ammonites, and the Aramean (=Syrian) states of Maacah, Tob, Beth-Rehob, and Zobah. The King of Hamath sent gifts (tribute) to David, acknowledging Israelite supremacy, and he probably continued paying such tribute to Israel. With Hiram, King of Tyre, David had an important alliance, which was mutually advantageous, and which continued into the reign of Solomon.

See the handout "The United Kingdom." David's empire, including all the territory acknowledging Israelite supremacy under one arrangement or another, stretched from the Syro-Arabian Desert in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, excluding Phoenicia. In the north his influence reached as far as the Euphrates River; to the south, his domain ran to the Gulf of Aqabah, an arm of the Red Sea; the southwestern boundary was the River of Egypt (Wadi el-`Arish). With the Davidic Empire God's promise to Abraham was fulfilled (Genesis 15:18).

By ancient Near Eastern standards the Davidic Empire was quite respectable with regard to size. However, it was smaller than the earlier Egyptian Empire of the 18th Dynasty, which included basically this same territory plus Egypt and Nubia; and it was smaller than the later Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Empires.

Concerning David's government, see 2 Samuel 8:15-18; 20:23-26; 1 Chronicles 27:16-34. David's court was larger than that of Saul, smaller than that of Solomon. His court included his various wives, concubines, and children.

The report of David's sin and the aftermath (2 Samuel 11 and 12) points to Scripture as authored by the Holy Spirit, and not only man. In the ancient Near East, it was not customary to record disgraceful, embarrassing, or other negative incidents in a king's reign. The report also indicates that Israel's moral code was different from that of the surrounding nations (in many of these there was no problem with a king taking the wife of a subject), and that the king, as any other Israelite, was bound to the covenant. 2 Samuel 11 and 12 give the background for Psalm 51 (and perhaps for Psalm 32). David was fully forgiven by the Lord (and delivered from God's condemning wrath), but God still chastened him for his sin (David experienced God's temporal wrath). 2 Samuel 13-18 shows the fulfillment of God's judgment on David that "the sword" would never depart from his house (12:10).

The rebellion of Sheba (2 Samuel 20) was smaller than that of Absalom. It was an attempt to withdraw the northern tribes from the union with Judah under David, and demonstrated the underlying tension in this union. This tension was again considerable by the end of Solomon's reign, and resulted in the Divided Kingdom in the reign of Rehoboam.

As Horace Hummel (The Word Becoming Flesh, pp. 131-132) explains, 2 Samuel 21-24 are appendices, basically six in number. Where all the events related are to be placed in David's reign cannot be said with certainty. Possibly such a collection of miscellanies had taken shape independently before being added at the end of 2 Samuel. The six sections appear to be arranged chiastically: 1 and 6, natural catastrophes; 2 and 5, exploits of David's warriors; 3 and 4, poems. See also Dillard and Longman, pp. 138-139.

1. 21:1-14 - a famine, attributed to Saul's breach of Joshua's ancient covenant with the

Gibeonites in putting some of them to death. David's response.

2. 21:15-22 - conflicts with the Philistines in the process of subduing them, which included exploits of David's warriors.

3. 22 - a psalm of thanksgiving by David, identical with Psalm 18.

4. 23:1-7 - the "last words of David." Similar to a psalm, apparently intended as a sort of testament.

5. 23:8-39 - more exploits of David's warriors. Listing of the "mighty men."

6. 24 - the census taken by David, and resultant pestilence.

2 Samuel 24:1 reports that God was angry with Israel, and *incited* David against the nation, so that David took a census. David was a *tool* to bring God's judgment on sinful Israel. This passage implies that David also was guilty of some sin. 1 Chronicles 21:1 states that Satan "incited" (same verb as in 2 Samuel 24:1) David to take a census. This indicates directly that David, as was the nation, was guilty of some sin. What was this sin, which led to the census which was wrong in God's sight? Notice how even Joab (a murderer) is uncomfortable with David's plan (2 Samuel 24:3). David apparently had been building up an attitude of pride and self-admiration for what he had achieved in the way of military and economic success. He began to think more in terms of his accomplishments rather than in terms of God's mercy and grace (which granted these successes). Further, he came to measure his power by the numbers of his people and the material resources that were available to him, and not by the arm of the Lord. The nation, too, was guilty of this same sinful pride (Israel was the leading power in the Near East) and reliance on earthly wealth and troops. Yahweh *incited* David in the sense of letting David fall deeper into sin. This is sometimes how God deals with unrepentant sinners; cf. Romans 1:18-32. God gave David over to his evil pride, in essence saying to David, "All right, since this is in your heart, go ahead and take the census. See where it will get you!" Also, as Hummel (The Word Becoming Flesh, p. 132) explains, evil through Satan, who is under God's sovereign control, ultimately must be attributed to God, even if only in a permissive sense.

Whereas God allowed David to fall deeper into sin, Satan **tempted** David to sin, and succeeded in inciting him to carry through with his evil desire (which originated with his sinful pride) to take the census. So God and Satan were both involved in this incident (cf., e.g., the story of Job, and Christ's betrayal and crucifixion), each with different purposes.

God's purpose was that David, having gone through with the census, realize the terrible nature of his wicked action and pride, confess his sin, come to the Lord in sincere repentance, and in addition, be further refined spiritually through the necessary chastisement which followed. The nation too, would be brought to repentance, and would be refined, as a result of the plague. Satan's purpose was that David continue and grow in his sinful pride, eventually fall from faith, and finally be damned in hell. God's purpose prevailed.

The text of most of the Old Testament books is in good shape in the Masoretic Text. This is not

the case for Samuel, which is in poorer shape than any other Old Testament book, with the possible exceptions of Ezekiel and Hosea. In other words, the text of Samuel preserved in the MT (which the Masoretes faithfully and accurately transmitted) exhibits much textual corruption (although this must not be exaggerated). Why this is, is unknown.

The translators of the Septuagint used a Hebrew text type which was in somewhat better condition than the text type preserved in the MT. Thus, the Septuagint is very useful for the textual criticism of Samuel. Also helpful are parallels in Chronicles and the Samuel fragments from Qumran.

5. 1 and 2 Kings

Author: In the Hebrew Bible 1 and 2 Kings are one book. It is uncertain who the author of this history was. We can say that he made use of previously written records. Three documents are named:

a. the book of the annals of Solomon (1 Kings 11:41);
b. the book of the annals of the kings of Judah (e.g., 1 Kings 14:29; 15:7, 23); and
c. the book of the annals of the kings of Israel (e.g., 1 Kings 14:19; 15:31).

Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 188-189) comments: "Evidently these works were public annals of the kingdom which had probably been written down by the prophets. As an example, appeal may be made to the history of Uzziah's reign which Isaiah made (2 Ch. 26:22). These sources, therefore, may be regarded as part of a prophetic history issued in the form of annals. Under divine inspiration the author of Kings made his choice from these written documents," and perhaps from other sources. It is interesting to note the similarity between Isaiah 36-39 and 2 Kings 18-20, and between Jeremiah 52 and 2 Kings 24:18-25:30.

The end of Kings, 2 Kings 25:27-30, was written after 560 B.C. and before the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C. It is possible, though, that the rest of Kings was written before 560.

With the above points in mind, it is conceivable (but not certain) that the author of Kings (except for 2 Kings 25:27-30) was Jeremiah, following Jewish tradition. The author writes from a prophetic standpoint and has great literary ability. A consideration in favor of this proposal, as Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 289) explains, is that there is no mention whatever of Jeremiah himself in the chapters dealing with King Josiah and his successors in Jerusalem - the time when Jeremiah carried out his prophetic ministry. It is difficult to explain the failure to mention such an important prophet in the history of Israel, unless this was due to the author's modesty - that author being Jeremiah himself. As for 2 Kings 25:27-30 (and Jeremiah 52:31-34), this passage seems to have been written by an inspired author living in Babylon, rather than in Egypt, where Jeremiah died, and written perhaps after the death of Jeremiah.

1 Kings 8:8 - "and they are still there today" (the temple and the ark were destroyed when the Babylonians took Jerusalem in 587/6 B.C.) - may be due to the fact that Jeremiah (or whoever the author of Kings was) did not have a chance to update his earlier work. If this explanation is applied to 1 Samuel 27:6 (see above, 1 Samuel, "Author"), it is not out of the question that

Jeremiah (or whoever wrote Kings) also was the author of Samuel.

Time of Composition: Discussed above.

Purpose: To present a history of the Israelite kings, from the very end of David's reign to the last king of the Southern Kingdom and the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians; and to give some information about what took place after the fall of Jerusalem. The time period covered is from ca. 971 B.C. to 560+ B.C., or over four hundred years (Samuel covered the time period ca. 1100?-975? B.C.).

Another purpose of Kings was to show on the basis of Israel's history that the welfare of the nation ultimately depended upon its faithfulness to the Lord. The success of any ruler was to be measured by the degree of his following the covenant and his upholding the worship of Yahweh.

Therefore, the author had a religious approach when writing this history. As Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 722) writes, this was the "divine view of Israelite history." The author was not so much interested in secular achievements as he was in showing how each successive ruler related to Yahweh and the covenant. For this reason, Kings presents an uneven picture as far as *pure* history is concerned. Omri, one of the most important kings of the Northern Kingdom, is given six verses in regard to his achievements. The rule of Jeroboam II of the Northern Kingdom, which was a "mini" golden age from a secular standpoint, is given seven verses. Hezekiah, a godly king who carried on a religious reformation, is given three whole chapters.

Since Kings is written from this religious, theological standpoint, **all** the kings of the Northern Kingdom are condemned (given a negative evaluation), because they all continued in the sin of Jeroboam I (the son of Nebat), the first king of the Northern Kingdom, who led the people of his Kingdom into sin with his wrong religious innovations. With regard to the Southern Kingdom, the author puts particular emphasis on those kings who were faithful to Yahweh and the covenant.

Contents:

1 Kings 1 - 11	The end of David's reign, and the reign of Solomon.
1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 17	The Divided Monarchy (or Kingdom), and the end of the Northern Kingdom.
2 Kings 18 - 25	The remaining history of the Southern Kingdom until its end, and certain events which took place after the fall of Jerusalem.

Selected Comments:
2 Chronicles is a parallel history to 1 and 2 Kings.

The golden age of Israel, which began in the reign of David, continued into the reign of Solomon, who for a short time was co-ruler with David, and then was sole ruler over Israel after David's

death. Contrasts between David and Solomon and their reigns are as follows.

1. David had lived in the open, and had been a fugitive. Solomon knew only the ease of the palace.

2. David had been a warrior, leading his army to victory. Solomon was a king of peace, and (as far as we can tell) did not experience battle.

3. Solomon's court was more lavish than David's, more in the manner of other ancient Near Eastern courts. Also, Solomon engaged more in foreign trade.

4. David was faithful to the Lord. Solomon fell into sinful ways and worship.

At the beginning of his reign Solomon took care of any potential trouble-makers (1 Kings 2:13-46).

With regard to his foreign and military policy, Scripture gives no evidence of Solomon conducting any military campaign. David had built the empire. The task before Solomon was not to expand the kingdom further - it had reached its limits under David - but to maintain the empire in peace and security. He did this by strengthening his military establishment and arranging a series of treaties.

1. Key cities at strategic locations were fortified and made into military bases. From these cities Solomon's troops could be quickly dispatched to put down any internal uprising, or revolt by a vassal state, or to meet an invasion by an enemy army.

2. Solomon also made full use of chariots in the Israelite army. He divided up this chariot corp among the key fortified cities.

3. Solomon had alliances with cities and lands neighboring Israel (including Tyre). Some of these were sealed by marriage. His most significant marriage in this regard was to the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt. From what is known of the history of the ancient Near East, this is the only example of a daughter of a Pharaoh being given in marriage to a foreign royal house. This indicates:
    a. that Egypt, under the leadership of the 21st Dynasty, was very weak; and
    b. the military and political superiority of the Solomonic Empire over Egypt.

For most of Solomon's reign the empire did remain intact.

Solomon carried on commercial activity, which brought much wealth to the king and to Israel.

1. He conducted trade via the Red Sea.

2. He conducted overland merchant activity, controlling important caravan routes. This may have been part of the reason why the Queen of Sheba visited him.

3. 1 Kings 10:28-29 is difficult from a text-critical standpoint, but apparently Solomon conducted trade in horses and chariots (acting as middleman).

During the first half of Solomon's reign, the golden age was at its height. The empire was secure militarily, and at peace. Israel and the king were enjoying prosperity. Solomon at this time was faithful to Yahweh, and tremendously wise. There was literary production: much of Proverbs; the Song of Solomon; perhaps Job. Ecclesiastes may have been written toward the end of Solomon's reign. There was building activity: e.g., the temple in Jerusalem, and Solomon's palace. With Solomon's reign there was a full-blown Near Eastern monarchy (quite a development from Saul's relatively primitive kingship).

However, in the second half of Solomon's reign problems arose.

1. In order to support his lavish lifestyle, and bureaucracy, and building projects, Solomon had to lay a heavy tax on his subjects (apparently costs outran income). Because of this tax the resentment of the northern tribes of Israel in particular grew (there had been in the past some tension in their union with Judah under the house of David).

2. Solomon reorganized Israel into twelve administrative districts, each district having to provide the court with provisions for one month. With this reorganization some of the tribal boundaries were disregarded, causing additional resentment among the Israelites.

3. Solomon used forced labor for his projects, even compelling some of his fellow Israelites to carry on such work. This caused further resentment.

4. The major problem was Solomon's being unfaithful to the Lord (1 Kings 11:1-13). In I Kings 11 there is an indirect condemnation of polygamy (a violation of God's ideal of monogamy, as set forth in Genesis 2; and with regard to Solomon as king, disobedience to Deuteronomy 17:17), as elsewhere in Scripture, where cases of polygamy have ensuing problems. Thus God, by way of judgment, raised up adversaries to frustrate and humiliate Solomon: Hadad, Rezon (who took Damascus from the empire), and Jeroboam.

By the time of the death of Solomon, there was much tension in Israel. The northern tribes had grown disillusioned with the house of David, and were on the verge of breaking away. God showed mercy to Solomon in that he was allowed to live out his days as the ruler of a united kingdom. Also, God showed mercy to the house of David in that it did not lose the secular kingship entirely but was allowed to rule over a portion of the kingdom.

2 Kings 12:4 indicates that if Rehoboam had responded to the complaints of the northern tribes with wisdom and diplomacy, and actually lightened their burden, the division of the kingdom could have been avoided. But he gave the opposite kind of response; the split occurred; and this division was permanent. The Southern Kingdom is also known as *Judah*; it consisted of the tribe of Judah and a good portion of Benjamin. The Northern Kingdom is also known as "Israel" (so context indicates how that name is to be understood), *Samaria* (after that city became the capital of the North), *Ephraim* (one of the leading tribes of the North), and by other names.

As a result of the split the empire quickly was lost: the Aramean territories to the north broke free (Damascus already was gone); Ammon and Moab broke free; the hold over the Philistines was weakened. Judah does seem to have retained some control over Edom. Also, 1 Kings 14:25-28

reports the invasion of Pharaoh Shishak (who had overthrown the 21st Dynasty) from Egypt. According to his inscription at Karnak, he hit both the Southern and the Northern Kingdom with great force, carrying off much plunder.

Read the handouts "Kings and Prophets of the Old Testament" (not every prophet is listed), "The Sin of Jeroboam I (1 Kgs. 12)," "Framework" (taken from Hummel's The Word Becoming Flesh), "A Chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel," "Chronology of the Divided Monarchy," and "A Chronology of the Ancient Near East."

Note that, with regard to the *good* kings of Judah, some in Kings receive more approval, some less (some were better than others). The *good* kings were:

Asa	
Jehoshaphat	very good
Joash	
Amaziah	
Uzziah (Azariah)	
Jotham	
Hezekiah	*outstanding
Josiah	*outstanding

Note that, in the history of the Divided Monarchy, there were times of friction, even of conflict, between the two kingdoms, and times of peace, even of cooperation.

Rehoboam

⇓ conflict with Northern Kingdom

Asa

Jehoshaphat

⇓ peace/cooperation

Athaliah

Joash

⇓ mutual toleration ⟹ ⟹ friction, conflict

Ahaz (fall of Samaria)

Omri established the capital of the Northern Kingdom at Samaria, and was an important king from the political standpoint. His son Ahab, married to the Phoenician princess Jezebel, succeeded him as king. The situation in the Northern Kingdom already was bad enough (due to the religious innovations of Jeroboam I), but now Jezebel and Ahab attempted to make Baal-worship the dominant religion of their kingdom. They attempted to persecute those who did not worship Baal. God intervened, raising up first Elijah, then Elisha. This is another great period of miracles in Old Testament history (the first being in the time of the exodus, wilderness wandering, and conquest). By God's grace the prophets were able to prevent Baal-worship from becoming the dominant

religion.

Elijah is an excellent example of what a prophet of the Lord was. He has been called a *second Moses*. Both men were zealous for the law and honor of God; both performed miracles; both had a meeting with God on Mt. Sinai/Horeb. Both talked with Christ during His transfiguration.

Athaliah (2 Kings 11), the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, usurped the throne of the Southern Kingdom when her son Ahaziah, who was king at the time, was killed in the North during the rebellion of Jehu. She reigned over the Southern Kingdom for about six years, and represents the only intrusion into the otherwise uninterrupted Davidic dynasty. Her grandson Joash, who succeeded her, started well, but took a turn for the worse in the latter part of his reign (2 Chronicles 24:17-27).

During the reign of Jeroboam II the Northern Kingdom reached fairly great material power and prosperity. He was able to take advantage of both Aramean/Syrian and Assyrian weakness and regain much of the territory to the north that David had once controlled. His contemporary Uzziah, ruler of the Southern Kingdom, regained territory in the southeast. Judah at this time also was outwardly prosperous. The territory of the two kingdoms together was considerable, but would not equal the empire of David and Solomon. This time can be considered a lesser (*mini*) golden age in the history of Israel.

However, there was much wickedness in the Northern Kingdom. God raised up the prophets Amos and Hosea to warn the people of the North of impending doom if they persisted in their lack of repentance. The large majority did not repent, continued to lead sinful lives, and most were not true believers in Yahweh.

This time of material prosperity and power was relatively brief. When Assyria became strong again under Tiglath-pileser III, the end of the Northern Kingdom rapidly approached. Beginning with 2 Kings 15:8, the author of Kings quickly goes through the history of the Northern Kingdom after the reign of Jeroboam II - the last 31 years of the Northern Kingdom's existence. These were chaotic years; of the six kings after Jeroboam II, four were assassinated. Assyria was exerting more and more pressure, threatening the Southern Kingdom as well. The result was that Assyria made the Northern Kingdom, after reducing its territory, a vassal state; the Southern Kingdom under Ahaz agreed to be a vassal state. Finally, after rebellion on the part of the Northern Kingdom, the Assyrians under Shalmaneser V ended that kingdom by taking Samaria in 722 B.C. (after a three-year siege). 2 Kings 17 describes the exile of many of the Israelites, and the subsequent rise of the Samaritans. The author of Kings makes a strong theological point in reporting the end of the Northern Kingdom (2 Kings 17:7-23).

The Northern Kingdom existed for just over two-hundred years, from ca. 931-722 B.C. It had ten ruling families. Eight kings were either assassinated or committed suicide.

With regard to the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18-20, 2 Chronicles 29-32), note four events during his rule (and the role of Isaiah).
1. He carried on a religious reform.

2. He rebelled against Assyria, which was the background for the miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem.

3. He was fatally ill, but God extended his life fifteen years.

4. He made a major mistake with envoys from Babylon.

Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, started out as a wicked king, and had a terrible influence on Judah. 2 Chronicles 33:10-20 indicates that he had a change for the better later in his reign. However, because of his earlier evil influence, Judah had fallen back into wrong religious practice, and was in need of another religious reformation by the time of Josiah.

Note two aspects of the reign of Josiah (2 Kings 22:1-23:30, 2 Chronicles 34-35).

1. He carried on a religious reform, heightened by the finding of the Book of the Law.

2. He seems to have wanted to extend the territory over which he had influence; cf. 2 Chronicles 34:6-7. He could do this because Assyria was weakening, and its empire shrinking rapidly, after 627 B.C.

Wood (A Survey of Israel's History, p. 311) describes Josiah's reign:

> The three decades of Josiah's reign were among the happiest in Judah's experience. They were characterized by peace, prosperity, and reform. No outside enemies made war on the nation, the people could concentrate on constructive activity; and Josiah himself sought to please God by reinstituting adherence to regulations commanded in the Mosaic Law.

In 612 B.C. Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, fell to a coalition of Babylonians, Medes, and probably also Scythians. Pharaoh Necho of Egypt marched north in 609 B.C. with a large army, to aid a remnant group of Assyrians which had escaped the destruction of Nineveh. He wanted to set the Assyrians up as a buffer between the Babylonians, who had taken over the eastern half of the Fertile Crescent (from Nineveh south through Babylonia), and himself and the Egyptians, who were planning to take over the western half of the Fertile Crescent. Josiah, going out with his army to stop the northward march of the Egyptians at Megiddo, was slain.

Necho's plan with regard to the remnant group of Assyrians failed, and the Assyrians disappear from history. Consequently, Necho fell back to Carchemish, making that city on the Euphrates River an Egyptian fortress. During the years 609-605 B.C. there was a standoff between the Babylonians and the Egyptians, the former ruling the eastern half of the Fertile Crescent up to the Euphrates, the latter the western half. Judah was a vassal state of Necho during this period.

The four last Israelite kings, who reigned in Jerusalem after the death of Josiah, were all wicked rulers. Under their influence the land once again was involved in wrong religious practice. The majority of the people persisted in their wickedness, despite the valiant ministry of Jeremiah, which lasted from ca. 627-587+ B.C.

In 605 B.C. the Babylonians, under Prince Nebuchadnezzar, crossed the Euphrates and hit the

Egyptians at Carchemish with a surprise attack. The Egyptians were routed, and sent fleeing all the way back to Egypt. As a result, the Babylonians took over the western half of the Fertile Crescent, including the Southern Kingdom (2 Kings 24:7). In that year 605 the first group of exiles was taken from Jerusalem and Judah to Babylonia. Daniel and his three friends were among these exiles.

King Jehoiakim rebelled against the Babylonians. As the Babylonians were approaching to stop the rebellion, Jehoiakim died, and his son Jehoiachin was placed on the throne. After a reign of only three months, he wisely surrendered to the Babylonians, who took him and other people from Judah as exiles to Babylonia in 597 B.C. Probably included in this second group of exiles was Ezekiel.

The Babylonians appointed Zedekiah as ruler in Jerusalem. However, another revolt took place under Zedekiah which led to the end of the Southern Kingdom. In 587/6 B.C. the Babylonians took Jerusalem and destroyed the city. At this time a third wave of exiles was led off to Babylonia. After the assassination of Gedaliah, who was appointed as governor by the Babylonians, many of the people who were left in the land fled to Egypt (forcing Jeremiah to go with them).

The Southern Kingdom existed for almost three and one-half centuries, about 136 years longer than the Northern Kingdom. Judah apparently was not repopulated with foreign peoples by the Babylonians, as the Assyrians had done to the Northern Kingdom. (Jeremiah 52:30 indicates that a fourth wave of exiles was taken to Babylonia in 582/1 B.C.)

Kings ends (2 Kings 25:27-30) on a positive note. The report concerning Jehoiachin in Babylon indicated that David's royal line, although having been brought low, would never be utterly rejected by the Lord. The Messianic promise connected with the house of David had not been abandoned by God, despite the necessary judgments His people had to experience.

For a discussion of the term "Deuteronomistic History," see Dillard-Longman, pp. 96, 122, 154-155. The following quotation from the Anchor Bible Dictionary (Steven McKenzie, "Deuteronomistic History," Vol. 2, 1992, pp. 160-161) serves as a supplementary reference. Keep in mind that McKenzie is a member of the historical-critical school.

"Deuteronomistic History" is "the name commonly used to designate the book of Deuteronomy as well as the section of the Hebrew Bible know as the Former Prophets, i.e., Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, and 1-2 Kings. The name reflects the scholarly theory that these books comprise a single literary unit alongside the other two great historical works in the Hebrew Bible – The Tetrateuch (Genesis through Numbers) and the Chronicles complex (1-2 Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah). According to this theory, a later editor shifted the notice of Moses' death from its original position at the end of Numbers to its present location at the end of Deuteronomy (chapter 34) in order to group the first five books of the Hebrew Bible into the Torah or Pentateuch . . . The Deuteronomistic History (DH) is also referred to as the Deuteronomic History by some scholars. However, the term 'Deuteronomistic' in reference to this corpus is preferable since it better translates Martin Noth's adjective *deuteronomistische* . . . and thus distinguishes between matters pertaining to the entire History (Deuteronomistic) and those concerning only the book of

Deuteronomy (Deuteronomic) . . . Previous [prior to Noth's work] treatments of the Former Prophets can be described in two broad categories . . . One approach continued to apply to these books the same kind of source criticism used in analyzing the Pentateuch. . . This was particularly true for Joshua. Another perspective tended to view the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings as independent units that had passed through one or more Deuteronomistic redactions. . . Noth, in contrast, argued that the material in Deuteronomy and the Former Prophets was a unified history of Israel written by a single, exilic author/compiler . . . Noth pointed to the similar language and ideology exhibited throughout the DH as evidence of an individual hand. According to Noth, this individual . . . composed the first history of Israel on the basis of traditions which he had collected. [He] . . . selected those traditions that were appropriate for his purposes and unified them by means of a common structure and chronology. He divided the history of Israel into four major periods: the time of Moses, the settlement of Canaan under Joshua, the period of the judges, and the era of the monarchy. [His] . . .use of the traditions before him was basically conservative. However, he did make changes where necessary in order to introduce his own theological view of Israel's history. He also formulated speeches for the main characters and inserted them at key junctures in his account in accordance with his periodic division of Israel's history . . . [He] introduced his history with the old Deuteronomic law code (4:44-30:20 minus additions) for which he constructed a new framework (Deuteronomy 1-3 plus original parts of chap. 4 and 31:1-13 plus original parts of chap. 34). Hence, all of the book of Deuteronomy took on the appearance of a speech of Moses. Noth dated the DH to the middle of the 6th century B.C.E., shortly after 562, the date of Jehoiachin's release from prison, the final event recounted in the DH (2 Kgs 25:27-30). Noth found no evidence to indicate that the materials in the DH had been redacted earlier. The [writer] . . . addressed his contemporaries in Babylonian exile, his purpose being entirely negative: to show them that their sufferings were the fully deserved consequences of centuries of decline in Israel's loyalty to Yahweh. This loyalty was measured in terms of Israel's obedience to the Deuteronomic law. Since Israel and Judah had failed to follow that law, their histories had ended in complete destruction, in accordance with the divine judgment envisaged by Deuteronomy. There was not the slightest glimmer of hope for the future. . . the report of Jehoiachin's release in 2 Kgs 25:27-30 was the result of the [writer's] . . . conscientious reporting of historical fact and was not intended to herald the commencement of a new age for Judah and Israel."

With regard to Noth's idea of a Deuteronomistic History, his proposal, and variants of his proposal (see, e.g., Dillard-Longman, pp. 105, 122-123, 153-154), are to be rejected. We agree that there is a unity from Joshua through 2 Kings, that these books are religious history written from the same editorial standpoint, and that different sources were used in the composition of portions of these books. However, we do not go along with Noth's proposal (and its variants), for the following reasons (briefly given).

1. As has been discussed, these books were written by different authors, writing at different times. Also, Moses wrote Deuteronomy, as well as Genesis – Numbers.

2. We reject Noth's idea that the author of the DH invented some historical material, and formulated speeches for the main characters.

3. More can be said about the purpose of these books than what Noth claimed.

4. We reject the idea of various redactional levels; e.g., a later redactor *correcting* an earlier writer. We do not go along with the idea that there are various (conflicting) theologies contained in these books.

Dillard and Longman's use of "Deuteronomistic History," "Deuteronomic History," and "DH" throughout their book is confusing. Usually in An Introduction to the Old Testament a) "DH" = "Deuteronomistic History," and b) the latter term and "Deuteronomic History" are used by them as equivalents. Usually "Deuteronomistic History" or "Deuteronomic History" in their book refers to Deuteronomy - 2 Kings (although in places they are referring only to Joshua – 2 Kings), whether the terms are being used by/of historical-critical scholars or other scholars (including Dillard and Longman). Further, Dillard - Longman take the position (p. 152) that Joshua – 2 Kings is "a single literary work" (which also includes Deuteronomy 1-4 and 34?; see p. 149), though it is unclear whether Dillard and Longman believe this "work" was composed (at least for the most part) by one author/editor. Cf., e.g., pp. 96, 103-105, 112, 122-123, 136, 145-146, 149, 152-154, 162, and 209.

Old Testament Isagogics
Unit 5

1. Ruth
2. Proverbs
3. Song of Solomon
4. Ecclesiastes
5. Job
6. Prophets & Prophecy
7. Obadiah
8. Joel

Unit 5 - Old Testament Isagogics

Objectives

When students complete this lesson they will

Know:

1. The isagogical matters pertaining to Ruth, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Job, Obadiah, and Joel, and about prophets and prophecy in the Old Testament.

Be able to:

1. Read these subjects with greater understanding and discuss them with their peers and the people they are serving.

Reading Assignments

1. Skim the contents of Ruth, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiates, Job, Obadiah, and Joel.
2. Unit 5 material in this student guide.
3. Dillard and Longman, pp. 129-134, 235-265, 199-210, 385-390, 363-371.
4. Handout, "Wisdom," Proverbs 1-9
5. Handout, Prophets, Prophecy

Writing Assignments

None

1. Ruth

Author: The author is unknown. Talmudic tradition says that Samuel wrote Ruth, but this is unlikely, since the genealogy in Ruth 4:22 seems to imply that David was a famous man (probably king).

Time of Composition: This, too, is uncertain, because no definite, precise information is available with regard to this matter, and the author is unknown. The book was composed later than the period of the judges, since the phrase in 4:7 was meant to explain a custom which was well known in that period. There is no need to suppose that the date of composition was later than the reign of David (the custom mentioned in 4:7 could have been forgotten by the majority of Israelites or become unfamiliar to them by this time).

Purpose:

1. To record history.

2. To give some of the ancestry of King David. The book accounts for the introduction of non-Israelite blood into the family line.

3. To emphasize the importance of filial love and devotion.

4. To show the importance of witnessing in a mixed marriage (the believing spouse witnessing to the unbelieving spouse).

5. To show the marvellous working of the Lord. Ruth, a Moabitess, became a convert, and an ancestress of David and Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5). The book reminds the reader that Christ came for the benefit of all people.

6. To show that Gentiles could enter the fellowship of God's covenant people through repentance and faith in Yahweh. Salvation was not limited to the Israelites. In this sense, Ruth foreshadows the New Testament era, when Gentiles in large numbers would be brought to faith.

7. To show the blessedness of a marriage involving a good and godly husband and wife.

Contents: See the outline in Dillard and Longman at the bottom of p. 132.

Selected Comments:

The story of Ruth takes place during the period of the judges and is certainly a "change of pace" from the Book of Judges (which deals with the wickedness of the Israelites, warfare, and bloodshed).

Pentateuchal principles involved in the story are redemption of land by the kinsman-redeemer (Leviticus 25:23-25; 27:22-24) and levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). Evidently it had become customary to connect these two institutions, that is, to require the levirate marriage of the

redeemer of the land of the deceased relative. Also, the Book of Ruth indicates a slight development of the levirate law. Boaz was not a brother of the dead man, but a relative; neither was the "nearer" relative a brother. The act of Boaz extends the levirate custom to other male relatives of the deceased in the event no brothers survive (or the surviving brother/s is/are already married?).

Some critical scholars have argued that the story of Ruth is fiction. As Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 340) has pointed out, it is unlikely that a writer of fiction would set out to trace the line of the great King David to a Moabite ancestress.

In the first chapter of the book Naomi is grief-stricken, depressed, and bitter. Ruth was God's instrument to bring help and healing to Naomi. Ruth exhibited Christ-like compassion. Luther referred to her as "a little Christ."

Remember that the Book of Ruth was read at the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost, when the firstfruits of the wheat harvest were dedicated to God.

2. Proverbs

Author:

1. Chapters 1-22:16 (cf. 1:1; 10:1) and 25-29 (cf. 25:1) apparently came from Solomon. Since 1 Kings 4:32 states that Solomon's original collection of proverbs numbered 3,000, there is in this book only a selection of the king's proverbs. Chapters 25-29 are proverbs published by *men of Hezekiah* (a technical phrase for Hezekiah's scribes maintained by the royal court); several of these proverbs or portions of proverbs are repeated from Chapters 10:1-22:16. Hezekiah's scribes did this work a) because Hezekiah (who became sole ruler of Judah ca. 715 B.C.) was a godly, reforming king (cf. 2 Chronicles 29:30), and b) because the Northern Kingdom had been ended by the Assyrians in 722 B.C., and the Southern Kingdom saw the need for preserving any word from an inspired author.

2. A section is attributed to the *wise men* - 22:17-24:22, 24:23-34 = 22:17-24:34. These wise men probably belonged to the same class referred to in 1 Kings 4:31. Perhaps they preceded Solomon, and he may have gathered the collection of their proverbs which is in Proverbs. As Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 1012) explains, the cultural life of the Hebrews was molded by prophets, priests, and wise men (Jeremiah 18:18). These wise men were teachers of wisdom. They do not appear to have been rigidly organized at any time during the period covered by the canonical Hebrew books.

3. Chapter 30 comes from Agur, son of Jakeh. Agur may have been a non-Israelite; when he lived is unknown. Some translate 30:1 "Jakeh of Massa" and suggest that Agur and Jakeh (and Lemuel, 31:1) were from the tribe of Massa, descendants of Ishmael, who settled in northern Arabia (see Genesis 25:14; 1 Chronicles 1:30).

4. Chapter 31:1-9 comes from King Lemuel. He certainly seems to be of non-Israelite origin; when he lived is unknown. Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 1018) notes the

influence of Aramaic in this section.

5. Concerning Proverbs 31:10-31, it is uncertain whether this description of the ideal, virtuous wife comes from Lemuel or another author.

Time of Composition: Discussed above.

Concerning the growth of the book, the following is only a proposal.

Stage 1 1:1-9:18 + 10:1-24:34. This was the first collection of proverbs, gathered by Solomon, which may have already been a single unit or two separate units.

Stage 2 The first collection + 25:1-29:27 (a new collection of Solomon's proverbs compiled by Hezekiah's scribes). Stage 2 may or may not have included Chapters 30-31.

a. Some scholars think 1:1-7 was added by Hezekiah's scribes.

b. The above proposal assumes the sayings of the "wise men" (22:17-24:34) came earlier and then were included in the "first collection," but this is not certain.

c. Chapters 30-31 (which consist of Agur's writing, Lemuel's writing, and the acrostic piece concerning the godly wife) are like an appendix. When these chapters were added to Proverbs is uncertain. As indicated above, when the three sections were composed is unknown.

With regard to the final shape of Proverbs, Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 1018) concludes that "there is no positive evidence whatever for postulating a post-exilic date for the extant work...there is no reason to suppose that the work could not have been completed at any period from 700 B.C. [Hezekiah's time] onwards."

Purpose: Proverbs focuses on one's relationship with his neighbor and the world. The book serves as a practical guide for successful living; it teaches the wise life. The basic nature of wisdom as viewed by Proverbs is summed up in 1:7. Thus the book has a theological approach in what it teaches. Wise living is sanctified living: glorifying God in every aspect of life. Proverbs thus also emphasizes the primary importance of one's relationship with God. That is the basis for everything else in life - for judging what is right, for a proper attitude toward material possessions, for working, for a right relationship toward one's neighbor, for a proper sense of security.

Contents: See the outline in Dillard and Longman, p. 238 (1:1-9:18 is probably from Solomon, as discussed above).

Selected Comments:
Review the discussion in the Hermeneutics course concerning the meaning of the Hebrew word

mashal, usually translated "proverb." In the Old Testament the term is used in a variety of ways. In Proverbs it mainly signifies either a maxim or aphorism (a short, concise saying which expresses wisdom) - e.g., 10:1-22:16 - or a short discourse or lesson (a passage involving several verses) - note the discourses in Chapters 1-9. The larger portion of Proverbs is aphorisms.

Both the aphorisms and discourses of Proverbs have the usual types of parallelism found in Hebrew poetry (in Proverbs mainly synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic). Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 1011) points out that an additional type of parallelism found in Proverbs, but not in Psalms, Lamentations, or Job, is known as a parabolic distich, in which one or more factual elements are related to a moral concept (e.g., Proverbs 26:3).

Proverbs 1:4 indicates that to a large extent the book is directed at young people. A specific objective was to train and educate the young for the preservation of the family unit and social stability.

As Hassell Bullock (An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books [Chicago: Moody, 1979], p. 170) writes, "the book of Proverbs is in no way a theological treatise, although some sublime concepts are included among the numerous subjects covered (e.g., 25:21-22). Therefore, we cannot require of the text the kind of theological depth we might expect of some prophetic writings or one of Paul's epistles."

One aspect of modern study of Proverbs is the comparison of the book with other, extrabiblical wisdom writings of the ancient Near East. Such wisdom literature has been found in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and other non-Israelite countries. As Bullock (An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books, p. 171) observes, at times the wisdom literature of other ancient Near Eastern countries deals with the same subjects and reaches similar conclusions as Israelite wisdom teaching. Many of the same practical approaches to life were held in common by more than one culture. Nevertheless, despite these similarities, Israelite wisdom literature also has a distinctiveness which sets it apart. For example, Solomon's wisdom simply was superior to that of any other wise man: 1 Kings 4:30. Of course, Solomon also was inspired. Proverbs and other Old Testament wisdom literature is monotheistic and Yahwistic, with all the corresponding ethical implications.

One passage in Proverbs, 22:17-23:14, is very similar to the Egyptian document known as "The Instruction of King Amenemopet." See the discussion in Dillard and Longman, pp. 240-241. Against their conclusions (p. 241), two points can be made. First, it is by no means certain that Egypt was the "dominant" culture (especially in the time of David and Solomon). Second, a good case can be made for seeing the Hebrew text as prior to the Egyptian text and as being used by the Egyptian author(s). Even if the Egyptian text was prior and used by the Hebrew wise man or men, this in no way takes away from the inspiration of the Hebrew passage. Adaptation of pagan sources to biblical theology (in this instance, it would have been from polytheism to Yahwistic monotheism) occurs in the New Testament (Acts 17:28). Writers in the Old and New Testaments made use of extra-biblical sources (whether oral or written): the authors of Old Testament historical books, Paul in 2 Timothy 3:8, and the author of Jude in vv. 9 and 14-15. Bullock (An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books, p. 173) concludes: "Nobody has

the franchise on truth but God. If one culture has come by means of natural revelation to share certain basic ideas and ethical principles with the biblical faith (cf. Rom. 1:18-20), we are free to recognize that without diminishing the value of and need for special revelation." Thus, there is no problem with the possibility of a portion of Proverbs being based on a piece of literature from the pagan culture of Egypt. Another possibility is this: both the Hebrew text and the Egyptian text used the same independent source.

Read the handout "'Wisdom,' Prov. 1-9." The position of this handout differs from that of Dillard and Longman, p. 245.

3. Song of Solomon

Author: 1:1 indicates that Solomon (who ruled from ca. 971-931 B.C.) is the author. Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 332) and other scholars have pointed out additional reasons for seeing Solomon as author.

1. The book has some points of contact with other writings of Solomon (linguistic parallels).

2. The book seems to reflect a time before the Divided Kingdom. The author speaks of places located in both northern and southern Israel as if these places all belonged to the same kingdom.

3. The author shows an extensive knowledge of animals and plants. This corresponds to the historical notice (1 Kings 4:33) about Solomon's great knowledge in the field of nature.

4. Mention is made in 1:9 of *Pharaoh's chariots*. Compare this to 1 Kings 10:28-29, which possibly says (there are textual problems) that Solomon imported chariots and horses from Egypt. Also, Solomon was married to a daughter of Pharaoh.

5. The book shows many evidences of royal luxury and an abundance of costly imported products (cf. 1 Kings 10:14-27).

Time of Composition: Discussed above.

Purpose: The purpose of the Song is connected with how the book is interpreted. Various interpretative approaches have been proposed.

1. The allegorical approach. Review the discussion of allegory in the Hermeneutics course. The Song does not meet the criteria for being an allegory.

2. The typical approach. Solomon, regarded as the main male character, is seen as a type of Christ, and the main female character as a type of the Church. However, where is the New Testament warrant which justifies this approach?

3. The literal approach. The Song is seen as presenting actual history and nothing more. This approach does not treat adequately the Song. Why is this particular history (a detailed

description of a husband's love for his wife, and the wife's love for her husband) preserved in Scripture?

4. The dramatic approach. The Song is seen as a drama, and nothing more. Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 334) responds: "But drama did not make its way to any extent among the Semitic peoples. Also, the Song does not purport to be a drama any more than it does an allegory. It is unlikely that the pious of the ages would have regarded the song as a divinely inspired composition if it were merely a drama of such nature."

5. The erotic-literary approach. The book is regarded simply as a collection of independent love (and/or nuptial) songs, and shows no unity. Yet would this book be in the canon if it were merely such a collection? Further, as Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 1051) observes, the Song "has distinct indications of literary unity...the repetitions in the book point to the activities of a single hand, while in addition there is a greater unity of style and theme than would be the case in a diverse collection of lyrics from several authors in widely separated ages."

6. The liturgical approach. It is explained that the Song was borrowed from a pagan liturgy, which was associated with a fertility cult. Involved with the cult were sacred prostitutes. As Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 335) states, "it is extremely unlikely that, had such been the origin of the Song, it would have been accepted into the Canon."

7. The Christological approach. It is explained that in the Song it is actually Christ speaking to the Church, and the Church speaking to Christ, but in figurative language. However, this approach appears to be somewhat forced, and does not seem to be the natural reading of the text.

8. The parabolic approach, which is the position of this course. The Song is regarded as a dramatic parable. Review the discussion of parables in the Hermeneutics course, and note specifically what was expressed concerning the Song at the end of the discussion of parables and allegories. A side feature of this parable is that it would remind people of the holiness and beauty of marriage (and the sexual relationship within marriage), and that the human body is God's good creation.

Contents: The Song is rather difficult to analyze. Young's (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 337) outline follows; other outlines are possible.

Chapters 1:1 - 2:7 The bride longs for the bridegroom. They meet and praise one another.

Chapters 2:8 - 3:5 Their love increases. The maiden sings the praises of her beloved.

Chapters 3:6 - 5:1 This section contains the espousal, and praise of the bride.

Chapters 5:2 - 6:9 The bride longs for her beloved and sings his praises while he is gone from her.

Chapters 6:10 - 8:4 The beauty of the bride is described.

Chapters 8:5-14 Here the beauty of love is shown.

Selected Comments:
With regard to the Song, there is no specific reference to sin, no specific reference to the religious realm, and there is a question if God's name occurs in the book. 8:6 has been translated in different ways. Some think that in this verse there is mention of Yahweh - "flame of Yahweh."

According to Jewish tradition a man had to be thirty years old before he could read the book. The Song, one of the Megilloth, was read during Passover.

4. Ecclesiastes

Author: Until the time of Luther there was minimal questioning about authorship: most assumed Solomon to be the author. That is the position of this course. The following are reasons for proposing Solomonic authorship.

1. 1:1 - "son of David" - and 1:12 - "king over Israel in Jerusalem" - point to Solomon as author; cf. 2:9.

2. 1:16 relates the great wisdom of the author.

3. 2:4-11 - indicating the massive wealth, many servants, and projects of the author - is reminiscent of the report in 1 Kings about Solomon's reign.

4. The sequence of books in the Septuagint testifies to Solomonic authorship: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon (evidently all being ascribed to Solomon) follow the Psalter (a large portion of which came from David), as son follows father.

However, many have denied Solomonic authorship. Much of the following discussion on authorship is taken from Hummel (The Word Becoming Flesh, pp. 526-530).

Luther, in his Table Talk, says: "Solomon himself did not write the Book of Ecclesiastes, but it was produced by Sirach [Jesus ben Sirach] at the time of the Maccabees...It is a sort of Talmud, compiled from many books, probably from the library of King Ptolemy Euergetes of Egypt." Today liberal scholarship rejects Solomonic authorship, but so also do many conservative commentators (e.g., Hengstenberg, Delitzsch, Young, Leupold, Harrison, Pfeiffer). The trend is to put Ecclesiastes in the post-exilic period. Estimates of the precise date, however, range over almost the entire post-exilic period.

What are some of the reasons for rejection of Solomonic authorship?

1. The book does not claim to be written by Solomon. All other writings of Solomon bear his name (Proverbs, Song of Solomon). It is not likely that a person as prominent as Solomon would have felt any need to choose a pen name (NIV: *the Teacher*; see below, under *Selected Comments*).

2. The phrase "king in Jerusalem" (1:1) does not occur elsewhere as a designation for Solomon. Usually he is called "King of Israel" (e.g., 2 Kings 23:13). See also Nehemiah 13:26; 1 Kings 11:42.

3. 1:12 - "I was" king in Jerusalem, suggesting that the condition no longer prevailed.

4. It is often argued that the book indicates very difficult economic and social circumstances (e.g., 1:2-11; 3:1-15; 4:1-3; 7:1), such as would fit much of the post-exilic period, but scarcely the prosperity of Solomon's reign. Also, it is argued that the author seemed powerless to do anything about the injustice and abuses he observed (3:16; 4:1; 5:8).

5. The major argument for a post-exilic date is linguistic. When compared to classical and Mishnaic Hebrew, the Hebrew of Ecclesiastes is seen as closer to the latter. It is argued that the lateness of the Hebrew is evidenced by both vocabulary and syntax.

6. 1:16 - "all who were over Jerusalem before me." How many Israelite kings were over Jerusalem before Solomon?

The following is a response (in defense of Solomonic authorship) to the reasons as they are listed above.

1. Why could not Solomon have chosen this identification? Cf. 1 John, which gives no author's name, and 2 and 3 John ("the Elder").

2. This is an embarrassingly weak argument. The phrase "king in Jerusalem" is not inaccurate with regard to Solomon, and "Israel" implies the United Monarchy. 1:12 is close to 1 Kings 11:42.

3. "I was" is not necessarily indicating that the author's kingship was over. The author simply is talking about an earlier point in his life and reign, when he made these observations, and carried on these activities. Also, it is possible to translate 1:12 as "I have become king," or "I became king," or "I have been king."

4. Oppressive policies existed in Solomon's reign (1 Kings 12:1-4). Not every Israelite prospered during his rule or throughout his entire kingship. With regard to the author's inability to correct injustices, no matter how good a king is, and how powerful, it is still impossible to wipe out all corruption and injustice. There cannot be a perfect reign in this sinful world. Also, consider the larger wisdom context: the wisdom literature speaks to circumstances that recur constantly in human experience, and there is nothing in Ecclesiastes which cannot easily be read in that way.

5. The linguistic analysis is not decisive for positing a post-exilic date. The linguistic argument is an ambivalent one.
   a. The presence of Aramaisms is not necessarily decisive for a late date, in light of archaeological discoveries at Ugarit. The Arameans were present in the western portion

of the Fertile Crescent especially from about 1200 B.C. on. The political and commercial ties with the Aramean people of the Syrian areas were close during the reign of Solomon.

b. Various scholars have put forth weighty arguments in favor of heavy Phoenician-Canaanite influence on the book's language. While they think of Ecclesiastes as being early post-exilic, their arguments could also be used to support Solomonic authorship.

c. Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, pp. 482-483) has proposed that the style and vocabulary of Ecclesiastes are due to its being a certain kind of wisdom literature. He theorizes that Ecclesiastes belongs to a genre of philosophical discourse developed in North Israel (thus having Phoenician and Aramaic traits) prior to the Solomonic era. Ecclesiastes is our only example of the style and language unique to this genre in Hebrew literature.

d. There simply is not sufficient Hebrew literature (preserved) to construct with confidence any certain chart of the development of the language in different times and areas beyond very broad generalities. A definitive history of the Hebrew language is still not possible (Bullock, An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books, p. 198). But based on what we do know, we can say that Ecclesiastes fits into no known period in the history of the Hebrew language (Archer, A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 481). (It has been suggested that a Solomonic text was later updated linguistically - a recension - like a revision of Chaucer or even Shakespeare into modern English.)

6. Regarding 1:16 - the statement does not specify Israelite kings, and Jerusalem was an ancient city by Solomon's time.

Time of Composition: Discussed above. The author of this course suggests that Ecclesiastes may have been composed by Solomon when he was an old man, toward the end of his life and reign. 1 Kings 11:1-13 reports Solomon's faithlessness to the Lord and leaves the reader with a question as to what Solomon's spiritual condition was when he died. Perhaps Ecclesiastes answers that question, indicating that Solomon came back to his "spiritual senses" shortly before his death (cf. 7:26 [and compare this verse to certain verses in Proverbs], 28). Solomon tasted the bitter fruit which results from disobedience to God, but emerged from his negative experiences a humbled and wiser man, by God's grace.

Purpose: The author wants to impart to his readers wisdom he has gained from his observations and experiences during his lifetime.

Contents: Different outlines are possible. Note the general outline presented by Dillard and Longman, pp. 250 (bottom)-251 (top), and their discussion of the book's structure in the second and third paragraphs of p. 251 (reject their notion, however, that the author adopts and then discards the literary *persona* of Solomon).

The majority of scholars agree that, as with most wisdom literature, it is difficult, if not

impossible, to give a detailed analysis of the structure of Ecclesiastes. In much of the book there is something close to a "stream of consciousness" flavor (Hummel, The Word Becoming Flesh, p. 531). Still, the book does have thought segments and recurring themes. The alternation between the author being referred to in the third person (besides the passages given by Dillard and Longman see also 7:27) and the first person is no problem; this is seen frequently in books of the Latter Prophets.

Selected Comments:
The English title "Ecclesiastes" comes from the Septuagint, which called the book *Ekklesiastes*. This is a translation of the Hebrew title. The Hebrew title is *qoheleth*, a feminine singular participle from the verbal root meaning *to assemble, gather,* and related to the noun *assembly, convocation, congregation. Qoheleth* is the name of the author/speaker in Ecclesiastes. 1:1 has the phrase "the words of Qoheleth". This name also appears in 1:2, 12; 7:27; 12:8, 9, 10.
The feminine form is usually explained this way: it is referring to an office, function, or a title (thus it is a type of abstract noun, for which Hebrew usually employs the feminine gender). Another possible explanation, as noted by Bullock (An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books, p. 190), is that "the name *Qoheleth* refers to wisdom, which is feminine in gender, and is thus applied to Solomon as the exemplar of Wisdom."

Qoheleth is followed by a masculine predicate, with one exception (7:27), presumably because the office was filled by a man. *Qoheleth* has been translated as *Assembler, Gatherer*, but better is *Preacher* (or *Teacher*), because he who assembles a congregation does it for the purpose of addressing it. So *Qoheleth* is not a proper name. However, since it is only once used with the definite article ("the"; 12:8), it seems that the author of the book used the title as a pen name.

Ecclesiastes has frequent alternation of viewpoint. Statements range from what appears to be agnosticism to traditional orthodoxy. The book seems to move back and forth between delight in life and a melancholy skepticism. Because of these "contradictions" questions arose in the past concerning the book's canonicity. Thus, Ecclesiastes has been subjected to various interpretations, and has been frequently misinterpreted.

Following are general thoughts with regard to the book's contents.

1. The author looks at a question he raises sometimes from the standpoint of an unbeliever, and sometimes from the standpoint of a believer. He also looks at different sides of a question. As a result he makes claims that, unless they are rightly understood, seem to be opposites. As Herbert C. Leupold (Exposition of Ecclesiastes [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1952], p. 21) observes: "He speaks of the value of wisdom, yet seems to contend that the acquisition of wisdom is of no profit. He seems to counsel extreme soberness, yet he advocates being of a merry heart."
   Two statements may seem to be opposite each other, but each, understood in its context, is proper. Compare Paul, in Philippians, saying that we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (2:12), but that we are also to rejoice in the Lord always (4:4); see in addition Psalm 2:11.

2. The book is a frank record of Solomon's struggles with problems: his dialogues with himself;

his vacillations as he wrestled with certain issues, issues which he states in a very honest way; and how he had arrived at certain conclusions.

There are records of this kind of personal struggle, with corresponding startling statements, in other portions of Scripture: e.g., Psalm 73; Jeremiah 20:7-18. Yet the author of Ecclesiastes (as well as the authors of similar passages in Scripture) is writing under inspiration, and is no longer skeptical or troubled by doubt. As Leupold (Exposition of Ecclesiastes, p. 19) explains, the author records what he had gone through, but at the time of composition is now certain and firm in his position, and is writing for the purpose of helping those who will listen to his words.

3. The author is pointing out the temporary nature of existence on this earth (cf. Psalm 90), and the limits of human wisdom. Man cannot probe the depths of God's wisdom, and always figure out God's purposes. Man simply will not have all the answers this side of the grave; only God has all the answers. The author refers to God throughout as "Elohim," and not "Yahweh" (God's personal, covenant name), stressing God's role as Creator and Sovereign.

   The book therefore gives evidence of resignation on the part of Solomon, but, as Leupold (Exposition of Ecclesiastes, p. 20) states, "a resignation coupled with a clear and intelligent faith." Hummel (The Word Becoming Flesh, p. 534) puts it this way: "Qoheleth is not disillusioned, but *un*illusioned [or, he has a godly disillusionment]; not a cynic, but a realist. Even less is he any sort of crypto-atheist; God is obviously fundamental to his whole outlook."

4. At the same time, the author speaks of the enjoyment of life on this earth, about living this life to the fullest. God gives us earthly blessings, and we are to enjoy them.

   The proper perspective, though, is to realize that the world is God's creation, and everything we have is from God. We are to use and enjoy the things of this world for God's glory. This alone gives life meaning; life apart from God can have no meaning. Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 351) comments: "God is the ultimate standard and point of reference by which every aspect of life must be interpreted. If man or the world be regarded as the ultimate standard or point of reference, all is vanity. All then becomes without meaning, and can lead only to despair. The only possible interpretation of the world then is to regard it as the creation of God and to use and enjoy it for His glory."

5. In calling for the enjoyment of the present, not in dissipation and foolish living, but in accepting today and its pleasures as gifts from God, Solomon urges the "golden mean of conduct" (Bullock, An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books, p. 194). This involves avoiding extremes and excesses, and following a path of moderation. This also extends to matters of religion: cf. 7:15-18. This passage refers, on the one hand, to a wrong kind of righteousness based on man-made laws, which leads to sinful pride (cf. Matthew 5:20); and on the other hand, to not giving free reign to the sinful nature (cf. Romans 8:13).

6. Thus, Solomon does speak about the importance of true, godly wisdom, which is indeed

limited, but nevertheless essential. This wisdom is a sure guide for life, and is summed up in 12:13. Proper fear of God is a product of saving faith, and is one motivation for living according to God's will. Solomon is saying: have a right appreciation and enjoyment of this life, but do not put your trust in earthly goods or human resources, which are not an end in themselves. Avoid the evil things of this world; stay away from sin. See in addition 8:12-13 and 12:7, 14.

Ecclesiastes, one of the Megilloth, was read during the Festival of Tabernacles.

5. Job

Author: It is unknown who wrote Job. The book itself gives no clear indication of its human author, and there is no reliable evidence outside of Job.

Time of Composition: As the author is uncertain, so also is the time of composition. Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 319-320) proposes that "the view...which seems to be most free from objection regards the book as composed at some time during the reign of Solomon." Following are reasons for this viewpoint.

1. Job is wisdom literature, and during the age of Solomon there was a flourishing of wisdom and wisdom literature.

2. Part of Job is written in the style of Proverbs.

However, other conservative scholars place the composition of Job at a later date. For example, Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 1040-1041) writes: "...a date of composition not later than the end of the fifth century B.C. would seem to account for most of the peculiar features of the book, despite the inconclusive nature of much of the evidence."

The viewpoint of the author of this course is that Job was written during the time of Solomon, if not before.

Purpose: The book relates the story of Job and deals with the question, "Why do the righteous suffer?," giving a partial answer to that question.

Contents: See the outline in Dillard and Longman at the bottom of p. 201, and note their analysis of the book's structure (pp. 202-205). There is no need to posit a third Zophar speech (as Dillard and Longman do, p. 203); 27:13-23 can be considered part of Job's speech. Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 1033) writes: "The general pattern of the poetic speeches exhibits a progressive shortening, so that the absence of a third speech by Zophar need not be particularly surprising. Indeed, in his second speech (Job 20:1-29), it was becoming evident that he had already encountered the law of diminishing returns in his argument, and this simple fact may constitute the sole reason why he was not credited with a third speech."

Selected Comments:

The story in the book actually took place; Job was a historical person (cf. Ezekiel 14:14; James

5:11). No precise date is given in the book. Nevertheless, a good case can be made for placing the events in the second millennium B.C.

1. The story has a patriarchal atmosphere (occurring during the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, during the early second millennium B.C.).
   a. Without priesthood or shrine, Job performed his own sacrifices (1:5; cf. 42:8-9).
   b. Job's possessions, like Abraham's and Jacob's, were measured in sheep, camels, oxen, asses, and servants (1:3; cf. Genesis 12:16; 32:5).
   c. Job's life-span is matched only in the Pentateuch. Cf. 42:16 - "after this" - and recall that Isaac lived to be one-hundred-eighty (Genesis 35:28).
   d. There is an absence of allusion to Mosaic law.

2. The monetary unit in 42:11 (*kesitah*) occurs elsewhere in Scripture only in Genesis 33:19 and Joshua 24:32.

3. The name "Job," according to archeological finds, was an ordinary western Semitic name in the second millennium B.C., although its derivation and meaning are still uncertain. The other names in the book are appropriate for that millennium.

The conclusion is that the events took place in the second millennium, probably in the first half.

The location of the Land of Uz is uncertain. It did lay outside of Canaan/Israel. Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 324) comments: "The introductory words (`there was a man'...) evidently show that this is not a narrative of a portion of the Israelitish history, but rather a beginning of an extra-Israelitish history." Uz apparently lay to the east of Canaan/Israel (1:3; cf. Judges 6:3, 33; Isaiah 11:14; Ezekiel 25:4, 10). Uz perhaps was in the south, in the vicinity of Edom or northern Arabia (which could still be considered an eastern location), for the following reasons.

1. At least two of Job's friends, Eliphaz the Temanite and Zophar the Naamathite, seem to have come from a southern location.

2. In Lamentations 4:21 the Edomites are spoken of as occupying Uz ("Uz" is omitted, however, in the Septuagint).

The Hauran region, south of Damascus, has also been proposed as the location of Uz.

From evidence in the book (1:2-3, 14-17; 29:7; 31:8, 38-40) it appears that Job was a semi-nomad who lived in a walled city and grew crops (outside the city) during part of the year, and migrated with his flocks and herds throughout the rest of the year.

Chapters 1 and 2 are prose, Chapters 3-42:6 are poetry (except for 32:1-6), and Chapter 42:7-17 is prose. Concerning the poetry of the dialogues - did Job and the other men actually speak that way, or were their speeches put into poetic form by the author of the book? It is not impossible that the characters spoke poetically, and the book contains a verbatim account of their dialogues. Perhaps more likely is the possibility that the characters spoke prose, and that their speeches were then put into poetic form, but that nothing was lost by way of content with this transition (the book contains an accurate record of what was said).

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar applied the principle of divine retribution in an automatic, mechanical fashion. Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 455) thinks that

> an adequate psychological motive for their persistence in carrying on the controversy with Job over so many chapters is to be found in the dilemma into which his catastrophic disaster had placed them. If a man of such high reputation could suffer so devastating a misfortune, their own security was imperiled by the possibility that the same thing could happen to themselves. Their basic motive in attempting to elicit from Job a confession of sin was to establish their own sense of security. If in point of fact Job had been guilty of some grievous sin of which the public had no knowledge, his overwhelming disaster could be easily understood as the retribution of the righteous God. Failing to secure from him any such confession despite all their diligent efforts to compel from him an admission of guilt, they felt unable to return home relieved and reassured that calamity would be kept from their door if they only "lived a good life."

The speeches of Elihu are a surprise. A change in the flow of the book is indicated by the short prose introduction (32:1-5). Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, and Job, have "shot their wads." The reader next expects God to speak.

The Elihu speeches are the section of the book most attacked by critical scholars. They explain that these speeches are a later addition by a later author(s), and worthless as far as contributing to the story and message of the book. What are their reasons for considering the speeches a later addition?

1. Elihu is not mentioned in the prologue or prior to his appearance.

2. The epilogue says nothing about Elihu.

3. The rhetoric and literary style of this section is said to be significantly different from the other parts of the book (e.g., the presence of Aramaic words).

4. Elihu quoted Job verbatim, but this did not happen elsewhere in the book.

Following is a response to the reasons as they are listed above.

1. Elihu may have been part of the retinue of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, or one of their pupils (his youth is indicated in 32:6-10), or a scribe, and thus was not singled out for special mention. Or, his mention was delayed deliberately to enhance the surprise and increase the suspense which these speeches produce (William LaSor, David Hubbard, and Frederic Bush, Old Testament Survey, p. 571). Or, Elihu's speeches may have been added at a later date by the author of the book without a harmonizing of the details by adding his name to the prologue, which was already written.

2. Perhaps because Elihu both celebrated God's wondrous mysteries and rebuked Job with less venom than did Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, he did not require direct censure (LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush, Old Testament Survey, pp. 571-572). Or again, the author may have added Elihu's speeches at a later date without a harmonizing of the details by adding his name to the epilogue, which was already written.

3. Reason #3 is not decisive. Elihu may have come from a different background than the other speakers. To a certain extent he takes up different subjects and arguments, which can call for different wording. Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 1035) comments that "the presence of Aramaisms in one section of a poetic composition that abounds in difficult and obscure expressions [the book is a great challenge to translate] need be no indication at all that the particular passage is spurious."

4. As Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 1033, 1035) explains, it is probable that Job quoted his three friends, placing in the process a different emphasis upon the words (cf. Job 20:29 and 27:13). Thus, there need be no problem with regard to Elihu's quoting Job. Also, if Elihu wanted to quote Job, why could'nt he?

The Elihu speeches have their place in Job.

1. They enhance the suspense by postponing the climax. The reader was expecting to hear from God.

2. Elihu tries to correct Job and his three friends. This section shows that younger wisdom basically is no more effective than older.

3. Elihu makes an advance on the arguments of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar by stressing the disciplinary and educative value of suffering.

4. Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 1035) points out that Elihu makes more explicit the earlier hints at a doctrine of salvation by God's grace through faith (33:26-30).

5. Elihu's speeches prepare for God's speeches. They stress Job's ignorance of God's ways, and they emphasize God's power, majesty, and sovereignty.

According to Scripture, there are various answers to the question, "Why do the righteous suffer?" At times this is due to the chastening of the Lord. However, the believer, because he is living in a sinful world, may suffer because of his faith in Jesus Christ, or because he takes a godly stance in opposition to wickedness. The Book of Job provides the answer that sometimes we don't know, or fully understand, why the righteous suffer (cf. John 9:3). Job in the book was never told about the meeting of Satan and God. Finite man cannot fully comprehend the infinite wisdom of God, or totally grasp the mystery of His rule. We may not always see the full picture, but only pieces of God's mosaic. God's wisdom is far above our wisdom (Romans 11:33-36). As Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 331) explains, "Job and his sufferings have their place in God's all-wise, incomprehensible disposition of things. All is well. Why should Job seek to penetrate the mystery? God is upon the throne. That is enough." In all things God is working for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28). As a result of his ordeal, Job's faith has been strengthened, he has been properly humbled, he has been refined spiritually, he has found peace, and he has grown in wisdom. The Book of Job encourages continual trust in the Lord.

book introduces a God who is free to work his surprises, correct human distortions...He was free to enter into the Satan's test and tell none of the participants about it, to time his intervention and determine its agenda...

God is never unrighteous (what all **deserve** from God is only damnation), but we cannot *pigeon-hole* Him.

The book teaches about Satan (that name means *adversary*). We see that he is opposed to God; he is also opposed to human beings. Satan wanted to destroy Job's relationship with God. Yet God's control over Satan is absolute: he can do only as much as God allows, or permits him, to do. Further, God's purpose and will, as to why He let Job suffer, prevailed. LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush (Old Testament Survey, p. 583) comment: "The absence of the Satan from the epilogue is not `to be regretted as a flaw in the harmony of the prologue and epilogue,' but a deliberate factor in the book's message. God, not the Satan, is sovereign...The Satan is but an interloper in the relationship of God and Job as depicted in the book's beginning and ending."

6. Prophets and Prophecy

Read the handout "Prophecy, Prophets," which is a summary of Archer, A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, pp. 295-299.

God allowed the prophets to see the future, and they wrote about what would take place with complete accuracy. Certain of the prophetic passages dealing with what lay ahead exhibit prophetic perspective. That is, in such passages the prophets wrote about certain future events as if they would happen one right after the other. However, we know from our New Testament perspective that there is/are a time gap(s) between those events. This characteristic in the prophetic writings can also be described as a telescoping, or a blending together, of events.

7. Obadiah

Author: The prophet Obadiah. No mention is made of his father's name or his home region. He generally is believed to have been from Judah, because of the message of his book. "Obadiah" was a common name in Old Testament history; in the Old Testament narratives about a dozen people have this name.

Time of Composition: The precise time of composition is uncertain. Different factors enter into the consideration of this matter.

1. To what historical event(s) are vv. 11-14 to be related? There have been various scholarly proposals, ranging from an incident in the reign of Jehoram (ca. 848-841 B.C.) to the fall of Jerusalem in 587/6 B.C.

2. There are striking parallels between Obadiah 1-9, 16 and Jeremiah 49:7, 9-10, 12, 14-16, 22. Which prophet wrote first, which second (and borrowed from the first)? Or were both taking from the same independent prophetic source? Or were both simply inspired by the Holy Spirit to write on their own, and independently, similar material?

3. There is similarity between Obadiah and Joel, though this is not as close as that between Obadiah and Jeremiah (#2). Cf. especially Obadiah 10, 11, 15, and 17 with Joel 1:15; 2:1, 32; 3:3-4, 7, 14, 17, 19. But what is the connection between Obadiah and Joel, if any? Perhaps such similar expressions were used in public worship and so became part of common language. Also, there is a question as to when Joel is to be dated.

About all that can be said for certain is that Obadiah wrote before the destruction of Edom, which took place toward the end of the sixth century and perhaps into the beginning of the fifth century B.C. At that time, the Nabatean Arabs invaded and occupied Edom, driving the Edomites from their homeland. The Edomites were pushed north and forced to settle in the Negeb and southern Judah, as far north as Hebron. This downfall of Edom and shifting of the Edomite population is reflected in Malachi 1:2-5 (which reports the fulfillment of Obadiah 1-14).

Purpose: To foretell God's judgment on Edom, and on all nations; and to proclaim the deliverance of God's people and their triumph on Judgment Day.

Contents:
Verses 1 - 14 Future judgment on Edom, and the reasons for this judgment.

Verses 15 - 21 Judgment Day and the ultimate victory of God's kingdom.

Selected Comments:
Among the prophets Edom is at times seen as a representative of all powers and nations which are hostile to God and His people. The destruction of Edom symbolized and foreshadowed the destruction of all these unbelieving, ungodly nations and powers throughout world history, but especially on Judgment Day.

Judgment Day is described in Scripture, including the Old Testament prophecies, as both the day when all are judged by the Judge, and also as the day of the final, *show-down* battle, when God's forces will overthrow, and do away with forever, all evil forces. The victory of God's people on that day can be described as their trampling down the wicked, or conquering them, or possessing the territory of the wicked. However, keep in mind that similar words and phrases can be used in different contexts with different meanings. In Obadiah 17 and 18 "Zion," "Jacob," and "Joseph" stand for God's kingdom, which is made up of all believers.

There are text-critical problems in Obadiah 19-21, which add to the challenge of interpreting

these verses.

8. Joel

Author: The prophet Joel, the son of Pethuel. Since Joel does not mention the northern kingdom, but does name Judah and Jerusalem, it seems that his ministry was in the Southern Kingdom.

Time of Composition: Note, in the discussion of Dillard and Longman (pp. 365-367), points 1, 2, 3 (particulary noticeable is the absence of mention of Babylonia, which would not be fully explained even by a date of composition for Joel after the fall of the city Babylon), 4, 6, 9, 11, and the list of proposed dates on p. 367. That there is no mention of the Northern Kingdom (Dillard and Longman, p. 365, #5) simply may be due to the fact that Joel received word from the Lord only concerning Judah. Also, "Israel" certainly could be used as a reference to Judah before 722 B.C. In conclusion, dogmatism must be avoided when proposing a time of composition for the book. The evidence, however, does seem to tilt in favor of seeing Joel as written in the ninth century B.C. (perhaps during the minority of Joash). An interpretation of the book does not depend upon the date of composition.

Purpose: The purpose of the book is a) to record Joel's prophetic word to Judah during a particular time of judgment from the Lord (when the land was afflicted with a locust plague and drought); and b) to foretell judgments from God on Judah and all nations, which will culminate on Judgment Day; and c) to describe the New Testament Church and the preservation and everlasting endurance of God's spiritual kingdom.

Contents:

Chapter 1 Present judgment from the Lord.
- A. Verses 1-12: the terrible locust plague described.
- B. Verses 13-20: a call to repentance, and a description of the drought.

Chapter 2:1-11 The coming Day of the Lord (future judgments from God, culminating in Judgment Day). Joel uses imagery borrowed from the present locust plague.

Chapter 2:12-27 Call to repentance, and God's immediate deliverance and blessing (evidently the people repented).
- A. Verses 12-17: the exhortation to repent.
- B. Verses 18-27: God's immediate (in the near future) deliverance and blessing.

Chapter 2:28 - 3:21 Future judgments and Judgment Day, and the Messianic Age and the New Creation.
- A. 2:28-32: the Messianic Age, climaxing in Judgment Day.
- B. 3:1-16: Judgment Day, foreshadowed by previous judgments.
- C. 3:17-21: the blessings of God's spiritual kingdom and the New Creation.

Selected Comments:
In Chapter 1 there is no doubt that Judah is being chastened by the Lord for its wickedness, but Joel differs from other prophets of Israel in that he makes no mention of the sins which brought about this judgment.

In 1:1 - 2:17 Joel is speaking (as God's mouthpiece), and in 2:18 -3:21 God is speaking (through Joel).

Again, in 2:28-32 Joel prophesies concerning the New Testament era. This prophecy began to be fulfilled on the first Christian Pentecost (cf. Acts 2), continues to be fulfilled today, and will culminate on Judgment Day. In 2:32 "Mount Zion" and "Jerusalem" stand for the Kingdom of God, the whole Christian Church.

Old Testament Isagogics
Unit 6

1. Amos
2. Jonah
3. Hosea
4. Micah
5. Isaiah
6. Nahum

Unit 6 - Old Testament Isagogics

Objectives

When students complete this lesson they will

Know:

1. The isagogical matters pertaining to Amos, Jonah, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah and Nahum.

Be able to:

1. Read these subjects with greater understanding and discuss them with their peers and the people they are serving.

Reading Assignments

1. Skim the contents of Amos, Jonah, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, and Nahum.
2. Unit 6 material in this student guide.
3. Dillard and Longman, pp. 373-384, 391-395, 353-362, 397-402, 267-283, 403-408.
4. Handout, Young, pp. 205-211
5. Handout, Maier, pp. 85-87

Writing Assignments

None

1. Amos

Author: The prophet Amos. See the discussion in Dillard and Longman, pp. 375-377.

Time of Composition: Sometime in the eighth century B.C. See the discussion in Dillard and Longman, p. 375.

Purpose: To leave a record of the messages he preached in the Northern Kingdom.

Contents:
Chapters 1:1 - 2:16 Oracles against various nations and the Southern Kingdom.

Chapters 3:1 - 6:14 Oracles directed to the Northern Kingdom.

Chapters 7:1 - 9:10 A series of five visions depicting coming judgment. 7:11-17 recounts the meeting between Amaziah and Amos.

Chapter 9:11-15 A prophecy concerning the Messianic Kingdom.

Selected Comments:
God called this layman to be a prophet, and then sent Amos from Judah into the Northern Kingdom, where he preached the revelations God gave to him. After delivering the word of the Lord Amos presumably returned to the Southern Kingdom to Tekoa, and wrote down this book, in which he gives us a summary and the quintessence of his messages. His poetry may be classed with the very best in Hebrew literature.

Remember that the time of Amos' ministry was a period of resurgence and outward prosperity and glory for both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Syria and Assyria were unable to threaten the Northern Kingdom, and Egypt in the south was weak. In this power vacuum both Jeroboam II and Uzziah extended the borders of their kingdoms.

Experiencing a sense of security, the people of the Northern Kingdom pursued after material goods. This preoccupation with materialistic goals went hand in hand with moral and religious corruption. Soon a powerful, rich class emerged, the middle class was greatly reduced in size and influence, and the condition of the poor class did not improve, but worsened. The Northern Kingdom was polluted with dishonesty and cheating; selfishness; greed; sexual immorality; neglect, then oppression of the poor. The rich dominated not only the poor but also judges. Those who were poor and defrauded seldom if ever received justice in the courts because of bribery of corrupt officials.

The religious situation in the North certainly did not improve. The sin of Jeroboam II was continued - involving a large number of the people (much of this worship was only external ritualism, lacking any sincerity of heart). Further, many blended in idolatrous practices with their so-called worship of Yahweh. They worshipped God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him.

The people of the North were smug, confident, and secure in the belief that, since they were

the chosen people, no calamity could come upon them. The rich thought that their prosperity indicated that God was pleased with them, that He was blessing them, and that He would continue to do so. They longed for the Day of the Lord, which they thought would be when Yahweh would judge all the Gentile nations, deliver Israel from every trouble, exalt Israel to might and dominion above all nations, and bless it with greater honor and glory.

Amos (at times referred to as the prophet of social justice) came to the Northern Kingdom to preach a message of impending judgment, or doom. He could see beneath the exterior glory, the surface glitter of the Northern Kingdom; he could see the real condition of the land, that it was rotten. Amos focused on all the evils and wickedness in the Northern Kingdom. His book is the chief source of information relating to the internal conditions in the Northern Kingdom during the reign of Jeroboam II.

As Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 258) says, Amos does not mention the Assyrians by name, but he clearly predicts their coming and the exile, if the people did not change. His purpose was to warn, in order to shake the people up, bring them to their spiritual senses, lead them to repent. In addition, his purpose was to foretell the coming of the Messianic Kingdom.

Most of the people of the North did not listen to Amos and repent. Remember that in 745 Tiglath-pileser III became king of Assyria, and that nation was resurgent and again became aggressive from a military standpoint. The Northern Kingdom came under Assyrian domination, and eventually was brought to an end by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. (only about thirty-one years after the death of Jeroboam II).

With Amos 9:11-15 there is a complete change of tone; the book ends with bright, positive good news. This is the prophecy concerning the Messianic Kingdom. David's dynasty formerly was referred to as the house of David, but now it is called a tent (or booth), indicating that it had undergone, and would undergo, deterioration. The Davidic dynasty suffered one blow when the ten northern tribes broke away. Also, it became spiritually corrupt. Then the Babylonians conquered the Southern Kingdom, and eventually brought that kingdom to an end; there were no more political kings from the Davidic dynasty. Judah had various foreign rulers, until by the time of Jesus the rulers were the Romans. The spiritual leaders were corrupt. So the dynasty of David itself would be in very bad condition (as if it were a collapsed tent), and it would exist in most unpromising circumstances. Apparently, the dynasty would never rise again. However, God would raise it up. He sent His Son who, becoming a man, was a descendant of David. Jesus took up His father David's throne; He set up a spiritual (not an earthly) kingdom, which lasts forever. See Acts 15:16-18 (where the Septuagint is quoted). With the preaching of the Gospel, first in Palestine, and then beyond, some who were descendants of those who had been in the old Northern Kingdom, as well as those who had been in the old Southern Kingdom, would be brought to faith. Thus there would be a spiritual reunification of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Further, the Christian Church, the kingdom (spiritual) of the Second David, would also include Gentiles, even traditional enemies of Israel, represented by "Edom." The Gospel would go throughout the world, and there would be converts from every nation. In this way David's dynasty would be as it used to be: ruling, over a united kingdom, which included Gentiles. Verses 13-15 depict spiritual blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, and the blessedness

of the new creation, the new heaven and earth; the Messianic kingdom culminates in the new creation. In verse 14 "Israel" signifies the spiritual Kingdom of God (which in the New Testament era is the Messianic Kingdom). That verse reads literally, "I will restore the captivity of My people Israel," which means, "I will restore My people Israel." The phrase means the turning of misfortune and misery into prosperity and salvation. Spiritual Israel experienced suffering in Amos' day, and it would in all later world history. But there will be a time when the sufferings of spiritual Israel will end, and God will plant Israel in a land (new heaven and earth, the second Paradise) where Israel will experience forever joy, peace, and security.

Thus Amos, as do other prophets, uses earthly imagery to depict the blessings of the Messianic kingdom, and the new creation. He uses Old Testament language (as do other prophets), all that was available to him, to express New Testament truths. Also, he uses imagery already seen in his book (destruction, exile), to depict future, higher realities.

Amos emphasized the covenant relationship between God and Israel, His chosen people of the Old Testament era. The covenant name "Yahweh" appears constantly throughout his book: "Yahweh," 52 times; "the Lord Yahweh," 19 times; and "Yahweh, God of Hosts," 6 times. This special relationship brought out Yahweh's blessing and mercy on Israel, but also Israel's responsibility to Yahweh and the covenant. Israel, in particular the Northern Kingdom, was found guilty. Yahweh had tried, and was trying, to get the people to repent. Persistent wickedness would result in His fierce judgment. Yahweh would fulfill the threats connected with disobedience to the covenant (see, e.g., Deuteronomy 28:15-68). Nevertheless, He would also keep His promise to send the Messiah.

2. Jonah

Author: The prophet Jonah. He is undoubtedly the Jonah mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25. From that passage we learn that Jonah was from Gath Hepher of the tribe of Zebulun in the Northern Kingdom. The Kings passage also indicates that Jonah's prophetic ministry began sometime before the conquests of Jeroboam II, who reigned ca. 793-753 B.C.

Time of Composition: It is likely that Jonah's ministry at least partially overlapped the reign of Jeroboam II. Exactly when Jonah had the experiences of his book, and when he wrote them down, is uncertain. A reasonable approximation is to place both the events and the composition of the book in the first half of the eighth century B.C. (making Jonah a contemporary of Amos and Hosea).

Purpose: To record Jonah's experience in being commissioned by God to preach at Nineveh, so that the reader might learn from the prophet's experience.

Contents:
Chapter 1:1-3 Jonah rejects God's commission. He did not want to go to Nineveh, the chief city of the Assyrians, because the Assyrians were enemies of the Israelites. He was concerned that, as a result of his preaching, the Ninevites would repent, and God would not destroy the city (cf. 4:1-2).

Chapter 1:4-17 Jonah's flight and Yahweh's pursuit. It is interesting to note that Jonah thought he could flee from the presence of the Lord (1:3), and yet confessed that Yahweh is "the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land" (1:9).

Chapter 2 Jonah's prayer, which is a psalm thanking the Lord for deliverance from drowning.

Chapter 3 God's commission renewed, and carried out. Nineveh repents, and is spared by Yahweh. The only record of Jonah's message to the Ninevites is in 3:4.

Chapter 4 Jonah's anger at Nineveh's repentance and Yahweh's reply. The prophet did not want the Ninevites to listen to his message; he wanted Nineveh destroyed. The book ends on a question, but the answer is as clear to the reader as it must have been to Jonah.

Selected Comments:
In all the prophetic books, except for one, the major characteristic is the message of Yahweh to the prophet, which the prophet delivered to the people. The exception is Jonah, because it is almost entirely an account of what happened to the prophet. The story of Jonah's experience is the message of the book.

Jonah in his book does not speak of himself in the first person, but uses the third person throughout (except for the poem in Ch. 2). This is similar to Moses in the Torah referring to himself in the third person, as did, as Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 308) notes, Xenophon in his Anabasis and Julius Caesar in his Gallic Wars.

Jonah is a famous battleground for various groups of theologians. Scholars have interpreted the book as being myth, allegory, non-historical parable, or history. Discard the "wishy-washy" stance of Dillard and Longman. Jonah is history; the events took place, just as they are recorded in the book.

1. This is the natural reading of the book: the various details provided are given as historical data.

2. Christ's words in Matthew 12:39-42 (cf. Luke 11:29-32) indicate that Jonah is historical. The decisive verse is 41: Christ is stating this as reality. Note also verse 42. Verses 40-42, then, are dealing with historical events.

Objections to a literal, historical interpretation of the book are dealt with effectively by Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, pp. 309-313), Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 905-911), and Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 262-263).

The mission of Jonah served to remind Israel that it was to bring the truth to other nations, that it was "to implement the missionary concepts inherent in the Sinai Covenant" (Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 918). Israel was to be a light to the Gentiles. Set apart for the worship and service of Yahweh, Israel was to be separate from the nations in the sense of not engaging in their idolatrous and other wicked practices. Yet Israel, as much as possible, was to share the truth with the Gentiles.

The Ninevites repented. That would be a lesson to any wicked, stubborn Israelite who refused to repent.

Jonah reminds the reader that with God nothing is impossible.

3. Hosea

Author: The prophet Hosea. His hometown remains unknown, but he apparently was from the Northern Kingdom, which is where he carried out his prophetic ministry.

Time of Composition: In the eighth century B.C., perhaps in the second half. The minimum length for Hosea's prophetic ministry would have been about twenty-five years (from ca. 753, the end of Jeroboam II's reign, to ca. 728, the beginning of Hezekiah's reign). Hosea was called to be a prophet evidently not long before his marriage and the birth of Jezreel (1:2-3). With the birth of Jezreel God announces that Jehu's house/dynasty soon will be punished. Thus, it is likely that Hosea began prophesying toward the end of the reign of Jeroboam II, whose son and successor, Zechariah, reigned for only six months before he was assassinated. The mention of relations with Egypt in Hosea 7:11, 9:6 and 12:2 may indicate the activity of Hoshea (2 Kings 17:4), the last king of Israel (ca. 731-722 B.C.); this would be a parallel to the mention of Hezekiah in 1:1. The book itself gives little evidence that Hosea continued to preach after the fall of Samaria in 722. Whether or not Hosea lived to see this fall is unknown. It has been proposed that he did, and spent his latter days in Judah in retirement. Some think that because he dates his ministry (and his book) by reference to kings of Judah (1:1), that the book was written in Judah after the fall of Samaria, yet this is uncertain.

Purpose: To leave a record of a) Hosea's marital experience, and what that symbolized; and b) his prophetic oracles.

Contents: Basically, the book can be divided into two major sections, Chapters 1-3, and Chapters 4-14. Chapters 1-3 can be seen as functioning as a preface to the prophecies of Chapters 4-14. See further the outline of Dillard and Longman, p. 359. Hosea prophesied primarily against the Northern Kingdom, although his message at times concerned also the Southern Kingdom.

Selected Comments:
The first part of the book, Chapters 1-3, has received the most attention from scholars, and has been understood and treated in numerous ways. LaSor, Hubbard and Bush (Old Testament

Survey, p. 334) comment: "The details are few and the whole account so condensed that much is left to the interpreter's imagination. But the questions about the story's meaning are not merely academic. It is the foundation of Hosea's ministry." Following are questions which have been raised concerning these chapters, with brief responses.

- Are the narratives of Chapters 1 and 3 the actual experience of Hosea (history) or a story he composed to convey a spiritual truth (allegory)?

The narratives are history. This is the natural reading of the text. Certain details do not fit an allegorical pattern. The traditional reason for considering the story as allegory is to avoid the stigma on the morality of God and the prophet which the command to marry an immoral woman apparently involved. But does what is morally doubtful as history become any less questionable when viewed as allegory? Was what God commanded, and Hosea did, immoral?

- What is the relationship between Chapters 1 and 3?

Chapter 3 is the sequel to Chapter 1. This is the natural reading, and certain details support this understanding. Chapter 3 seems to symbolize what is discussed in Chapter 2: Israel's spiritual adultery following her "marriage" to Yahweh in the covenant relationship, Yahweh going after Israel who has deserted the marriage and chastening Israel, and by implication, Israel's return to Yahweh, her first husband, as prophesied in 2:7, 16, 17.

Also, Gomer is the woman in Chapter 3. It is unlikely that the prophet would marry two women; a second wife would confuse rather than clarify the message that God is to restore the one nation Israel to himself.

- What kind of a woman was Gomer?

It is best simply to see Gomer as an immoral woman, who had a "reputation." Hosea knew full well what he was getting into when he married her, and she indeed lived up to her reputation and deserted the marriage.

In conclusion, Chapters 1 and 3 are historical, and occur in the proper chronological order. Hosea married Gomer, had children, and gave them symbolic names. Gomer deserted the marriage and committed adultery. She may have committed adultery even before she deserted the marriage. Hosea does not claim that he is the father of the second and third child (cf. 1:3 with 1:6, 8). Gomer was loved by another man (3:1). At the command of God Hosea buys her back (3:2). Perhaps she had become a slave of some sort (e.g., a slave-prostitute), as a consequence of her sin. Or, perhaps this was the "deal" Hosea worked out with her lover so the lover would give her up. The exact relationship between 3:1 and 3:2 is unclear. Hosea then brought Gomer back to his house. The implication is that Gomer was or became a changed woman, who "returned" to her husband in love.

The marriage depicts the history of Israel, especially the Northern Kingdom. From the spiritual standpoint, this was a desperate time in the Northern Kingdom, and drastic measures were necessary. God tried various methods to get the people to repent. The marriage experience of

Hosea would have caught the people's attention, and then would have been a visual aid to his spoken word. God was the faithful spouse (Hosea), Israel the unfaithful spouse (Gomer). Israel turned to Baal worship, and other forms of idolatry, committing spiritual adultery. The names of the three children symbolized aspects in God's dealing with His people. Jezreel: God would judge the house of Jehu (2 Kings 9 and 10). Lo-Ruhamah: God would not show pity to His people in the future. Lo-Ammi: God would not regard Israel as His people (because they broke the covenant and rejected Yahweh). Nevertheless, God was forgiving and loving; His grace was amazing. God would go after His people and cause them to return to Him. His love would involve discipline (cf. 2:10-13; 3:4). The people of the Northern Kingdom would experience exile (implied: those in the Southern Kingdom would also go into exile). This would have the benefit of causing many of the people to repent and grasp the Gospel promises of God's Word, as a result of which they would return spiritually to the Lord and reform (cf. 2:14-23; 3:5). We note that many of those who came and settled in Judah at the end of the Babylonian Captivity were strongly opposed to idolatry and any idolatrous influences.

Chapter 2 is closely related in subject matter to Chapters 1 and 3. It is a theological commentary on those two chapters.

Chapters 4-14 summarize Hosea's preaching ministry (themes from Chs. 1-3 are seen in Chapters 4-14). The oracles reveal no discernible order. Hosea exposes the sins of the Northern Kingdom; he writes about the decline and impending fall of that kingdom. Following are emphases in these chapters.

1. Many *forgot* God. They lacked saving knowledge of God, with its corresponding love of, affection and gratitude toward, and obedience to, God.

2. Some were engaged in the wrong religious practice brought in by Jeroboam I; some were engaged in idolatry; and some were engaged in both, combining idolatry with their perverted Yahwism.

3. Yahweh's changeless compassion is emphasized in 11:1-9.

4. A key word in Chapters 4-14, indeed in the whole book, is *return*. Concerning God's love, LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush (Old Testament Survey, p. 344) quote W. Eichrodt: "Free from human weaknesses and limitations, God's love abides despite rebellion and hostility. Of all the prophets, Hosea knew what it was to love, be sinned against, and go on loving; he was the best equipped to bring this message of 'the quite irrational power of love as the ultimate basis of the covenant relationship.'" Of course, related to the "irrational power of love" is the awesome grace (undeserved kindness) of God. As LaSor, etc. (Old Testament Survey, p. 331) point out, the dominant influence which gave Hosea's message its ring of compassion was his own suffering and disappointment. Hosea, as does Jeremiah, shows a remarkable sensitivity and depth of feeling. He, as Jeremiah, had been asked by God to suffer much as a prophet.

Thus, Hosea learned obedience to the will of God from the things which he suffered. Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 865-866) notes that for Hosea, "who abhorred

immorality," to marry a woman known for her immorality, "constituted an act of self-abnegation explicable only in terms of a divine directive." The same can be said for Hosea's buying Gomer and bringing her back to his home. His experiences refined his character and enriched his ministry.

Amos mainly pictured sin as breaking the covenant, as failure to meet God's demand for righteousness. Hosea's picture of sin certainly is in harmony with this. However, in addition Hosea presents the nuance of sin as spurning God's love.

Concerning Hosea 1:10-11, notice the change of mood and message in these verses as compared to the surrounding context (often the prophets do not have transitions in their writing).
will be like the sand on the seashore - God had promised Abraham that his descendants would be many. This was fulfilled not only in the physical sense, but in another, and more important, manner. The Apostle Paul (Romans 2:28-29; 4:11-12, 16-17; Galatians 3:7; 4:28) draws out fully what it means to be an Israelite, or a descendant of Abraham. He emphasizes the spiritual aspect, that God considers all who follow in the faith of Abraham as the patriarch's children. So the in-numerable Israelites (v. 10) include Gentile believers. Christians today, whether Jewish or Gentile, make up the "New Israel." Cf. 1 Peter 2:10. *you are not my people...sons of the living God* - This has three references.

a. Some of the Northerners of Hosea's time, after the conquest, returned to Yahweh in true faith, whether they still lived in the territory of the old Northern Kingdom or were in exile. Some of their immediate descendants would be believers.

b. The ten northern tribes were for the most part deported, and swallowed up by, and amalgamated with, foreign peoples. They lost their identity among the Gentiles. But the time would come when the Gospel would be carried out into all the world; it would reach also the later descendants of these ten lost tribes, and many would be converted. Their intermixture with the Gentiles would not interfere with this. They would be called the children of God in the Gentile lands where they would be living.

c. This phrase also refers to the conversion of Gentiles (Romans 9:26).

Judah and...Israel will be reunited - "Judah" refers to the people of the Southern Kingdom who believed, and their believing descendants. "Israel" refers to the people of the Northern Kingdom who believed, and their believing descendants. The reunification is on the spiritual level. In the future this united kingdom will have "one leader," the second David (the first was acclaimed king by the people): Jesus Christ.

will come up out of the land - No matter where the people have been scattered, there will still be this reunification.
great will be the day of Jezreel- There will be a scattering of the people of the Northern Kingdom, for great will be the day when that kingdom in conquered. This is a reference back to 1:5. The destruction will be awful; the people will be taken into exile.

4. Micah

Author: The prophet Micah. See the discussion in Dillard and Longman, pp. 398-399. Micah was from the country. In harmony with this is his taking great pains (1:10-16) to show how the judgment coming to Judah will affect the villages and towns of his home region, southern Judah (LaSor, etc., Old Testament Survey, p. 356). Much of his message is concerned with the sufferings of the common people and of the peasants in the agricultural areas who were exploited by rich and unscrupulous landed nobility (Archer, A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 324). This is similar to what Amos saw in the Northern Kingdom - the rich oppressing the poor and reducing the peasant classes to the most impoverished of living conditions (Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 920). The birthplace of Amos was less than twenty miles from the home of Micah.

Jeremiah 26:18 is the only instance when one canonical prophet (from the Prophets section of the Hebrew Bible, three-fold division) explicitly refers to another prophet (from the Prophets section of the Hebrew Bible).

Micah may have been a contemporary of Amos and Jonah. He certainly was a contemporary of Hosea and Isaiah. Scholars have noted similarities especially between parts of Micah's book and parts of the books of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. The books Isaiah and Micah contain one passage in common: Isaiah 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-3. Verse 4 of the Micah passage is an extra verse, perhaps reflecting Micah's rural background.

Time of Composition: During the second half of the eighth century B.C. (or perhaps the very beginning of the seventh century).

Purpose: The basic purpose is to set forth God's "complaint" (Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 269) against both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms for their sin. Micah proclaims that the necessary product of saving faith is godly living. Most of the people in the Northern and Southern Kingdoms lack such saving faith, and their lives are evil in the eyes of the Lord. The Lord will punish them. Yet a purpose of the book also is to speak about salvation which centers in the Messiah, and the Messiah's kingdom.

Contents: The book seems to be giving a representative sampling and summary review of the oracles which Micah delivered during his entire prophetic ministry. The only pattern in the book which the author of this course discerns is a very basic one: an alternation between Law and Gospel. The book frequently is divided by scholars into three parts:

Chapters 1-3 prophecies of judgment;
Chapters 4-5 prophecies of hope and restoration;
Chapters 6-7 largely prophecies of doom.

This outline may be deemed a bit too general. Following is another possible outline.

Chapters 1 - 2:11 Exposing the sins of the people, and foretelling coming judgments from the Lord. Destruction of Samaria - 1:6.

Chapter 2:12-13 A word of promise and hope, centering in the Messiah.

Chapter 3:1-12 Exposing the sins of the people, especially the leaders of the people, and foretelling coming judgments from the Lord. Destruction of Jerusalem - 3:12; cf. 1:6.

Chapters 4 - 5 Prophecies of hope and restoration. Pointing ahead to the Messianic Age. Well-known: 4:1-5, 5:2-5a.

Chapters 6 - 7:6 Another Law section.

- A. 6:1-8 Yahweh's complaint against His people, and what He wants from them. Note 6:8.
- B. 6:9-16 The sins of the people, and coming punishment from the Lord.
- C. 7:1-6 A lament, a psalm of sadness and grief, depicting the wickedness of the society. Uttered by a true believer in Yahweh. Cf. 7:6 with Matthew 10:35-36.

Chapters 7:7-20 Conclusion of hope and promise.

- A. 7:7-13 Confession, repentance, and deliverance. A true believer's, or true Israel's, continued trust in the Lord.
- B. 7:14-20 The book ends on a joyful note, exulting in God's mercy and forgiveness, and His vindicating the true believers. Points ahead to the Messianic age, when Christ would be triumphant. Verse 18 may be a play on Micah's name. Cf. verse 20 with Luke 1:72-73.

Selected Comments:

Micah speaks fervently, yet concisely, to the issues of his day in terms of Israel's covenant obligations. He describes sins which are to a large extent similar to those exposed by Amos in the Northern Kingdom: besides the rich oppressing the poor, a false sense of religious security, and external ritualism (no sincerity of heart), with the corresponding lifestyle.

Many critical scholars thought/think that Micah and the other prophets could only have preached judgment and doom, and so consider(ed) 2:12-13 and most of Chapters 4-7 as later additions. There is no reason to go along with that view.

Micah 4:1-5 speaks about the Messianic Kingdom/Christian Church ("the mountain of the Lord's temple," "Zion," "Jerusalem"), how this kingdom will include people from all nations, how those in this kingdom will enjoy spiritual peace (with God and each other), and how this kingdom will last forever.

Micah 5:2-5a foretells the birthplace of the Messiah, and how He will shepherd His flock (the Christian Church), protecting His sheep and granting them peace. Verse 2 sets forth both the humanity (born in Bethlehem) and deity ("goings out...from days of eternity") of the Messiah.

5. Isaiah

Author: The prophet Isaiah, son of Amoz, who lived in Jerusalem from the eighth into the seventh centuries B.C., is the author of the entire book. See the discussion of Dillard and Longman, pp. 275-276.

However, many scholars and theologians have disagreed, or would disagree, with this position. The subject of the authorship of Isaiah is a major battleground in the field of Old Testament studies. The debate is as important as that concerning authorship of the Pentateuch. Where one stands on this issue is a key indicator of one's theological position and methodology: whether one regards Scripture as inerrant, or not; whether one believes the authors of Scripture were inspired, or not; whether one is a practitioner of the Historical-Grammatical Method, or the Historical-Critical Method. The matter of authorship of Isaiah, like that of authorship of the Pentateuch, also was part of the controversy in our synod's history (which took place especially from the late 1960's into the mid-1970's).

Read the discussion of Dillard and Longman, pp. 268-274. Omit p. 275 of their discussion of authorship, which has statements which are confusing and in fact erroneous. As a supplement to Dillard and Longman, read in the handouts section pp. 205-211 of Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament). In summary, the dominant position today among historical-critical scholars is that there were three main authors of the book Isaiah: a) Isaiah son of Amoz, living in Jerusalem from the eighth to the seventh centuries B.C., who wrote parts of Chapters 1-39; b) Second Isaiah, or Deutero-Isaiah, living and writing in Babylonia in the 540's B.C., who wrote Chapters 40-55; and c) Third Isaiah, or Trito-Isaiah, living in Judah in the post-exilic period, who wrote Chapters 56-66.

In addition to the explanation given by Young, another reason for the variations in style and vocabulary seen in Isaiah could be that the prophet was writing over a long period of time, and such variations are to be expected to a certain degree. It is interesting to note that some historical-critical scholars explain that Chapters 40-55 were added to the scroll of Isaiah son of Amoz because Second Isaiah was a *disciple* of the first Isaiah, writing in his spirit, carrying on his viewpoint. Yet they attributed Chapters 40-55 in the first place to a second author because of *differences* in subject matter, style and theology as compared to Chapters 1-39.

Time of Composition: Probably during the last third of the eighth, and first quarter of the seventh, century B.C.

Purpose: As Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 326) and Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 211) explain, the purpose of the book is to proclaim that deliverance is by the grace of Yahweh, and by the power of Yahweh, rather than by the effort and strength of man. This deliverance is both physical (do not trust in human allies) and spiritual. In connection with the latter, Isaiah prophesied concerning the Messiah and His kingdom. The books emphasizes that the holy God would not permit wicked living by His covenant people, and therefore would chasten them in order to purge them and bring about a purified remnant.

Contents:
Chapters 1-39

A. 1-12 For the most part, prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Largely oracles of judgment or doom. But there is also much material of promise and about the coming Messiah.

B. 13-23 Largely *Gentile oracles* - God's judgment upon various Gentile nations.

C. 24-27 Universal judgment, and final deliverance of those faithful to God.

D. 28-33 For the most part, oracles of judgment and woe against the unbelievers in the Northern Kingdom, Judah and Jerusalem. However, there is also a promise concerning coming salvation and the establishment of God's Kingdom.

E. 34-35 The contrasted future of the wicked and the righteous. Judgment against the nations and powers, referred to as "Edom," the enemies of those faithful to God. Chapter 35 - the deliverance of those faithful to Yahweh, and the blessings that will come to them.

F. 36-39 Historical section. A key figure here is King Hezekiah.

Chapters 40-55 This can be seen as the second major portion of the book, with the understanding that these chapters had the same author as Chapters 1-39. What follows is a listing of the main themes in Chapters 40-55, as given by Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 220-221), who cites J. A. Alexander.

A. A description of Isaiah's wicked countrymen, those who were unfaithful to Yahweh and worshipped idols, whether in Judah or in exile.

B. A description of Isaiah's countrymen who still confessed the true God, but were weak in the faith. For these people, Isaiah uses different arguments to demonstrate Yahweh's power and ability to fulfill His promises.

C. The deliverance from exile in Babylonia, which serves as an example of God's future dealings with His people.

D. The coming of the Messiah.

E. The character of the Messianic Kingdom.

Chapters 56-66 This can be seen as the third major portion of the book, with the understanding that these chapters had the same author as Chapters 1-39 and 40-55. The main themes of this portion are identical to themes A, B, D, and E of Chapters 40-55. Some of the passages of Chapters 56-66 could have been applicable to people living in Isaiah's time; some seem to fit the

needs of the people of Judah after the return from the Babylonian exile.

Selected Comments:
Isaiah was a very gifted writer, as indicated by his beautiful poetic style. It should also be noted that no other prophet was chosen by the Holy Spirit to proclaim so many and such remarkable prophecies concerning Christ and the New Testament Church. That is why Isaiah is referred to as *the evangelist of the Old Testament.* Examples of Messianic prophecies in Isaiah are seen in Chapters 7, 9, 11, 40 and 61. The four *Servant Songs* are also Messianic prophecies: 42:1-4, 49:1-7, 50:4-11, and the greatest of these songs, 52:13-53:12.

Following are emphases in the book.

1. Yahweh is the supreme and only ruler. His power is infinite and universal. Therefore He will judge all nations (LaSor, etc., Old Testament Survey, pp. 386-387).

2. Isaiah has more to say about the Holy Spirit than any other Old Testament writer (LaSor, etc., Old Testament Survey, p. 387). See, e.g., 11:2; 32:15; 61:1 (cf. Acts 10:38); and 63:10-11, 14.

3. Isaiah strongly emphasizes the holiness of God. The prophet's characteristic phrase for God is "the Holy One of Israel."

4. As indicated in *Purpose* above, Isaiah emphasizes that the holy God expected covenant obedience from His chosen people. However, many in Israel were unfaithful. The people went through the religious rituals, but their hearts were far from the Lord, as evidenced by their wicked lives. Also, many engaged in pagan worship practices. Therefore judgments would come from Yahweh.

   Yet Yahweh would not wipe out Israel; He had promises tied up with the nation. From Israel would come the Messiah. Therefore the judgments would be in part a drastic discipline, purging, refining the nation, and leaving a purified remnant.

   To encourage those who were faithful to Yahweh, and to remind Israel that Yahweh keeps every one of His promises, Isaiah foretold the coming of the Messiah. He described the Messiah's character, work, and kingdom.

More will be said about this book in the Isaiah course.

6. Nahum

Author: The prophet Nahum of Elkosh. The exact location of Elkosh is uncertain. In 1:15 the reference to Judah may imply that Nahum was from Judah.

Time of Composition: Nahum refers to the fall of Thebes as a well-known occurrence in 3:8 (No Amon). This took place in 664/3 B.C. under the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal. So Nahum

wrote after this time. The fall of Nineveh is predicted as a future occurrence. The fall took place in 612 B.C. Therefore Nahum wrote prior to that date. The book was composed, then, between 664/3 and 612. Since the impression from the book is that Nineveh was still in its glory, perhaps the time period can be narrowed to about 660-640 B.C. In 640 Assyria was still at the zenith of its power, but after that year it began to decline.

Purpose: To announce that Nineveh, the proud capital of the Assyrian Empire, will be destroyed.

Contents: Notice how this book is a contrast to the Book of Jonah. Similar to Obadiah, the Book of Nahum is mainly a message against a foreign nation.

Chapter 1 An introductory psalm, in which Nahum praises the majesty of God and announces the punishment of the Lord's enemies (including the people of Nineveh), and the Lord's goodness to those who trust in Him (Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 270).

Chapter 2 In vivid language Nahum describes the siege of Nineveh and the city's destruction.

Chapter 3 Nahum further describes the destruction of the city, but also gives the reasons for the fall of Nineveh (vv. 1, 19).

Selected Comments:
The Assyrian Empire had been built by blood and torture, cruelty and massacre, destruction, plundering, and exiling such as has been seldom seen in history. Nahum has a joyous attitude when talking about the fall of Nineveh, but this in not, as Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p. 353) explains, from vengeful malice. Because he loves God and his fellow men, he hates and despises inhumanity, cruelty, and wickedness. He is speaking as a man of God, who is totally preoccupied with the righteous Lord's cause on earth. His earnest desire is to see Yahweh vindicate His holiness and righteousness in the eyes of the heathen, against this ruthless Assyrian nation. Nahum desires this so that all would realize that every nation, no matter how strong it might be or have been, is helpless before the wrath of Yahweh.

Scholars are in agreement that Nahum has an exceptionally fine style. As a literary craftsman he has no superior and few peers among the Old Testament poets. His book contains scintillating imagery, numerous metaphors or similes which are both apt and brief. With his vivid descriptions he makes the reader feel as if he or she is right there during the destruction of Nineveh (but all of this is foretelling).

Nahum presents Yahweh in His universality, justice, omnipotence, majesty, mercy, and faithfulness.

Following are other theological truths presented in Nahum.
1. Military might does not preclude obligations of righteousness and justice (LaSor, etc., Old Testament Survey, p. 449).

2. Nahum not only foretold the destruction of Nineveh, but he also predicted in detailed fashion how the city would be destroyed. Archeological finds have shown that these predictions were fulfilled. Thus, as Walter Maier (The Book of Nahum [St. Louis: Concordia, 1959; 1977 reprint], p. 139) has written, the prophet's book "constitutes one of the most dramatic and electrifying instances of divine prophecy in the Old Testament." God made these predictions, and then brought them about, demonstrating both the validity of Old Testament prophecy, and that He is the Lord of all the earth.

3. Nineveh fell not because it was a large, non-Israelite, wealthy, commercial city, but because it was a godless and idolatrous city, a city of violence, lust, and greed. Nahum shows how terrible God's judgments can be. Read in the handouts section p. 85 from Maier, The Book of Nahum.

4. The book shows how quickly God can bring about change. In 640 B.C. Assyria was at its height, with Nineveh as the proud capital. In 612 B.C. Assyria was conquered, and Nineveh destroyed. Not long after that the Assyrians disappear from history. Read in the handouts section pp. 85-87 from Maier, The Book of Nahum.

Old Testament Isagogics
Unit 7

1. Zephaniah
2. Habakkuk
3. Jeremiah
4. Lamentations
5. Ezekiel
6. Daniel
7. The Post Exilic Period

Unit 7 - Old Testament Isagogics

Objectives

When students complete this lesson they will

Know:

1. The isagogical matters pertaining to Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, and about the post-exilic period in Israel's history.

Be able to:

1. Read these subjects with greater understanding and discuss them with their peers and the people they are serving.

Reading Assignments

1. Skim the contents of Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel.
2. Unit 7 material in this student guide.
3. Dillard and Longman, pp. 415-420, 409-413, 285-327, 329-352.
4. Handout, Young, pp. 360-372

Writing Assignments

None

1. Zephaniah

Author: The prophet Zephaniah. See the discussion of Dillard and Longman, pp. 415-416. The Hezekiah listed may or may not have been the godly king of Judah. If Zephaniah was of royal blood, the denunciation in 1:8 would carry extra weight (Hummel, The Word Becoming Flesh, p. 351). "Cushi" (which means "Nubian" or "Ethiopian"; cf. Numbers 12:1), the name of Zephaniah's father, may imply partially black ancestry (Hummel, The Word Becoming Flesh, p. 352). It is interesting to note that, in Zephaniah's foreign nations section (2:4-15), the prophet includes Cush (2:12), which is somewhat surprising (in view of the other nations which are mentioned).

Time of Composition: During the reign of King Josiah of Judah (640 - 609 B.C.). Because Zephaniah presents the spiritual condition of Judah as being very poor, and because Josiah was a godly, reforming king, the prophet **perhaps** began his ministry before Josiah started his reform (628/7 B.C.), or before the reform took on added impetus with the discovery of the Book of the Law (622/1 B.C.).

Purpose: As LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush (Old Testament Survey, p. 432) explain, Judah never recovered from the long period (about 45 years) when Manasseh was sole ruler. Throughout the great majority of his reign he was a wicked king, who had a terrible, corrupting influence on the land. Despite token attempts at reform toward the end of his rule (2 Chronicles 33:12-19), he left indelible blots on the nation's character. Amon, his son and successor, followed in Manasseh's former wicked ways. Thus the land was for the most part corrupt when Josiah began to rule at the age of eight years. Even Josiah, as good as he was, and as important as his reform movement was, could not turn around this basic character of the land before his abrupt death in 609 B.C. See 2 Kings 23:26-27.

Therefore, Zephaniah both describes the sins of Judah and Jerusalem, and foretells judgment and disaster coming upon the land. He also writes about judgment from God on specific foreign nations because of their wickedness, and about the universal judgment (Judgment Day). At the same time, he urges the people of Judah to repent, trust in the Lord, and show their faith in obedient living. He proclaims the Gospel, as he looks ahead to the Messianic Age and the new heavens and earth.

Contents: See the previous paragraph. The book falls into two major sections: 1:1 - 3:8 (unremitting condemnation, except for 2:1-3, 7, 9b, 11) and 3:9-20 (a conclusion of hope and promise). For a more detailed outline, see that of Dillard and Longman, p. 418. 3:9-20 deals with the Messianic Age, announcing that God will have for Himself a purified people (through the preaching of the Gospel), drawn from all the nations of the earth.

Selected Comments:
What nation did Zephaniah see as God's instrument for bringing judgment on Judah? See the discussion of Dillard and Longman on p. 417. After 640 B.C. Assyria began to decline, and the Scythian proposal is questionable. The strongest candidate is Babylonia (remember, Zephaniah was writing under inspiration). Discard the first sentence on top of p. 418 in Dillard and

Longman ("Unless one is willing to accept...one must reject...").

Concerning 3:18-20 Theodore Laetsch (The Minor Prophets [St. Louis: Concordia, 1956], p. 381) writes: "The closing words of Zephaniah's message are directed particularly to the believers living in the dark decades preceding Jerusalem's fall, during the horrors of the siege, and the long years of captivity at Babylon." They are comforted with the reminder of the coming Messiah and His kingdom, the blessings of which were retroactive to believers in the Old Testament era (in v. 20 the "home" of the NIV translation is not present in the Hebrew text).

2. Habakkuk

Author: The prophet Habakkuk. All that we know about the prophet is what can be gathered from the book itself, which does not give his home town, his father, or the kings under whom he prophesied.

Time of Composition: Since so little is known about the prophet, the date of the composition of his book cannot be precisely determined. Noteworthy in this regard is that 1:5-11 refers to the *Chaldeans* or *Babylonians* as already well known and having a reputation as a powerful, warlike, conquering nation. [[Excursus: Chaldea was technically southern Babylonia. However, especially because the dynasty to which Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of the *neo-Babylonian* empire, belonged came from that area, *Chaldea* frequently is used from the late seventh century on for all of Babylonia.]] The prophecy says that God is raising up the Babylonians. This indicates the beginning of their dominance in the ancient Near East. The time probably would be after 625 B.C., when Nabopolassar (father of Nebuchadnezzar) seized the Babylonian throne and triggered the rise of the neo-Babylonian kingdom. Perhaps the time indicated is after the fall of Nineveh in 612. Habakkuk also predicts that the Babylonians will subjugate the land of Judah. The impression given is that this will happen relatively soon. Nebuchadnezzar first invaded and conquered Judah in 605 B.C. It is less likely that the reference is to his second invasion in 598/7 B.C. Habakkuk 1:2-4 describes injustice in Judah, but this does not really help to pinpoint the time of the prophecy. With the evidence that is available, it is reasonable to conclude that Habakkuk delivered his message late in the seventh century B.C., perhaps ca. 608-606 B.C., and wrote it down at that time or not long thereafter.

Purpose: To record two questions (some call these complaints) Habakkuk presented to God, God's responses, and Habakkuk's psalm of praise (uttered after his doubts had been settled and his questions answered).

Contents: See the preceding paragraph, and the outline and discussion in Dillard and Longman, pp. 411-413. 2:6-20 could also be regarded as part of God's second answer (which begins at 2:2).

Selected Comments:
Chapter 2:4b is the key verse in the book. In this chapter God tells the prophet that He will judge

and condemn the proud, self-confident Babylonians, who have no faith in Him. Their empire will be destroyed, and they will not live with God in eternity. The gods of Babylonia are powerless. But 2:4b says that the one who has faith in the Lord - who is righteous by faith - will not be condemned; he will be acquitted. That person will go on living, he will have everlasting life. This is the chief doctrine of Scripture: justification by God's grace through faith. 2:4b is quoted by Paul in Romans 1:17 (also Galatians 3:11). Luther read this verse in Romans, and thus began the Reformation.

While holding to the position that Habakkuk is the author of the entire book, some think that Chapter 3 was a hymn/psalm composed by the prophet at a separate time from his composition of Chapters 1 and 2. There is no compelling reason to go along with this proposal. Whichever position a person takes, it makes no difference with regard to the interpretation of Chapter 3 or the book as a whole.

That Chapter 3 is a hymn/psalm is indicated by the following features:
- the mention of *Shigionoth* (verse 1), which was perhaps a hymn tune (cf. the title of Psalm 7);
- the occurrences of *selah* (verses 3, 9, 13);
- the musical notations in verse 19.

The book shows that it is not wrong for a believer to have questions. God used Habakkuk's questions to draw the prophet closer to Himself. Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 936) observes that "in the thought of Habakkuk, the concept of the justice of God formed the central issue in any attempt to comprehend history from a religious point of view."

3. Jeremiah

Author: The prophet Jeremiah. More is known about the life of Jeremiah than about the life of any other Old Testament prophet, due to the large amount of autobiographical material in his book. See Dillard and Longman, p. 289. According to the narrative of his call (1:4-19) Jeremiah was a youth (probably not older than twenty) when he began his prophetic ministry.

Time of Composition: Jeremiah began his ministry in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah (1:2), which was 627 B.C. His ministry continued beyond the fall of Jerusalem (587/6 B.C.). At intervals throughout these forty-plus years Jeremiah was writing the oracles and narratives which make up the book (concerning 52:31-34, review the discussion of the composition of Kings). Precisely speaking, Jeremiah dictated many, if not all, of the portions of the book to Baruch, his scribe or amanuensis, who actually wrote them down. For a glimpse into how at least a large part of the book was composed see Chapter 36. Baruch, as Jeremiah, was taken into Egypt (43:6), and there he may have gathered and arranged all of Jeremiah's prophecies (at the direction of the prophet), either before or after Jeremiah's death.

Purpose: To preserve the prophetic message of Jeremiah.

1. a. The theme running throughout Jeremiah is that Jerusalem and Judah would suffer chastisement from the Lord unless there was true repentance. In the first stage of his

ministry Jeremiah foretold that God's instrument of judgment would be the Babylonians, who would come in the near future. The people would be chastised because of their wickedness, because of their forsaking Yahweh and turning to idolatry.

b. Judah was included in the Babylonian empire. When Jeremiah saw that the majority of the people still refused to repent, he urged them to submit to the yoke of the Babylonians. It would be useless for them to rebel against these foreign rulers, who were God's instrument of chastisement.
c. When most of the people of Judah and Jerusalem persisted in their wickedness, and refused to heed the warnings of Jeremiah, the prophet foretold a chastisement that was even more severe: the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem, and many additional people being taken into exile.

2. Jeremiah also spoke prophecies against the enemy nations surrounding Judah. They, too, would be judged by God for their wickedness.

3. Amidst these prophecies of judgment, Jeremiah pleaded with the people of Judah to repent. Out of this pleading came prophecies concerning the Messiah and the Messianic Age. These prophecies were words of comfort to the minority which was faithful to Yahweh (and the means by which some of the unbelievers were converted), reminding them that Yahweh would indeed send the Deliverer. Jeremiah encouraged the believers to continue remaining faithful to Yahweh, trusting in Him alone, and relying on His promises.

Contents: See the discussion of Purpose. One very broad outline could be that given by Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 233-234).

Chapters 1-25 These chapters contain prophecies of woe and well-being which were spoken to Judah. The order and arrangement of these prophecies are not strictly chronological.

Chapters 26-45 These chapters deal primarily with the personal life of the prophet, though the autobiographical narratives are not in a chronological order.

Chapters 46-51 These chapters contain prophecies against foreign nations.

Chapter 52 This chapter is a historical appendix.

As Young (p. 234) notes, the contents of the book are not arranged in what, to the western mind, is a logical order. Why is this arrangement seen in Jeremiah? It must be remembered that the book comes from the ancient Near East, and ancient Near Eastern writings do not always show the great concern for logical arrangement which seems to be characteristic of western writings. Jeremiah's prophecies may seem to be scattered, but their arrangement allows for emphasis by repetition. The main themes of the book are recurring ones - the **sinfulness** of Judah and the **approaching judgment**. As the reader meets these themes again and again, the impression which they make is a powerful one.

Selected Comments:
After the death of King Josiah (609 B.C.), Jeremiah suffered much as a prophet of God. He was an object of hatred, falsely accused of treason, slandered, and severely persecuted. He had much grief and experienced loneliness as one having few true friends (and lacking a wife - 16:1-2). See, for example, his complaint in 20:7-18. Nevertheless, because of God's power and protection, Jeremiah carried out the ministry God had planned for him and indeed stood as a "bronze wall" (1:18), despite the opposition of many and powerful people. By God's grace Jeremiah was able to endure his loneliness, overcome his own sinful nature, and withstand the temptation to abandon his prophetic office. With the help of the Lord Jeremiah maintained his spiritual integrity and remained faithful to his calling, and thus became a symbol of courage and of triumph over hardship. He never once, as Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 809) states, stooped to an act of spiritual compromise in the face of danger. Although Jeremiah at times prayed for God's vengeance on his enemies (e.g., 11:20; 12:3; 20:12), he still had a deep love for his countrymen. He prayed for them and lamented their judgment (e.g., 9:1; 13:17; 14:17).

Concerning the text of Jeremiah, note the discussion of Dillard and Longman, pp. 291-294. The explanation for the existence of a shorter and longer edition which is preferred by the author of this course is that given by Dillard and Longman (with reference to Archer) in the first full paragraph on the top of p. 293, starting with the words, "On the other hand, some have suggested that Jeremiah himself or his..." The additional material in the longer edition was also by Jeremiah, even if it was incorporated by Baruch.

The following table is a correlation between the MT and the LXX for ease of comparison.

MT	LXX
1:1 - 25:13	1:1 - 25:13
25:14 - 45:5	32:1 - 51:35
46:1 - 51:64	25:14 - 31:44

One example of a Messianic prophecy in the book is 23:5-6. This passage speaks about the Messiah, His righteous reign, and the blessedness of being in His kingdom (a spiritual kingdom). The Messiah is identified with Yahweh, who bestows righteousness on His people (verse 6b; justification by faith).

Chapter 31:31-34 is the famous prophecy of the New Covenant, which will be put into effect by the Messiah, and which will replace the Old Covenant. Cf. Hebrews 8:6-13 and 10:11-18.

4. Lamentations

Author: The book does not give the author's name; it remains uncertain who the author was. According to early and consistent tradition Jeremiah wrote the book, and this may be correct. As Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 343) points out, the author seems to have been an eyewitness of the destruction of Jerusalem (because of the general vividness of the description of the devastation). Further, there are striking similarities of style and phraseology between Lamentations and Jeremiah (examples are listed by Young).

Time of Composition: The book was written not long after the destruction of Jerusalem in 587/6 B.C.

Purpose: As Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 345) explains, the book presents the attitude of a devout believer in Yahweh towards the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem. The author laments the disaster which has occurred because of the sinfulness of the majority of the people. He grieves that his countrymen had become so wicked, yet acknowledges that the Lord, and His judgment, are righteous. The author appeals to the chastened people to repent and return to Yahweh. At the same time he sees how evil has been the action of those who have destroyed Jerusalem, and calls for their punishment. LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush (Old Testament Survey, p. 617) comment: "The historical narratives of 2 Kgs. 25 and Jer. 52 give the facts; the five poems of Lamentations capture the emotions."

Contents: The book has five parts, which equal the five chapters.

Chapter 1 The author pictures vividly devastated, desolate, and forsaken Jerusalem. Reasons for God's righteous judgment are given in verses 5, 8-9.

Chapter 2 The author pictures God's anger with the city. Some reasons for this are implied in verse 14 - the people had listened to false prophets, and not to the prophets sent by God. In verses 18-19 the author urges the people to repent.

Chapter 3 Jerusalem is personified. Verses 1-20: Jerusalem laments the tragic condition that has come upon it. Verses 21-39: Jerusalem recalls that God's mercy does not end (especially verses 22-27, 31-33). Verses 40-54: Jerusalem urges the people to examine their ways, repent, and return to the Lord. Verses 55-66: Jerusalem, after knowing that God has heard its cry, calls upon the Lord to punish its enemies.

Chapter 4 The author presents a contrast between the former splendor and glory of Jerusalem and the city's present miserable condition. Verse 13 gives reasons for God's judgment.

Chapter 5 The author, describing the suffering and grief of his countrymen, pleads with the Lord, "Restore us to Yourself...that we may return; renew our days as of old..." (verse 21). Reasons for God's judgment are presented in verses 7, 16.

Selected Comments:
Lamentations deals with a major tragedy. God had chosen the Israelites to be His covenant people. He delivered them from slavery, and enabled them to possess the Promised Land. God's plan was that the Israelites dwell there and enjoy His physical and spiritual blessings as they awaited the coming of the Messiah. The people, however, repeatedly rebelled against the Lord. As a result, the Northern Kingdom was destroyed, the people exiled, and the territory inhabited by foreigners. Now the Southern Kingdom has been ended. Jerusalem, the capital, the city of David, and the temple of Solomon within the city, have been made into ruins (undoubtedly the ark of the covenant was consumed by fire). Many have been exiled to Babylonia. The author knows *what could have been* for Israel, and grieves over the present horrible reality confronting him.

The author thus experienced emotional turmoil, and one can sense some of the questions that went through his mind due to the bitterness of the moment. Did God no longer care? Was there any prospect for the future? But this bitterness of the moment does not dominate the writer and his book. Rather, as Hummel (The Word Becoming Flesh, pp. 523-524) explains, in Lamentations confession is made of sin, and God's justice is never questioned. Relying on God's love, mercy, and unfailing goodness (3:25-32), the author is certain that there will be a future under God and His Word. He knows that God's promises have not failed, despite the present terrible circumstances, and he continues to trust in those promises.

The author believes that the Messiah indeed will come. Lamentations displays the magnitude of God's righteous wrath, and shows the need for the Deliverer, who bore and made atonement for the transgressions of all sinners. Through faith in the Messiah, the people would have forgiveness and everlasting life.

The first four chapters of Lamentations are acrostics, written according to the twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Review the discussion in the Old Testament Bible course, and note the comments of Dillard and Longman on p. 308. LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush (Old Testament Survey, p. 619) explain that as a piece of artistry the acrostic was an act of devotion by the poet. They suggest that in Lamentations this form seems to have served at least two other purposes.

1. It signaled a full expression of anguish and contrition, by covering the subject from **aleph** to **tau** (i.e., A to Z).

2. It placed artistic constraints on the lament, thus keeping it from deteriorating to an uncontrolled wail, howl, or whine.

Another possible purpose for the acrostic form was that it may have indicated that the grief would come to an end.

Lamentations was one of the Megilloth, and was read on the 9th of Ab.

5. Ezekiel

Author: The prophet Ezekiel. See the discussion of Dillard and Longman, pp. 313-319. In

Babylonia Ezekiel lived in the community Tel-Abib (3:15). He possessed a house (8:1) and was happily married (24:15-18), until his wife died suddenly in 588 (on the day the final siege of Jerusalem began). Hummel (The Word Becoming Flesh, p. 258) observes that the fact Ezekiel had a house indicates fair living conditions not only for the prophet but also for most of the other exiles. The Babylonians in general were more humane in their policy of deportation than the Assyrians had been. A reasonable estimation is that the physical circumstances of the exiles in Babylonia in Ezekiel's time were not extremely good and not extremely bad. Later, a number of these exiles became prosperous merchants and businessmen in Babylonia.

Aside from their physical circumstances, the exiles needed someone to minister to their spiritual needs. Ezekiel was God's servant for that purpose. Hummel (p. 258) points out that, in contrast to many of the prophets before him, and especially to his contemporary Jeremiah, Ezekiel apparently was tolerated, perhaps even held in some esteem, by his fellow exiles. There is no indication that he was persecuted. He is consulted by the elders of the exiles (8:1; 14:1; 20:1), and at times listened to by large crowds. However, at least until the fall of Jerusalem, many of the people did not believe the message of Ezekiel, or did not understand what he was saying (20:49; 33:30-32). The destruction of Jerusalem was striking proof that Ezekiel's proclamation was true and reliable; he indeed was a genuine prophet receiving revelation from God.

Time of Composition: Ezekiel's ministry lasted for at least twenty-two years (ca. 593-571 B.C.). See Dillard and Longman, p. 313, and their chronological table on p. 315. It was during this period, or shortly thereafter, that Ezekiel wrote his book.

Purpose: To preserve a record of Ezekiel's prophetic ministry. His task was "to impress upon the exiles the fact that calamity had come because of their own sinfulness" (Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 244). During the first part of his ministry he foretold that Jerusalem would be destroyed if the people back in Judah persisted in their idolatry and other wickedness. Ezekiel explained that God's chastisements were necessary if He was to correct His disobedient people and draw them back from unbelief. In addition, the prophet foretold that the holy God, as Ruler of all the earth, would also bring righteous judgment on certain Gentile peoples because of their transgressions.

Throughout his ministry Ezekiel urged the exiles to repent and trust in Yahweh, who was ever faithful to His promises. To strengthen the faith and hope of those who believed (and that unbelievers might be converted), Ezekiel told about a glorious future time. He prophesied about the coming Messiah, the rise and development of the Messianic Kingdom (the Christian Church), and the creation of the new heavens and earth.

Contents: See the outline of Dillard and Longman, pp. 320-321. Another way to outline the book is to have Chapters 33-39 as the third section, and Chapters 40-48 as the fourth and final section. Chapters 1-24 contain prophecies uttered before the destruction of Jerusalem; Chapters 33-48 contain prophecies spoken after the fall of the city (33:21). 33:1-20 is a repetition and expansion of the same *watchman* theme, with its stress on the individual accountability and responsibility of both the prophet and the people, seen in Chapter 3. Chapter 33:1-20 is a sort of recommissioning of the prophet at this crucial point in his ministry (the Babylonians taking

Jerusalem).

Selected Comments:
Dillard and Longman wax eloquent at the bottom of p. 319. Their discussion, beginning with "The prophet so identified with the fate of his people as vicariously to take their suffering on himself and to...," and continuing to the end of the page, is extreme. Ezekiel performed his sign acts simply in obedience to God's directives.

A characteristic of the book is God's calling Ezekiel *son of man* (to emphasize Ezekiel's humanity), and telling him, *set your face against,* to strengthen his determination to prophesy, despite the fact that many of his hearers would (at least initially) refuse to believe his messages.

The message of Chapter 34 is that in the future God would get rid of the false shepherds (leaders of the people). He Himself would gather (spiritually) His scattered sheep and install *one shepherd, My servant David* (verse 23) over them - this is the second David, namely, the Messiah. Verses 25-31 depict, with earthly imagery, the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom, which culminate in the glorious peace of the new heavens and earth.

Chapter 37:15-28 deals with the spiritual reunification of Judah and Israel (in v. 21 *back* of the NIV translation is not in the Hebrew text). Descendants of people of the old Northern and Southern Kingdoms would be brought to faith when the Gospel would go out into all the world. God's *servant David* (verse 24) would rule over them: Christ will rule over this spiritual kingdom, the one, holy Christian Church.

Concerning Chapters 38-39, Hummel (The Word Becoming Flesh, p. 279) comments: "...it seems plain that, in contrast to Ezekiel's earlier Gentile oracles, *no specific* historical individuals or nations are in mind [with the names "Gog" and "Magog"]. Here the *trans*historical is primary, with, however, constant manifestations and anticipations within the course of history. The major focus, however, is eschatological, the final showdown `battle of Armageddon' at the end of time." On the Last Day all evil forces (*Gog* and *Magog*) will be overthrown forever.

In Chapters 40-48 Ezekiel portrays the Messianic Kingdom and the blessedness of being in this kingdom, which merges into the new heavens and earth. With his detailed description of the city and temple, he is using figurative and symbolical language, not literal; he is speaking as a prophet, not as an architect. He is using Old Testament language and thought patterns to depict New Testament realities. The whole description (Chapters 40-48) comes to a climax in the last words of the prophecy, *the Lord is there.* In the end, paradise would be restored (cf. Genesis 2:10, Ezekiel 47:1-12, and Revelation 22:1-2), in which the saved will carry on perfect worship of God.
With regard to the LXX being 4 or 5 percent shorter than the MT (Dillard and Longman, p. 320), this is perhaps due to the fact that there may have been two editions of the book (as seems to be the case with Jeremiah). The MT would be favored as the final text produced by Ezekiel.

6. Daniel

Author: Daniel, who was taken by the Babylonians into exile in 605/4 B.C., and who lived in Babylon into the 530's B.C. or beyond. The book has no introduction, but beginning with Chapter 7 Daniel speaks in the first person. The book is a unity, and thus it was entirely authored by Daniel (including the third-person narratives about himself in Chapters 1-6). Since the book reports the taking of Babylon by the Medes and Persians (539 B.C.), and about events taking place not many years after this (cf. Ch. 6; 9:1; 10:1; 11:1), it was perhaps composed, or completed, by Daniel in the 530's B.C.

The authorship of Daniel is a major issue in Old Testament scholarship. This issue is on a par with the debate over authorship of the Pentateuch and Isaiah, and for the same reasons. There are two basic positions with regard to Daniel: that of this course, and the position that the book was written by an unknown Jew living in Palestine about 165 B.C., during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. The latter position holds that Chapters 1-6 are historical fiction, and that the whole book was written to encourage the resistance movement against Antiochus, who was persecuting Jewish believers.

Read in the handouts section pp. 360-372 of Young's An Introduction to the Old Testament, which supplement the discussion in Dillard and Longman (notice how Dillard and Longman supplement Young with their fuller treatment of the issue "Darius the Mede"). The following comments expand on certain points made by Young.

1. With regard to Nebuchadnezzar's sickness (Young, p. 367), Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 1115-1117) reports that he was able to observe a man with the same illness. Harrison concludes that Daniel was describing quite accurately an attestable, if rather rare, mental affliction: boanthropy.

2. With regard to Belshazzar being called Nebuchadnezzar's *son* (Young, p. 368), Archer (A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, pp. 382-383) has the following explanation: In ancient usage the term *son* often referred to a successor in the same office whether or not there was a blood relationship...In Assyria a similar practice was reflected in the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, which refers to King Jehu (the exterminator of the whole dynasty of Omri) as "the son of Omri." Moreover, it is a distinct possibility that in this case there was a genetic relationship between Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. If Nabonidus married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar in order to legitimize his usurpation of the throne back in 556 B.C., it would follow that his son by her would be the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. The word for "father"...could also mean grandfather.

In addition to the points made by Young, Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 1117-1118) and LaSor, etc. (Old Testament Survey, pp. 666-667) note that the evidence from Qumran "indicates that Daniel was in existence in its full form, and had been distributed over a relatively wide area, prior to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes" (LaSor, etc., p. 667). LaSor, etc. (p. 667) also cite the evidence of the LXX as indicating the same thing.

Time of Composition: Discussed above.

Purpose: Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 372) states well the purpose of the book: "The book of Daniel seeks to show the superiority of the God of Israel over the idols of the heathen nations. Although these nations had been God's instruments in punishing Israel, nevertheless they themselves will in time pass from the scene. In the latter days the God of heaven will erect a kingdom [the Messianic] that will never be destroyed...Daniel, then, may be said clearly to teach the sovereignty of God in His dealing with human kingdoms." In the future, God's people would experience persecution, but the Lord is in complete control of everything, and He will overcome all evil. He is faithful, and will deliver those who put their trust in Him.

Contents:
Chapters 1 - 6 Narratives concerning Daniel and his companions in Babylon, told in the third person.

Chapters 7-12 Visions seen by Daniel, interpreted by angels, but narrated in the first person singular.

Selected Comments:
Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Chapter 2 signifies that God's kingdom (the stone cut without hands) will bring to an end the four kingdoms symbolized by the statue (Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman), and every other kingdom in world history. God's kingdom will grow; it alone will be victorious, and endure forever. This kingdom was the Old Testament Church, which became the New Testament Church. God's people rule and conquer because they have the Word of the King.

The following comments concerning Chapter 7 are an addition to the discussion of Dillard and Longman. See Matthew 24 and 2 Thessalonians 2, which are important "control" passages for interpreting Daniel 7. The ten horns (*ten* being a symbol for completeness) of verse 7 probably signify all the world powers (an indefinite number) between the end of the Roman Empire (the fourth beast) and the rise of the Antichrist (the little horn). Toward the end of world history the Antichrist will arise in his/its full-blown manifestation, and persecute severely the Church (verses 21, 25). His power will seem to increase and last forever (verse 25: *the saints will be handed over to him for a time, times*). He keeps on fighting against God and God's people (verses 11, 25). But suddenly his power will be cut off (verse 25: *and half a time*). This will be on Judgment Day, which unexpectedly and instantly will come (verse 26). On that day (verses 9-10), God the Father (depicted as a dignified, elderly judge), the Ancient of Days, will judge all people. Also on that day *one like a son of man* (Jesus Christ, human, but also divine) will come with the clouds of heaven, who will share in the glory, authority, and power of the Ancient of Days, and who will be worshipped by all people (verses 13-14). See Matthew 24:30; 25:31, etc. In addition, note Philippians 2:10-11 - on the Last Day all will confess Christ as Lord, some in horror, and others in joy. Then the people of God (saints, believers) will have their ultimate triumph, evident to all, and they will rule forever with God over the new creation (verses 22, 27).

With regard to 8:8, Alexander's four generals divided up his empire among themselves. Lysimachus took Thrace and Bithynia; Cassander, Macedonia and Greece; Seleucus, Syria, Babylonia, and the eastern countries; and Ptolemy, Egypt. The reconsecration of the temple in 165/4 B.C. (foretold in 8:14) is celebrated each year with the Jewish festival Hanukkah.

The vision of Chapter 9 has been interpreted in various ways by conservative scholars. The following are a few of the proposed interpretations (explained briefly and generally). One proposal sees the time covered by the "seventy sevens" as from Daniel's time to the end of world history. The Messiah (the Anointed One) will come, the Christian Church will be established, it will grow, but toward the end of world history it will be persecuted severely by the Antichrist, until God ends the Antichrist's power and rule on the Last Day. Another proposed interpretation sees the time covered by the "seventy sevens" as from Daniel's time to the first coming of the Messiah ("the Anointed One, the ruler"). Verse 26 describes the death of the Messiah, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Roman army of Titus. As Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 375) explains,

> For the period of the seventieth seven the Messiah causes a covenant to prevail for many, and in the half of this seven by His death He causes the Jewish sacrifices and oblation to cease. His death is thus seen to belong within the seventieth seven. Consequent upon this causing of the sacrifices and oblation to cease is the appearance of a desolator over the pinnacle of the Temple, which has now become an abomination. Upon the ruins a determined full end pours out. This event, the destruction of the city, does not, therefore, take place within the seventy sevens, but follows as a consequence upon the cutting off of the Messiah in the seventieth seven.

A third proposed interpretation (favored by the author of this course) sees the time covered by the "seventy sevens" as from Daniel's time to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Verse 26a - "the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing" - refers to the death of the Messiah. The rest of the prophecy (verse 26b - 27) deals with the coming of Titus and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The last part of verse 27 is translated as: "until the end that is decreed will be poured out on the desolate (area)."

Chapter 11 foretells the wars between the kings of the *South* (Egypt) - the Ptolemies - and the kings of the *North* (Syria) - the Seleucids. The chapter portrays the rise of Antiochus Epiphanes to power, his campaigns against Egypt, and his persecution of Jewish believers. The chapter concludes with a description of the rise of the Antichrist (in his ultimate manifestation), his warfare and conquests, and his end.

Cf. Daniel 12:1 with Revelation 12:7. Cf. Daniel 12:2 with John 5:28-29 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Cf. Daniel 12:3 with Matthew 13:43.

7. The Post-Exilic Period

Cyrus the Great encouraged exiled people to return to their homelands and restore their gods to their temples, in marked contrast to the practice of the Assyrians and Babylonians, who uprooted peoples and resettled them in foreign lands. The reversal of this policy distinguished Cyrus as a

welcomed deliverer and as an enlightened conqueror. Those Jews who were living in exile in Babylonia were among those who benefited from Cyrus' policy (of course, God is the One who actually freed them from their captivity, as He had foretold through His prophets). Cyrus' edict and action in Ezra 1 were typical of his moderate general policy (which was followed by most of his successors) of allowing subject peoples, as much as possible, to enjoy cultural autonomy within the framework of the empire. Bright (A History of Israel, p. 362) explains that, although Cyrus and his successors kept firm control through a complex bureaucracy, through their army, and through an efficient system of communications, their rule was not harsh. Rather, they preferred to respect the customs of their subjects, to protect and foster their established religious practices and, where they could, to entrust responsibility to native princes.

Ezra 1:11 - 6:22 reports that over 40,000 Jews returned to territory that was part of the former Southern Kingdom. Here they renewed their worship life and would eventually rebuild the temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 4:6-23, relating later events, "interrupts" the flow of this account). Then Ezra (Ezra 7-8) would lead a second wave of Jews back to Judah and Jerusalem. As their books report, action would be taken by both Ezra and Nehemiah (who arrived at Jerusalem after Ezra) to preserve the Jews as God's covenant people dedicated to His service. From these returned exiles someday would come the Messiah.

[[Excursus: Not all Jews wanted to tear up established roots in Babylonia (indeed, some had become prosperous businessmen and merchants) and return to a land which had become unfamiliar to them, or they had never known. The return in 538/7 B.C. therefore included only a portion of those who had been exiled or who were born during the exile. A sizable Jewish community remained in Babylon for centuries, becoming a center of Jewish scholarship producing, for example, the Babylonian Talmud.]]

The Book of Esther recounts how God delivered His chosen people, the Jews, the bearers of the Messianic line, from annihilation. The story of Esther takes place in Persia.

The following is a time-frame for the events in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

Ezra 1-6	538/7-516/5
Esther	483-474
Ezra 7-10	458/7
Nehemiah 1-13:6a	445-433
Nehemiah 13:6b-31	42?-? (no later than 400)

Refer to the handout "A Chronology of the Ancient Near East" for the dates of the Persian rulers Cyrus through Artaxerxes I.

Old Testament Isagogics
Unit 8

1. Haggai
2. Zechariah
3. Esther
4. 1 & 2 Chronicles
5. Ezra
6. Nehemiah
7. Malachi
8. Psalms

Unit 8 - Old Testament Isagogics

Objectives

When students complete this lesson they will

Know:

1. The isagogical matters pertaining to Haggai, Zechariah, Esther, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Malachi, and Psalms.

Be able to:

1. Read these subjects with greater understanding and discuss them with their peers and the people they are serving.

Reading Assignments

1. Skim the contents of Haggai, Zechariah, Esther, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Malachi, and Psalms.
2. Unit 8 material in this student guide.
3. Dillard and Longman, pp. 421-436, 189-197, 169-177, 437-442, 211-234.

Writing Assignments

None

1. Haggai

Author: The prophet Haggai. See the discussion in Dillard and Longman, pp. 421-423.

Time of Composition: All of Haggai's oracles were uttered in the same year, 520 B.C. (the second year of the rule of Darius I). See the table in Dillard and Longman, p. 429. His book was composed about that same time.

Purpose: To preserve the messages of Haggai: his explaining to those in the post-exilic community why they were being chastened by the Lord, telling them to rebuild the temple, encouraging them in this project, and reminding them of their Messianic hope.

Contents:
Chapter 1:1-15 Haggai's first oracle (verses 1-11). The people's response of hearing and obeying (verse 12). Haggai's word of comfort and reassurance (verse 13). The temple project is begun (verses 14-15).

Chapter 2:1-9 Haggai's second oracle.

Chapter 2:10-19 Haggai's third oracle.

Chapter 2:20-23 Haggai's fourth oracle.

Selected Comments:
The early chapters of Ezra report that those returning from the exile were zealous for the Lord. They soon began their worship life in Judah, and not long after this started rebuilding the temple. They properly refused the help of their syncretistic neighbors. However, they allowed themselves to be discouraged, frightened, and frustrated by their opponents. This was the initial reason why the rebuilding project did not continue. Then, judging from the Book of Haggai, the people's zeal for the Lord died down. They put the temple project "on the backburner," and had as their first priority achieving economic prosperity and a comfortable lifestyle. They began to make excuses as to why they could not rebuild the temple.

Why was it so important for the temple to be rebuilt?

1. Much of the Mosaic covenant presupposed the carrying on of worship at a central sanctuary. At this sanctuary priests would teach the people and help in the faithful transmission of God's Word from one generation to the next. Thus, failure to have a temple would lead to a paralyzing of the religious life of the Jewish community.

2. Was it to the glory of God to leave His house a ruin? What kind of a witness was this to the surrounding peoples?

3. What did the temple not being rebuilt say about the spiritual health of the Jews and their priorities in life?

4. As LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush (Old Testament Survey, p. 485) explain, the rebuilding of the temple would be an indication that God's promised redemption had not been forgotten and a sign of the people's faith in that promise.

The wealth of the nations came to the temple (Haggai 2:7-8) during the time of the rebuilding project (Ezra 6:8-10), and in the following years. Josephus (Antiquities 14.7.2; War 1.8.8) indicates that Jews from all over the world sent gold to the temple. This same sanctuary was rebuilt by Herod the Great (ca. 73-4 B.C.) and his successors, who lavished much gold on the building. However, if the temple of Zerubbabel was made glorious by the coming of the wealth of the nations, the climax of its glory was reached when the Creator and ultimate Owner of this wealth, Jesus Christ, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Deity in bodily form (Colossians 2:9), came to the temple. In fact, Christ was greater than the temple itself (Matthew 12:6), which was a symbol of the coming Messiah.

In 2:15-19 the prophet encourages the people by telling them that, since they had put spiritual matters first (as evidenced by their rebuilding the temple), God will take care of their physical needs. This is an illustration of what Christ taught centuries later, "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33).

Dillard and Longman are not right with their "political" interpretation of Haggai 2:20-23, explaining that this oracle shows the Jews hoped for freedom from foreign domination and the restoration of Davidic rule (pp. 423, 425). Rather, in these verses Zerubbabel is addressed as the most prominent member of the Davidic line at the time. Thus, he represents that line. In this passage God is promising that through all future events He would watch closely over Zerubbabel and other members of the Davidic line, making sure that the line would not be lost (in the ancient Near East, one carefully guarded his signet ring, wearing it on his finger or on a thong around his neck). The prophecy indicated that some day the Messiah, the Son of David, would come.

Concerning the style of Haggai, this book does not have the beautiful and obvious poetic form of some of the earlier prophetic writings (e.g., Isaiah). Haggai's writing certainly is very good prose; occasionally poetic elements are seen, such as parallelism (e.g., 1:6). There is a vivacity to his writing, due to the frequent use of interrogatives.

2. Zechariah

Author: The prophet Zechariah. According to 2:4 he was a youth (cf. Jeremiah 1:6), probably of marriageable age, when he began his ministry.

Time of Composition: The last date given in his book is 518 B.C. See the table in Dillard and Longman, p. 429. However, the prophet's ministry and writing may have continued after that time. No doubt his book was completed by, or not long after, 500 B.C.

Purpose: To a large extent, the book is concerned with the struggle of God's kingdom and all

evil powers. This struggle ends with those powers being destroyed and God's kingdom being victorious, prospering (in the spiritual sense), and enjoying the new creation. The victory is accomplished by the Messiah. Thus Zechariah was writing to encourage his contemporaries (and all believers) in their faith in Yahweh, and their living the faith, which would result in God's blessing. Israel had experienced God's wrath because of its sinfulness.

Contents: See the outline provided by Dillard and Longman (pp. 432-433), and their discussion of the book's contents (pp. 433-436).

Selected Comments:
Dillard and Longman have an excellent discussion concerning the issue of authorship of Zechariah (pp. 429-432). Their comments on p. 430 apply to the Historical-Critical Method in general, specifically that method's usual way of dealing with aspects of authorship of biblical books.

The New Testament quotes 71 times from Zechariah: 31 quotations are from Chapters 1-8, and 40 from Chapters 9-14. 27 quotations are in the Gospels, 31 in Revelation.

3. Esther

Author: The author is unknown. A past suggestion was that Mordecai was the author, but the way he is referred to in 10:2-3 suggests that he had died before the book was composed (the author may have used records left by Mordecai). Likewise, the way Xerxes is referred to in 10:1-2 suggests that he also had died before the book's composition (Xerxes was assassinated in 465 B.C.). As Dillard and Longman point out (pp. 191-192), the author was familiar with Persian mores, court life, and the Persian palace (which was destroyed by fire thirty years after the death of Xerxes). Therefore, the book probably was written in Persia. It **perhaps** was written

a. not long after 465, in Susa or a neighboring area; or,
b. sometime in the second half of the fifth century B.C.

Time of Composition: Discussed above.

Purpose: Besides providing the background for the Jewish festival of Purim (Dillard and Longman, p. 191), the book shows the overruling providence of the almighty God who delivered and preserved His covenant people, the bearers of the Messianic line, from the hatred of Haman who plotted their annihilation (3:6, 13).

Contents: See the outline provided by Dillard and Longman, p. 190.

Selected Comments:
Concerning the famous "problem" of the name of God not appearing in Esther, see the fine discussion of Dillard and Longman, p. 196. A few additional comments may be made.

1. 4:14 seems to be a reference to God's providence. Further, some have proposed that the phrase "another place" is a circumlocution for the divine name out of reverence for that name.

2. Geisler and Nix (A General Introduction to the Bible, p. 260) mention that Jewish scholars did not doubt the canonicity of the Song of Solomon because the name of God does not appear in that book (except perhaps at the end of 8:6).

3. Esther is similar, in a sense, to previous sections of the Old Testament, such as the stories of Joseph and Ruth (though God's name does appear in those stories), in which God does not act in any obvious way, but is definitely in the background.

Two other "problems" (not mentioned by Dillard and Longman) which have been seen in Esther, and responses to them, follow.

1. It was wrong for Esther to marry a pagan Gentile.

Response: Esther is not to be blamed for this marriage, which was due to circumstances beyond her control. Esther 2:8 implies that, by royal decree, all the beautiful young women were located and brought to the king's palace. She did not seek or choose to become queen, but merely obeyed the king's order.

2. The Jews' slaughtering their enemies, and their delight in it (Chapter 9), was wrong. This is a different situation than the slaughter of the Canaanites, which the Israelites were commanded by God to do.

Response: Hummel (The Word Becoming Flesh, p. 547) responds:

> ...the analogy of Scripture assures us that the moralistic criteria by which Esther is often faulted are as invalid here as elsewhere. It would be just as invalid to try to alibi...for the Jewish vengefulness on moralistic grounds. Nowhere is the Bible to be read as `a book of lessons designed to make men morally better' (Anderson), but rather as the revelation of how God made both human `wisdom' and folly work together for His transcendent good, climaxing in Christ.

Esther was one of the Megilloth, and was read during the Festival of Purim.

4. 1 and 2 Chronicles

Author: This history is the product of a single author, who remains unknown to us. See the discussion of Dillard and Longman, pp. 170 -172. According to tradition, the author was Ezra, and this may be correct. The viewpoint and emphases of Chronicles are what would be expected from Ezra, a Levite from the priestly line, who was, humanly speaking, the one chiefly responsible for the spiritual and moral revival of the post-exilic community.

Whoever the author was, he used written sources in composing his history, many of which are listed by Dillard and Longman on pp. 171-172. Over half the material contained in Chronicles is paralleled by other books in the Old Testament, especially Genesis (some of the genealogical information), Samuel, and Kings. It is uncertain whether the author copied from Samuel and Kings, putting in his own details here and there, or whether he copied from earlier sources, which

were also used in writing Samuel and Kings (see the discussion of 1 Chronicles 10-29 on pp. 4.15 - 4.16). With regard to non-biblical sources, besides those mentioned by Dillard and Longman (p. 172), the author also refers, for example, to the book of the kings of Judah and Israel (2, 16:11), the record of Uzziah's reign composed by the prophet Isaiah (2, 26:22), and the annals of Jehu the son of Hanani (2, 20:34).

Time of Composition: With the evidence from the book itself (Dillard and Longman, p. 171), and considering the testimony of Josephus cited in Unit 1, the author probably wrote ca. 450-425 B.C. The time of composition should not be placed past 400 B.C.

Purpose: See the discussion in Dillard and Longman on the bottom of p. 172 and the first half of p. 173. The author is writing from a definite theological standpoint. He wants to assure his initial readers that God's promises to, and covenant with, Israel continued after the exile. Further, he seeks to instruct his countrymen from the past history of the nation, emphasizing that which was sound and godly in Israel's past, and holding this up as a reliable guide for operating in the present and future. He shows that the true glory of Israel was found in its covenant relationship with Yahweh. Thus, he writes a selective history; this is no attempt to "whitewash".

1. He stresses his nation's unbroken connection with its beginning under the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), to whom God gave His covenant promises. In fact, the connection goes back all the way to Adam, who received the first news of the coming Deliverer.

2. The author emphasizes in the nation's past proper worship in the temple (which was a safeguard for the covenant relationship), and all that was associated with such worship - especially the divinely ordained priesthood, but also, for example, the temple singers, and the Levites and their functions.

3. The author emphasizes the Davidic dynasty, which often promoted proper worship by the Israelites and so acted as a safeguard for the covenant relationship. Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 401) makes the following observations.

    a. In the life of David the author stresses those events which have to do with the nation's worship and which prepare for the building of the temple.
    b. In the life of Solomon, it is the temple and its dedication, rather than personal events in Solomon's life, which are emphasized.
    c. The author highlights those kings of the Southern Kingdom who opposed idolatry (e.g., Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah).
    d. For this reason, the author has very little to say about the Northern Kingdom. He mentions the kings of the North only when they have some interaction with Judah.

4. The author stresses direct activity of God.

5. Another characteristic of the author is his concern with the "theology of immediate retribution" (see Dillard and Longman, p. 176).

Points 1, 2, 4, and 5 still had relevance for the nation in its present situation, and with regard to the future. The author is encouraging his readers to keep on trusting in the Lord, believing in the future Messiah, being faithful to the covenant, and avoiding idolatry and other wickedness. Though Israelite (political) kingship ended with the fall of Jerusalem, the line of David would continue, from which would come the Deliverer.

Contents: See the outline in Dillard and Longman, p. 173, second full paragraph.

Selected Comments:
Dillard and Longman are incorrect when they explain (pp. 173-174) that the author of Chronicles is "(3) suggesting that he regarded the schism as neither permanent nor desirable, and (4) possibly giving some expression to an eschatological hope for a revival of the nation in its largest extent." The author, as his fellow writers of Old Testament books, did not foresee a **political** reunion of the Southern Kingdom and the Northern Kingdom. The same comment applies to Dillard and Longman's last sentence on p. 174 (continuing to the top of p. 175) and first full sentence on p. 175. They are also incorrect in stating on p. 177 that a "great number of wives" is a token "of divine blessing." God's ideal for marriage was set forth in Genesis 2 (monogamy); He tolerated or permitted polygamy among His people, but did not approve of it. Further, God specifically commanded that kings in Israel were not to have many wives (Deuteronomy 17:17).

Historical-critical scholars note "mistakes" in Chronicles and conclude that the author has written an unreliable history. These "mistakes" on the part of the author can be seen as errors in the transmission of the text (text critical matters) or only as apparent errors which disappear with further study of all the biblical evidence. For a fuller discussion, see Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 394-400.

5. Ezra (omit reading Dillard and Longman, "Ezra-Nehemiah," pp. 179-187)

Author: Ezra, who led the second wave of Jews coming to Judah. Ezra 7:1 reports that he traveled from Babylon to Jerusalem in the reign of Artaxerxes, arriving in the seventh year of that king. There is a debate among scholars as to which Artaxerxes is meant. The position of this course, which is held by the great majority of conservative scholars, is that the king was Artaxerxes I Longimanus, who reigned ca. 465-424 B.C. Thus, Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in 458/7 B.C.

Time of Composition: Ezra probably wrote this book ca. 450-425. Compare above the discussion of the time of composition of Chronicles.

Purpose: To record the history of Israel starting with the end of the Babylonian exile: the coming of the first group of Jews to Judah in 538/7 B.C., the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, the arrival of Ezra and the second wave of Jews in Judah, and the reform of Ezra in 458/7 B.C.

Contents:
Chapters 1-2 The coming of the first group of Jews to Judah and Jerusalem.

Chapters 3-6 Their starting up worship once again at Jerusalem, and their eventual rebuilding of the temple, which was dedicated with much joy.

Chapters 7-10 The coming of the second group of Jews to Judah under Ezra, and his reform in the post-exilic community.

Selected Comments:
The problem confronting Ezra when he came to Judah and Jerusalem was mixed marriages: Jews, for the most part men, marrying idolatrous Gentiles. Thus the spiritual life of the post-exilic community was threatened with this infiltration of paganism. The proper, Old Testament solution to the problem was to divorce those spouses who continued in their idolatry. In the New Testament era, we handle such cases in a different way (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:12-14).

In the Book of Ezra the sections 4:8-6:18 and 7:12-26 are in Aramaic (the rest of the book is in Hebrew). It is the usual "imperial Aramaic" of the time, the *lingua franca* of the Persian empire. That the official letters and a royal memorandum are in Aramaic is understandable, but there is no clear reason why the other portions are in that language.

6. Nehemiah

Author: The layman Nehemiah, who, as Ezra, also served under Artaxerxes I. Nehemiah came to Judah in the king's twentieth year (445 B.C.), thus arriving about thirteen years after Ezra. He returned to Persia in 433 (was he recalled?) after a term of twelve years as governor of Judah (Nehemiah 13:6). After a period of time (the impression is that this was not of long duration) he received permission to return to Jerusalem for a second term as governor. How long this second term lasted is uncertain.

Time of Composition: Nehemiah completed his book after 433 B.C., and perhaps by the end of the reign of Artaxerxes I. The time of composition should not be placed past 400 B.C.

Purpose: To record the history of Nehemiah's governorship of Judah, and what took place during that time.

Contents:
Chapters 1 - 7 Nehemiah's coming to Jerusalem, the rebuilding of the walls of the city, Nehemiah's reforms, and a list of those who came to Judah in the first group under Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, and Jeshua.

Chapters 8 - 10 Chapter 8 - Ezra reading the Book of the Law of Moses (undoubtedly the Pentateuch) to the people who had assembled at Jerusalem, and their celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles. Chapter 9 -the people assembling a second time, confessing their sin, and agreeing

to be faithful to the covenant. A list of those who ratified the agreement is recorded in Chapter 10.

Chapters 11 - 13:6 The completion of the resettlement of Jerusalem, a list of those living in the city, the dedication of the city walls, and the end of Nehemiah's first term as governor.

Chapters 13:7-31 Nehemiah returning to Judah for a second term as governor, and his reforms.

Selected Comments:
Ezra and Nehemiah originally were two separate books, but early in the history of transmission were joined together. That they were discrete compositions is indicated by the duplication of the list of the first group coming to Judah in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7:6-70. Also, as Hummel (The Word Becoming Flesh, p. 597) observes, evidence for their original separation probably is provided by the appearance of a superscription in Nehemiah 1:1 and, in Masoretic texts, by a marginal notice, "Nehemiah." The two books were combined perhaps because the Book of Nehemiah is the "sequel" to the Book of Ezra, and the activity of the two men in Judah overlapped. Another reason may have been, as Young (An Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 378) suggests, the desire to make the total number of canonical books agree with the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet (22).

Important evidence has been discovered in Mesopotamia, Palestine, the Transjordan, Arabia, and Egypt which sheds light on the history of the ancient Near East in general after 539 B.C., and in particular on the post-exilic history of Israel found in Ezra and Nehemiah. These discoveries include the Cyrus Cylinder, the Nabonidus Chronicle, the Elephantine Papyri, silver bowls found at Succoth in Egypt, an inscription found at Hegra in Arabia, an inscription in the Transjordan, the Zeno Papyri, a series of more than seventy bullae (small lumps of clay used to seal letters and other documents, usually stamped with an official seal) and two seals found in the Jerusalem region, a number of stamped jar handles found in Palestine, and the Samaritan Papyri.

Under Nehemiah the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt in 52 days. Recent archaeological discoveries help us to put this incredible feat in proper perspective. The city of Nehemiah's day compromised only the very limited extent of the Ophel ridge south of the temple mount. LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush (Old Testament Survey, p. 642) report that excavations, carried out at more than a dozen sites, have found clear evidence of occupation of the western hill in the late Judean monarchy, but none of these sites revealed any occupation levels whatsoever for the Persian period or even the early Hellenistic era. Further, in this period the wall on the eastern side of the city, above the Kidron Valley, ran along the crest of the ridge rather than further down the slope as did the pre-exilic wall, further reducing the area walled in. Probably Nehemiah found significant sections of the wall still intact, so part of the work involved filling in the breaches and completing the height, rather than starting anew.

Higher critical scholars claim that understanding the Book of Ezra to be first, and the Book of Nehemiah second, implies that Ezra's work in the post-exilic community was a failure, since Nehemiah's reforms, carried out in his second governorship, deal with the same wrongs (especially mixed marriages) as did Ezra. Therefore many of these scholars argue that Ezra came

to Judah after Nehemiah, in 398 B.C., during the reign of Artaxerxes II Mnemon (404-358). However, that Nehemiah dealt with mixed marriages was due to the seriousness and intractability of the problem, and the stubbornness of the people's will (clearly attested in Israel's earlier history), rather than to a failure of Ezra's efforts. One possible scenario, based on a proposal by Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 1148-1149), is that Ezra returned to the Persian court not long after 458/7 B.C., having accomplished his objectives. When Nehemiah later came to Jerusalem, Ezra accompanied him. After the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt, Ezra had the opportunity to reaffirm the Torah with the people. Since there is no mention of Ezra after the dedication of the walls (Nehemiah 12), it is possible that he returned to the Persian court, or that he died. With Nehemiah also absent from Judah (Nehemiah 13:6), problems crop up again in the post-exilic community. Whatever, there is no decisive reason for altering the biblical order and chronology.

As Harrison (Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 1150), LaSor, etc. (Old Testament Survey, pp. 653, 655), and others explain, Ezra, through his emphasizing the necessity of being separated from pagan influences and of being "holy" to the Lord, and his leading the reaffirmation of the Torah, stabilized the religious structure of the post-exilic community. Nehemiah succeeded in giving that community physical structure, and social and economic stability. Together they, under God, gave the Jews a new identity besides the ethnic. Whereas before a Judahite's identity came from being part of the political nation-state of Judah, now it became centered around the Torah and the temple. God used the work of these two men to keep Israel from becoming so socially and culturally assimilated to their neighbors as to disappear into the background. Both, especially Ezra, furnished the Jewish community with a degree of moral strength and spiritual resilience that enabled it to survive the engulfing tides of Hellenic culture under Alexander the Great and beyond his time.

Hummel (The Word Becoming Flesh, pp. 611-612), comments concerning Ezra and Nehemiah:

> Their cooperation remains a classical example of the necessary interpenetration of the material and the spiritual in God's earthly kingdom - and not only in the Old Testament when 'church' and 'state' are in principle still united. Without Nehemiah's heroic...measures, Ezra's labors of covenant renewal could scarcely ever have come to fruition, except perhaps for a tiny clique. And without Ezra's religious measures, Nehemiah's administrative reforms would have remained purely external and legal - and probably also very temporary, as indicated by the relapse during his brief return to Persia (13:6 ff.).

7. Malachi

Author: The prophet Malachi. See the discussion of Dillard and Longman, p. 438.

Time of Composition: See the discussion of Dillard and Longman, p. 439. In addition to their points, the author of this course presents the following for consideration.

1. Notice how many of the sins Malachi had to deal with were also confronting Nehemiah during his second governorship (see the list of Dillard and Longman).

2. Notice particularly that Malachi mentions the sin of mixed marriages. Ezra apparently had dealt successfully with this problem in 458/7, and Nehemiah does not have to deal with it until his second governorship.

3. The impression given at the end of Nehemiah's book is that this time the reforms were long-lasting in effect, that they "took hold". Thus, Malachi's ministry seems not to have occurred after the time of Nehemiah's second governorship.

4. Nehemiah was not governor when Malachi preached and wrote: cf. Malachi 1:8. Nehemiah did not take food from the people: Nehemiah 5:14-16.

5. Malachi is not mentioned in a) Ezra or b) Nehemiah.
   a. This perhaps shows that Malachi prophesied after the time period covered by the Book of Ezra, that is, after 458/7 B.C. Ezra in Chapters 5 and 6 reports the activity of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. Moreover, since Ezra attacked mixed marriages, a reasonable assumption is that, if Malachi was a contemporary, Ezra would have mentioned the prophet as a strong ally.

   b. This also perhaps shows (as #4 above definitely does) that Nehemiah was not governor - that he was not in Jerusalem and Judah - when Malachi prophesied. Nehemiah mentions Ezra as his "coworker" during his first governorship. Would he not also have named Malachi if he had been active in Judah at the same time as Nehemiah, especially since the prophet would have been his strong ally in attacking and treating the problems of intermarriage, oppression of the poor and helpless, withholding of tithes, and other evils of the people?

   True, Malachi does not mention Ezra or Nehemiah, but the only names of people that appear in his book are (besides his own) Esau, Jacob, Levi, Moses, and Elijah (the names of major figures living centuries before Malachi).

On the basis of the considerations listed above, the author of this course thinks that Malachi proclaimed his messages and wrote his book during the interval between Nehemiah's departing for the Persian court in 433 and his return to Jerusalem some time later. For further discussion, see Pieter Verhoef, The Books of Haggai and Malachi (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), pp. 159-160. Such a conclusion, of course, is uncertain. Malachi's ministry should at least be placed in the fifth century B.C.

Purpose: To preserve Malachi's inspired messages to the post-exilic community. The prophet:
a. pointed out God's love for the people;
b. described the sins of the people, of both the priests and the laity;
c. proclaimed the judgment that would come upon the wicked and the blessing reserved for those who repented and brought forth fruits of faith;
d. pointed ahead to the first coming of the Lord (the Messiah) and His second coming (Judgment Day).

Contents:
Chapter 1:1 Superscription.

Chapter 1:2-5 God's love for the people.

Chapter 1:6-14 Neglect and disrespect for Yahweh, especially by the priests, in liturgical functions.

Chapter 2:1-9 Corrupt teaching of the law by the priests; God's judgments described.

Chapter 2:10-16 Intermarriage with pagan Gentiles, and wrong divorce.

Chapters 2:17 - 3:5 Disillusionment and doubt, and God's coming as the just Judge and Purifier.

Chapter 3:6-12 Withholding tithes; blessings for proper stewardship.

Chapters 3:13 - 4:3 The wicked and the righteous; a word of comfort and encouragement for the righteous, including a description of the Last Day.

Chapter 4:4-6 Conclusion (this may be an integral part of the previous section). Remember the Law of Moses; Elijah will come before the Last Day.

Selected Comments:
Malachi 3:1 foretells the ministry of John the Baptist (*my messenger*), who prepared the way of the Lord (who is also called *the messenger of the covenant*). John the Baptist would be a second Elijah (Malachi 4:5) who, as the first, would have a dramatic impact on the spiritual life of his countrymen (cf. 1 Kings 18:16-40). Cf. Matthew 11:10-15, 17:9-13; Luke 1:16-17; also 2 Kings 1:8 and Matthew 3:4. Review the discussion of Dillard and Longman on pp. 166-167.

The *scroll of remembrance* (3:16) is a unique contribution of Malachi to Old Testament phraseology.

Malachi 4:1-3 describes Judgment Day, a terrible day for the wicked (judgment from the Lord), but a day of complete joy for the righteous (total freedom from, and victory over, all evil powers; exulting in the new creation). The image of the rising *sun of righteousness* signifies the new creation, which will be completely holy, without any of the consequences of sin. Thus, 4:5-6 says that the second Elijah (John the Baptist) would come before Judgment Day (here is an example of prophetic perspective: the first and second advents of Christ are seen in one grand view). By preaching Law and Gospel, John prepared the people not only for the first coming of the Messiah, but also for His second.

8. Psalms

Author: See Dillard and Longman, pp. 212-219. The authors named in the psalm titles are:
a. David;

b. Asaph - Psalms 50, 73-83 (in some of the titles Asaph's name evidently stands for the choir or musicians' guild formed by Asaph and which continued after his lifetime);
c. the sons of Korah - Psalms 42-49, 84, 85, 87, 88;
d. Heman the Ezrahite - Psalm 88 (one of the sons of Korah);
e. Ethan the Ezrahite - Psalm 89;
f. Solomon - Psalms 72 and 127;
g. Moses - Psalm 90.

A number of psalms have no titles. Seventy-three psalms are attributed to David in the Psalter. He is known from scriptural analogy to have written five other psalms which lack a title: 2 (Acts 4:25); 95 (Hebrews 4:7); 96, 105, 106 (1 Chronicles 16). David probably was responsible for even more psalms.

Time of Composition: There is one psalm from Moses, most are from the time of David and Solomon, Psalms 74 and 79 seem to have been written right after the fall of Jerusalem, and some of the psalms without titles (*orphan psalms*) apparently were composed during or after the exile. For example, Psalm 137 seems to be exilic, and Psalm 126 may be from the early post-exilic period. Thus the Psalter accumulated by stages over a long period of time. What the precise stages of growth were, and how the book came to assume its present form and arrangement, is not certain.

The Psalter as we have it now is made up of five books (each ending with a doxology): 1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, 107-150. There is other evidence within the Psalter, besides that already mentioned, which indicates that probably there were smaller collections of psalms, which were brought together to form larger collections, which were brought together to form books, which were brought together to form the Psalter. Whether five books were combined, or whether there were, for example, three books which then were divided into five (perhaps to match the number of books in the Torah), is unknown. Any one of the original books may have had later additions or withdrawals before or after it was included in the formation of the whole Psalter. Possibly the last step was to preface the Psalter with Psalm 1 as an introduction. This psalm has no title and author's name, unlike most of the psalms in Book I. Ezra may have been the final editor of the Psalter, completing his work conceivably by or before 425 B.C. The Psalter was in its final form not later than 400 B.C.

Purpose: To preserve inspired psalms composed throughout Israel's history. These poetic pieces, representing every human emotion and feeling, and carrying the reader into the immediate presence of God, well serve the devotional life of the individual believer and the congregation.

Contents: See the discussion above concerning time of composition. The Hebrew Bible contains one-hundred-and-fifty psalms, and Protestant Bibles have followed the Hebrew numbering. The LXX contains an additional psalm (which ought not be viewed as inspired) at the end of the book, thus having a total of one-hundred-and-fifty-one. Also, two of the Hebrew psalms have been subdivided in the LXX (followed by the Latin Vulgate), and twice a pair of psalms in Hebrew has been fused into one psalm in the LXX and Vulgate. Most of the psalms in

Roman Catholic Bibles therefore have different numbers than their counterparts in Protestant Bibles.

Selected Comments:
There is no single classification scheme for the Psalms which has been universally accepted, and no one in particular is the correct one. Such a scheme is not necessary. Some of the psalms almost defy classification. Nevertheless, the author of this course has found it helpful to see seven basic categories of psalms.

1. Wisdom, doctrinal, and ethical psalms (e.g., 1, 37, 73, 119). These psalms give guidance for wise and proper living, bring out the importance of God's Word, and deal with questions that may trouble the believer.

2. Messianic psalms (e.g., 2, 16, 22, 110). These psalms contain prophecies concerning the Messiah.

3. Prayer, confession, and commitment psalms (e.g., 23, 24, 90). The psalmist is in trouble, or recognizes that there will be trouble and suffering, yet puts his trust in Yahweh. He confesses Yahweh, and commits himself to the Lord.

4. Penitential psalms (e.g., 32, 51). The psalmist confesses his sin, and speaks about repentance, the forgiveness of the Lord, and living the life of repentance.

5. Imprecatory, complaint, and lamentation psalms (e.g., 35, 69, 109). These psalms contain harsh language against the enemies of Yahweh, complaints, and/or laments.

6. Historical psalms (e.g., 106). These psalms take up a portion of the history of Israel.

7. Praise and thanksgiving psalms (e.g., 146-150). These psalms simply give praise and thanks to Yahweh.

These categories, of course, are not to be pressed in too rigid a fashion. Some overlap; further, a psalm can show a mixing of these types.

The following are very brief comments concerning the Messianic psalms 2, 16, 22, 110.
Psalm 2 Speaks of God the Father and God the Son (the Anointed One, the Messiah). The Son is the "I" at the beginning of verse 7. Verses 7-8 refer to the Messiah's incarnation, baptism, transfiguration, resurrection, and exaltation.

Psalm 16 The Son of God, who will be the Messiah, is speaking, foretelling that His body would not undergo decay while in the tomb (verse 10). Cf. Acts 2:22-31; 13:26-37.

Psalm 22 The Son of God, who will be the Messiah, is speaking, describing His future suffering and death on the cross (verses 1-18) and His coming back to life and subsequent successful work (verses 21b-31).

Psalm 110 Foretells the exaltation of the Messiah, His everlasting kingship and priesthood, and

His ultimate victory over all evil forces on Judgment Day. Cf. Matthew 22:41-46.

The imprecatory psalms (e.g., 35, 69, 109) present a major challenge to the orthodox interpreter. In these the psalmist uses harsh language with regard to the wicked. Following are thoughts on this matter, taken in part from Derek Kidner (Psalms 1-72 [Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1973], pp. 25-32) and Leupold (Exposition of Psalms [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1959], pp. 18-20).

1. The imprecatory psalms bring out the seriousness of sin, God's just and righteous judgment toward the wicked, and His authority over evildoers.

2. The Old Testament does not teach an attitude towards one's enemies that is different than what is taught in the New Testament (see, e.g., Proverbs 25:21-22). Besides, David, the author of Psalms 35, 69, and 109, in many instances during his life showed an exemplary spirit of tolerance and forgiveness.

3. The psalmist in no way minimized or overlooked his own guilt but confessed it and cast himself on the mercy of God.

4. It has been pointed out that the Oriental, when emotionally aroused, uses commonly accepted forms of picturesque speech and dearly loves to portray things in brilliant colors, especially as he gives vent to what pains him or to that which he deeply desires (cf. Galatians 1:9; 5:12; 2 Timothy 4:14).

   Also, invective has its own rhetoric, in which horror may be piled on horror more to express the speaker's sense of outrage than to spell out the penalties he literally intends. The language may seem at times immoderate and irresponsible, but it has its place. As Kidner (p. 27) explains, "it has as valid a function in this kind of context as hyperbole has in the realm of description: a vividness of communication which is beyond the reach of cautious literalism."

   Further, the psalms are poetry. They have the special function of making an impression on us, to kindle us, stir us up, touch our whole person, rather than simply to address us, to give us information in plain prose form.

5. The psalmist is taking the matter to God in prayer. He is asking, and leaving it to, God to avenge (Deuteronomy 32:35). The psalmist is trusting in God to make things right.

6. The psalmist uttered these imprecations under inspiration. These are the thoughts and words God wanted recorded concerning the evildoers. As God's mouthpiece, the psalmist is speaking God's righteous curse (cf. Genesis 12:3; Deuteronomy 28:15-68). This is the impression God wanted made on the hearers and readers.

7. Under inspiration the psalmist uttered the imprecations out of a total zeal for Yahweh. The psalmist had pure motives, untinged by sinful anger. His passion for justice was completely genuine, and not a cover for vindictiveness. He saw the evildoers as the enemies of God and of God's cause on earth. He spoke out of total reverence for God's holiness.

In some instances the psalmist has in mind the vindication of God's righteousness and His just cause on earth (e.g., Psalm 79:10). There are other motives which can be detected: that the wicked not despise God (e.g., Psalm 10:12-13); that the righteous take courage at what they see (e.g., Psalm 35:26-27); that the wicked be taught to fear God (e.g., Psalm 64:7-9). He wants the wicked to be taught that there is a holy God who hates sin, who has authority over evildoers, and who carries out righteous judgment. Therefore, as Kidner (p. 30) states, "we gain the additional insight into these maledictions, that for all their appearance of implacability they are to be taken as conditional...Their full force was for the obdurate..."

8. The psalmist was foretelling the ultimate doom of those who persist in hating and persecuting God's children. Raymond Surburg (Exegetical Essays and Materials Dealing with the Interpretation of the Psalms [Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary, n.d.], pp. 66, 155) quotes Theodore Graebner, who wrote:

   > Of course God desires all their repentance and salvation, and He therefore often and earnestly invites them to return from their evil ways and to leave off from persecuting and troubling his children. But if they will not listen to these urgent calls to repentance, but persist in their evil ways, then at last His patience comes to an end and well-deserved punishments are hurled down upon their head in all their awful severity. As warnings of these terrible punishments, we must view the imprecations in the psalms.

9. Today, we are not inspired by God, so we are not at liberty to use all this language against our personal enemies or wicked people in general. Our motives would be impure, and could lead to our own spiritual damage. Rather, in light of Christ's teaching, we are to pray that they would be brought to repentance and faith in Christ. At the same time, we can pray to God to take care of vengeance; cf. Revelation 6:10. Also, we can ask God to overthrow wickedness and wicked forces, to prevent evil men from succeeding in their sinful devices, to hinder them, to confound them in their evil counsels, to frustrate and thwart their ungodly plans.

Supplemental Readings

Old Testament Isagogics

Old Testament Isagogics I
Dr. Maier III, Inst.

Threefold Division of the Old Testament

The Torah	Genesis	
	Exodus	
	Leviticus	
	Numbers	
	Deuteronomy	
The Prophets		
Former	Joshua	
	Judges	
	Samuel	
	Kings	
Latter	Isaiah	
	Jeremiah	
	Ezekiel	
	Book of Twelve	
	Hosea	Nahum
	Joel	Habakkuk
	Amos	Zephaniah
	Obadiah	Haggai
	Jonah	Zechariah
	Micah	Malachi
The Writings	Psalms	
	Job	
	Proverbs	
	Ruth	
	Song of Solomon	
	Ecclesiastes	
	Lamentations	
	Esther	
	Daniel	
	Ezra	
	Nehemiah	
	Chronicles	

THE APOCRYPHA

The following is taken mainly from *The Oxford Annotated Apocrypha, Revised Standard Version*, edited by Bruce M. Metzger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. vii-xi.

The word "apocrypha" is used in a variety of ways that can be confusing to the general reader. Confusion arises partly from the ambiguity of the ancient usage of the word, and partly from the modern application of the term to different groups of books. Etymologically the word means "things that are hidden," but why it was chosen to describe certain books is not clear.

According to widespread usage today, "the Apocrypha" is the designation applied to a collection of fourteen or fifteen books, or portions of books, written during the last two centuries before Christ and the first century of the Christian era. The following are the titles of these books as given in the Revised Standard Version:

1. The First Book of Esdras
2. The Second Book of Esdras
3. Tobit
4. Judith
5. The Additions to the Book of Esther
6. The Wisdom of Solomon
7. Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach
8. Baruch
9. The Letter of Jeremiah
10. The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men
11. Susanna
12. Bel and the Dragon
13. The Prayer of Manasseh
14. The First Book of the Maccabees
15. The Second Book of the Maccabees

In most of the previous English editions of the Apocrypha the Letter of Jeremiah is incorporated into the book of Baruch, which stands immediately before it, as the final chapter of that book. In these editions, therefore, there are fourteen books of the Apocrypha.

None of these fifteen books is included in the Hebrew canon of holy Scripture (they are not in the Hebrew Bible). All of them, however, with the exception of 2 Esdras, are present in copies of the Greek version of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint. The Old Latin translations of the Old Testament, made from the Septuagint, also include them, along with 2 Esdras.

At the end of the fourth century Pope Damasus commissioned Jerome, the most learned biblical scholar of his day, to prepare a standard Latin version of the Scriptures (the Latin Vulgate). In the Old Testament Jerome followed the Hebrew canon and by means of prefaces called the reader's attention to the separate category of the apocryphal books. Subsequent copyists of the Latin Bible, however, were not always careful to transmit Jerome's prefaces, and during the medieval period the Western Church generally regarded these books as part of the holy Scriptures. In 1546 the Council of Trent of the Roman Catholic Church decreed that the canon of the Old Testament includes them (except the Prayer of Manasseh and 1 and 2 Esdras). Subsequent editions of the Latin Vulgate text, officially approved by the Roman Catholic Church, contain these books incorporated within the sequence of the Old Testament books. Thus Tobit and Judith stand after Nehemiah; the Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus stand after the Song of Solomon; Baruch (with the Letter of Jeremiah as chapter 6) stands after Lamentations; and 1 and 2 Maccabees conclude the books of the Old Testament. An appendix after the New Testament contains the Prayer of Manasseh and 1 and 2 Esdras, without implying canonical status.

Chronology of Patriarchal Period

	Abraham born	2166	
Ab. 75	Abraham enters Canaan	2091	Gen. 12:4-5
Ab. 100	Birth of Isaac	2066	Gen. 21:5
Ab. 137 Sa. 127 Is. 37	Death of Sarah	2029	Gen. 17:17; 23:1-2
Is. 40	Isaac married Rebekkah	2026	Gen. 25:20
Is. 60 Ab. 160	Esau and Jacob born	2006	Gen. 25:26
Ab. 175 Is. 75 Twins 15	Death of Abraham	1991	Gen. 25:7
Is. 137 Ja. 77	Birthright incident	1929	Wood, 53 n.11 51 n.7
	Jacob's flight to Haran	1929	
Ja. 84	Jacob's marriage to Leah and Rachel	1922	Gen. 29:14-28
	Children born to Jacob		
Ja. 90	Joseph born	1915	Wood, 53 n.11
Ja. 97 Jo. 6	Jacob leaves Haran	1909	Gen. 31:38, 41
	Jacob enters Canaan	1909	Wood, 58 n.27
	Jacob meets Esau		
	Death of Rachel, birth of Benjamin		
Jo. 17 Ja. 108	Joseph sold into slavery	1898	Gen. 37:2
	Judah and Tamar		
Is. 180 Ja. 120 Jo. 29	Death of Isaac	1886	Gen. 35:28
Jo. 30 Ja. 121	Joseph elevated in Egypt	1885	Gen. 41:46
Ja. 130 Jo. 39	Jacob comes to Egypt	1876	Gen. 47:28
Ja. 147 Jo. 56	Jacob dies	1859	Gen. 47:28
Jo. 110	Joseph dies	1805	Gen. 50:26

THE LENGTH OF THE SOJOURN (STAY IN EGYPT)

Two main positions: 430 years and 215 years. The position of this course: 430 years. Why?

a) **Exodus 12:40.** The Masoretic Text reading has 430 years: "Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was 430 years" (New International Version). But the LXX and the Samaritan Pentateuch say that the 430 years included the time the patriarchs were in Canaan as well as the time their descendants were in Egypt.

   The patriarchs were in Canaan 215 years. This is determined from information in Genesis (Genesis 12:4; 21:5; 25:26; 47:9). Abraham was 25 years in Canaan when Isaac was born, Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born, and Jacob was 130 when he went down to Egypt=215 years. Thus, if one went along with the LXX and the Samaritan Pentateuch for Exodus 12:40, he would hold that the sojourn in Egypt lasted 215 years.

   The Masoretic Text is to be preferred unless there is decisive evidence against it. This evidence is lacking. The LXX (Codex Vaticanus) reads: "And the sojourning of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan, was 430 years." However, the Samaritan Pentateuch, while the same in thought, is not entirely the same in words. The evidence from the LXX and the Samaritan Pentateuch is lessened in that they do not reflect the exact same earlier reading. Also, neither the wording of the LXX nor the Samaritan Pentateuch is supported by the Syriac or Vulgate versions.

   There is no good mechanical reason for the words dropping out of the Masoretic Text.

b) **Exodus 12:40.** Those who see the LXX as reflecting the original Hebrew reading must regard "Children of Israel" as also applying to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel as individuals. This is very difficult and not true to Hebrew idiom.
   The Samaritan Pentateuch saw the problem here, and thus added the words "and the sojourning of the Children of Israel and of their fathers" (underlining added), for which there is no textual support.

c) **Genesis 15:13.** ". . . enslaved and mistreated 400 years." This is a round figure for the stay in Egypt. Also, the whole period of their stay in Egypt did not involve slavery and mistreatment (which took place sometime after the death of Joseph). They were not enslaved and mistreated in Canaan.
   Genesis 15:16. The Israelites would return to Canaan in the fourth generation: after about 400 years. Why? This decision is reached in light of 15:13. Also, the wording is based on Abraham's experience: Abraham would be 100 at the birth of Isaac.

d) **Acts 7:6-7.** Stephen says essentially the same thing as **Genesis 15:13.**

e) Population increase. The population grew from 70 or 75, plus servants, to over 2 million (judging from the 603,550 men-at-arms mentioned in Numbers 2:32). This points to the sojourn lasting 430 years, rather than 215. The growth rate is quite remarkable, due to God's

Chronology of Egyptian and Israelite History

	Egyptian History		Israelite History
Middle Kingdom	**1991 – 1782 (ca)**	**12th Dynasty**	
	1991 - 1962	Ammenemes I	Patriarchal family in Palestine (and at Haran)
	1971 - 1926	Sesostris I	
	1929 - 1895	Ammenemes II	
	1897 - 1878	Sesostris II	1898 (ca) Joseph brought into Egypt as a slave
	1878 - 1841	Sesostris III	1885 (ca) Joseph elevated in Egypt 1876 (ca) Jacob (and family) come to Egypt
	1842 - 1797	Ammenemes III	1859 (ca) Jacob dies 1805 (ca) Joseph dies
	1798 - 1786	Ammenemes IV	
	1785 – 1782	Queen Sobekneferu	
2nd Intermediate Period	**1782 – 1650 (ca)**	**13th Dynasty**	
	1720 – 1663 (ca)	**14th Dynasty**	
	17th – 16th Cent.	The Hyksos	
	1663- 1555(ca)	**15th Dynasty, Hyksos** **16th Dynasty, Hyksos**	
	1663 – 1570 (ca)	**17th Dynasty**	
New Kingdom	**1570 – 1293 (ca)**	**18th Dynasty**	1446 (ca) The Exodus
	Note: The New Kingdom includes the 18th, 19th and 20th Dynasties.		

The Sojourn

DATE OF THE EXODUS

Two major positions.

a) During the 15th century, ca. 1446 B.C. The "early" date.
During the 18th Dynasty of Egypt.
Pharaoh: either Thutmosis III (1490-1436, or 1504-1450), or Amenhotep II (1438-1412 or 1453-1419). Probably: Amenhotep II (1453-1419).

b) During the 13th century. The "late" date.
During the 19th Dynasty of Egypt.
Pharaoh: Rameses II (1304-1237, or 1279-1212). Probably: 1279-1212.

The position of this course is **a)**.

Reasons for the 15th Century Date

1. **1 Kings 6:1.** Solomon began to build the temple ca. 966. 966 + 480 = 1446.
   The Israelites would have remembered when the Exodus took place. For them it was probably the greatest event in their history. 480 may be a rounded figure.

   Those who hold to the late date say that 480 simply means 12 generations, a generation being 40 years. However, they go on to state that actually a generation was less than 40 years, perhaps being about 25 years (25 X 12 = 300; 300+ 966 = 1266 or thereabouts).
   Questions can be raised in response to those holding this position. How do they know that 480 means 12 generations? Why do they first say that a generation was 40 years, and then contradict that assertion and say that a generation really was 25 years? If 480 is to be taken symbolically in 1 Kings 6, are other numbers in Scripture in historical contexts also to be seen as symbolical?

2. **Judges 11:26.** See the discussion of Dillard and Longman, p. 59.

3. The length of the period of the judges. Even assuming that some judges were contemporaries with each other, and that they "overlapped," 300+ years fits the evidence in Judges better than the years which would be allowed by the late date theory, less than 150.

4. See Dillard and Longman, p. 110 (**1 Chronicles 6:33-37**).

Other reasons are given by Bimson and Leon Wood.

Rameses literally means "Begotten of Ra." The sun-god Ra was highly honored by the Hyksos as well as by the Egyptians themselves. Cf. **Genesis 47:11.**

2. The biblical account implies that the Pharaoh concerned was in the northern area of Egypt, near Goshen. Moses was able to have frequent contacts with him during the period of the plagues. Though the 18th Dynasty made its capital in the south at Thebes, some of the rulers - particularly Thutmose III and his son and successor, Amenhotep II - still conducted extensive operations in the north and even resided there for substantial periods of time. Thutmose III appointed a vizier for the northern area at Heliopolis, besides the vizier who continued at Thebes. So the Pharaoh had great interest in northern Egypt. There is some evidence that his son Amenhotep II was born at Memphis in the north. Thutmose III campaigned extensively in Syria and against the Hittites and the kingdom of Mitanni, far to the north of Egypt. He must have maintained substantial supply bases in northern Egypt, and lived there for extended periods. He made fourteen or more campaigns in Syria, and would not have started these campaigns from Thebes in the south. There is evidence that Amenhotep II spent much time in the northern part of Egypt. He seems to have maintained large estates in the vicinity of Memphis, where he and his successors resided for large periods of time.

3. See the discussion of Dillard and Longman, p. 60: "Before going on to give arguments. . . the thirteenth century (Bimson, 47-48)." An alternate explanation is that Pithom and Rameses (wherever they were located) may not have been occupied during the fifteenth century. They were built during the Hyksos dynasties (see above), and then may have been destroyed at the beginning of the 18th Dynasty by that dynasty, and not reoccupied until some time later (by the 19th Dynasty?).

4. See the discussion of Dillard and Longman, p. 61: "Glueck's survey, however, was . . . against an early date of the Exodus." A 1978 survey of central Moab covered some of the same area as that surveyed by Glueck and led the archaeological team to state that Glueck was premature in concluding that the plateau was abandoned in the period ca. 1900-1300 B.C. Bimson raises the question of whether the **Numbers** narratives always require a permanent urban population in the Transjordan at the time of the events related. The kings mentioned in **Numbers 20ff** could have been the chiefs of nomadic or semi-nomadic groups rather than the rulers of fortified cities or permanently held territories. Bimson also points out that the references to cities in **Numbers 21:25-27** and **22:36** may not be indicating permanent fortified sites. The Hebrew word usually translated as *city, 'ir*, need not always indicate a large fortified town. The same word is used to describe the temporary Israelite settlement at Kadesh in **Numbers 20:16**, and in **Numbers 13:19** Moses sends men to spy out the Negeb to see whether its people are weak or strong, "whether the cities [*'ārîm*] that they dwell in are camps or strongholds." Bimson concludes: ". . . there is no compelling reason to place the events of Num 20ff after 1300 BC. It is by no means certain that the narratives refer to permanent kingdoms; it is especially doubtful that they do in the cases of Edom and Moab. And a great deal of evidence is available which suggests that north of the areas occupied by the Edomites. . . and Moabites, the gap in occupation posited by Glueck never occurred [pp. 67-68]."

were killed, but the cities were left standing. The 13th century burned layer is not due to the Conquest but to some other, later destruction. That no such burned layer is found for ca. 1400 B.C. is to be expected.

There is evidence at Hazor (Tell el-Qeday) of a violent destruction sometime in the 13th century. This evidence indicates that nearly all habitation ceased on the plateau and that life on the main tell was able to continue only in a poor and modest fashion. However, there is no indication of burning in connection with the destruction of the 13th century (Stratum I), whereas **Joshua 11:11** states definitely that the city destroyed by Joshua was burned. At Stratum III there is evidence of destruction by burning, this destruction being dated by archaeologists to the 15th century. This city of Stratum III perhaps was the one Joshua burned.

A final comment is in order concerning the conclusion of Dillard and Longman's discussion. The conclusion (p. 62) reads: "The text, however, does not permit certainty on the subject. . . neither date should be held dogmatically." This conclusion is misleading, erroneous, and is to be rejected. Except for their conclusion, the discussion of Dillard and Longman otherwise is excellent.

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The Numbers in Numbers

Dr. Maier III, Inst.

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According to Num. 1:45-6 the number of Israelite males (excluding those from the tribe of Levi) of military age was 603,550. Cf. the second census, Num. 26:51. From this the total population of Israel can be calculated to have been from 2,500,000 to 3,000,000 people.

Some question these figures, thinking that they are too high. In a discussion of the numbers by orthodox theologians two principles always are kept in mind. BD, 60: "In the first place the numbers of the original text should not be regarded as fanciful inventions and therefore impossible and false. They were meant to represent a counting of persons and items that conformed to the facts in the case. In the second place every effort should be made to determine what the original text actually said and how it came to read as it does."

One proposal for reducing the numbers comes from the British scholar J. W. Wenham (see BD, 62). He points out that most of the high figures involve the Hebrew word for thousand, 'eleph. When the same consonants are supplied with different vowels, the word designates "chief" (Gen. 36:15-18; Ex. 15:15). He suggests that the Hebrew word (which in the original text was without vowels) did not represent a number (1,000), as later copyists assumed, but referred to an individual: a commander of a large group. Breaking down the census figures for the individual tribes, Wenham suggests that the text of the census figures originally meant to say: 580 leaders of 235 contingents, each of which consisted of some 25 to 100 men. The total fighting force is then estimated at 18,000 men and the entire population at about 72,000.

Another proposal for reducing the numbers is that the word 'eleph in certain cases has the meaning "tribe, tribal division, clan, family." Comment: in certain passages the plural of 'eleph perhaps has this meaning. However, as Archer (129) comments, "this is a most tenuous basis on which to erect a theory allowing for reduction."

The proposal involving the meaning "chief" should be rejected. It is not supported by any decisive textual evidence. Also, Wenham does not explain the total figures of 603,550 and 601,730 by breaking them down into military units, as he did in the case of the individual tribes (BD, 63). Further, according to Wenham's proposal the proportion of chiefs to fighting men would be top-heavy (CSB, 186). Cf. Num. 1:23 - 59 chiefs for 300 men in Simeon.

Both proposals involving "chief" and "clan" founder on the

Following are questions raised in objection to seeing the population of the Israelites as 2,500,000 to 3,000,000 people.

1) How could the wilderness sustain such a large number of people for a period of about forty years?

God provided for His people, and took care of their needs, by His almighty power. Some have also suggested that the wilderness was more fertile then than it is today.

2) How could such a large population have such a low number of firstborn sons (22,273) as recorded in Numbers 3:42-43?

Commentators have pointed out that the requirement of God (Numbers 3:42) applied only to those babies born after the start of the Exodus. The objection of CSB to this response (note, p. 194) is not decisive: God, after the exodus, is starting a new practice in the life of Israel.

3) How could two midwives (Exodus 1:15) be sufficient for such a large population?

Two would not be enough for a population of 200,000. Shiphrah and Puah were administrative superintendents over an obstetrical guild which served the entire Israelite community. All of the midwives in the guild would not have reported personally to Pharaoh. This is in keeping with what is known of the highly bureaucratic structure of the ancient Egyptian government (Archer, p. 131).

4) How could such a large group pass through the sea in the necessary time?

The path through the sea must have been wide, perhaps as much as a mile in width. The distance to travel through the sea probably was not more than 4 or 5 miles.

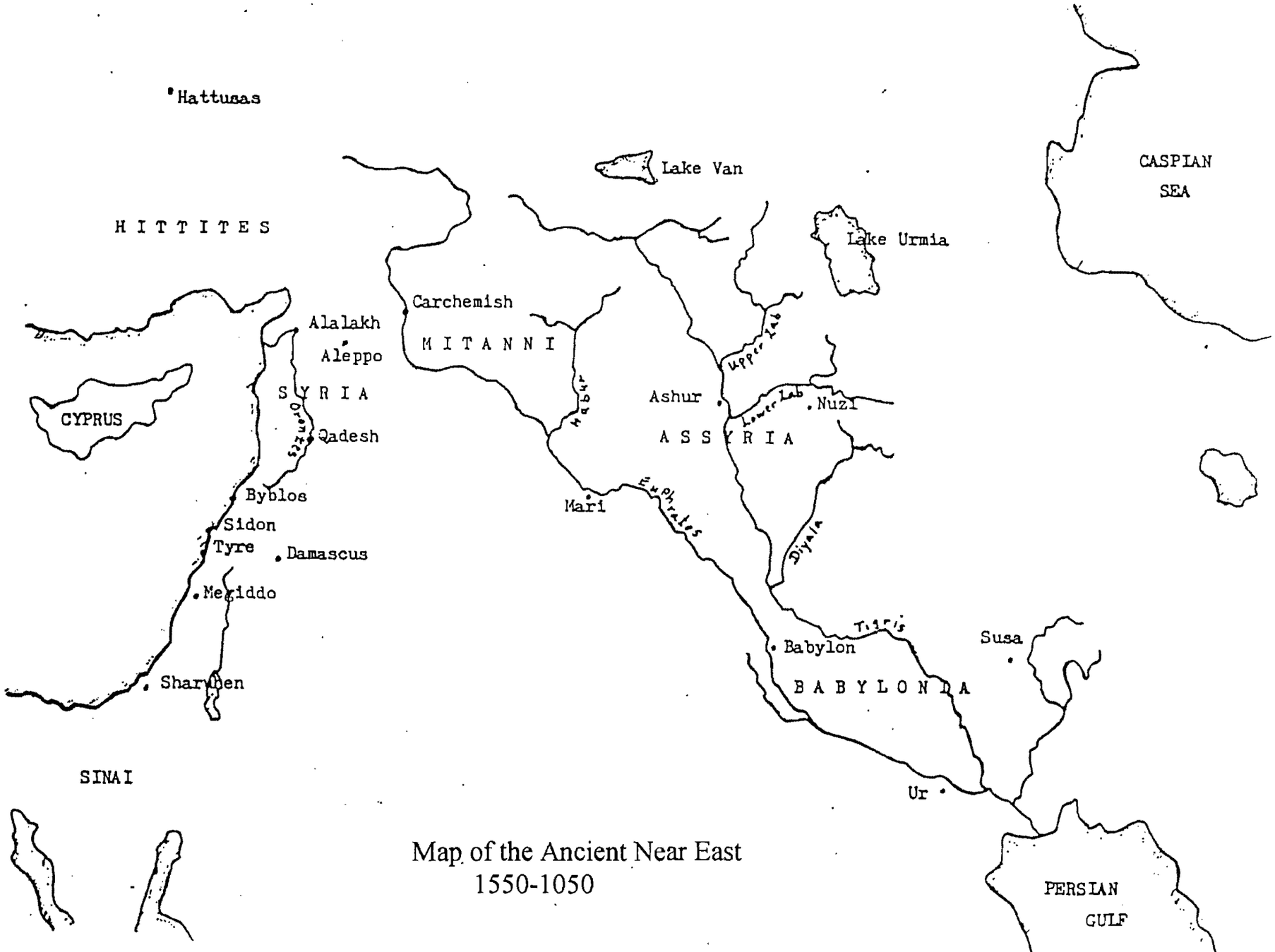
With regard to the day-by-day journeys of the Israelites, Numbers 2:3-31 reports that they camped down in the formation of a square around the tabernacle, with three tribes on each side. If the tribes moved simultaneously at the start of a march, they could easily cover ten miles or more each day without overdriving the young of the livestock (Archer, p. 132). There is no need to imagine the tribes moving single file, one tribe after the other.

5) Was the native population of Canaan really well over twenty million? Moses told the Israelites that the seven nations in Canaan they were going to displace were "greater and mightier" and "larger" than were the Israelites (Deuteronomy 4:38; 7:1; 9:1; 11:23).

There are different ways to understand the Hebrew phrases in question. Further, the phrase "larger" (or "more numerous") in Deuteronomy 7:1 may be a reference to the seven nations <u>combined</u>.

The population of Canaan undoubtedly was large (yet probably well under 20 million), but the biblical record indicates that the land was very fertile (thus enjoying sufficient rainfall) and capable of sustaining such a population.

Footnote: It has been estimated that for a rally which took place



Map of the Ancient Near East
1550-1050

Important Events in the Ancient Near East ca. 1550-1050
(Background for the Exodus through Period of Judges)

1. Following the consolidation of Dynasty 18 in Egypt Tuthmosis I (1525-1512) undertook an expedition which reached and crossed the Euphrates into Mitanni territory. There is little information about the results of this campaign. An equally vague Palestinian campaign took place under hie successor Tuthmosis II (1512-1504).

2. The absence of military activity during the reign of Hatshepsut (1504-1482) gave the Syrian and Palestinian city-states a chance to free themselves from Egyptian suzerainty; this relative independence was ended by Tuthmosis III, who, from his 22nd year on, conducted numerous campaigns in Palestine and Syria. Especially important are his siege and capture of Megiddo, where he defeated a coalition of states led by the prince of Qadesh, and his march (33rd year) from Byblos into Mitanni territory across the Euphrates.

3. Tudhaliyas II (1460-40), the founder of the new Hittite Empire, captured and destroyed Aleppo, which was at that time in the control of Hanigalbat, a Hurrian confederation of which little is known. When this took place is also unknown.

4. Amenophis II (1450-1425) continued the work of his father with an early campaign in Syria and a later one limited to more southern areas. The extent of Egyptian control seems to have diminished during the latter part of his reign and that of his successor Tuthmosis IV (1425-1417). Egyptian power gradually declined until Seti I of the 19th Dynasty.

5. The defection of several Hittite vassal states to the Mitanni led Suppiluliumas I (1375-1335) to destroy Wassukkani, capital of Mitanni. Aleppo and Alalakh were brought under Hittite control, but Carchemish remained loyal to the Mitanni.

6. The military activity of Suppiluliumas remained unchallenged by the Egypitians. Hittite activity seems to have been directed primarily against Mitanni.

7. Suppiluliumas returned ca. 1340 to take Carchemish, which was no longer able to rely on Mitanni territory.

8. At the death of Suppiluliumas, Asshur-uballit I of Assyria (1363-1328) took over the Mitanni territory.

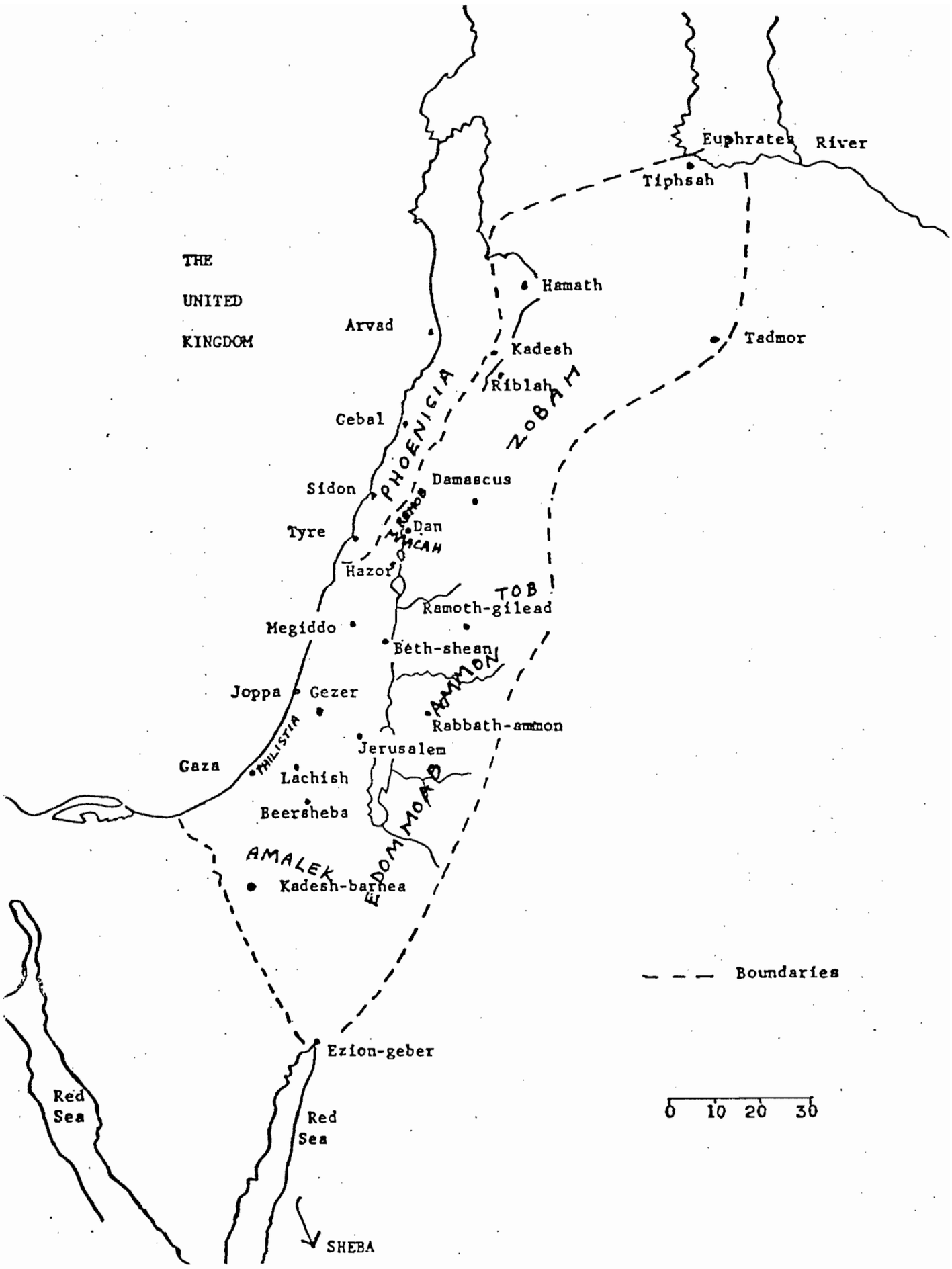
9. Syria rebelled against Hittite domination during the reign of Mursilis II (1334-1306), perhaps at the instigation of Haremhab (1348-1320). This was quickly quelled by the Hittite.

10. Seti I (1318-1304) campaigned in Palestine and Syria. He reached as far north as Qadesh,

Time Chart of the Ancient Near East: From the Israelite Slavery to the Monarchy

Egypt		*Israelite History*		*Hittites*		*Assyria*	
1570 – 1293 ca.	18th Dynasty						
1570 – 1546	Ahmose		Israelites slaves in Egypt				
1551 – 1524	Amenophis I						
1524 – 1518	Tuthmosis I	1526	Moses born				
1518 – 1504	Tuthmosis II						
1504 – 1450	Tuthmosis III						
1503 – 1483	Hatshepsut	1486	Moses flees Egypt				
1453 – 1419	Amenophis II	1446	Exodus	Tudhaliyas II			
1419 – 1386	Tuthmosis IV	1406	Wilderness Wandering (40 Yrs)				
1386 – 1349	Amenophis III	1400	Conquest				
1350 – 1334	Amenophis IV			Suppiluliumas I		1363 – 1328	Asshur-uballit I
1336 – 1334	Semenkhkare						
1334 – 1325	Tutankhamun						
1325 – 1321	Ay						
1321 – 1293	Haremhab						
1293 – 1185 ca.	19th Dynasty						
1293 – 1291	Ramesses I			Mursilis II			
1291 – 1278	Seti I			Muwatallis			
1279 – 1212	Ramesses II			Hattusilis II			
1212 – 1202	Merneptah			Hattusilis III			
1185 – 1070 ca.	20th Dynasty				1180 ca.	Hittite Empire	
1185 – 1182	Setnakhte					disintegrates	
1182 – 1151	Ramesses III						
1069 – 945 ca.	21st Dynasty	1050	Saul becomes king			1115 – 1077	Tiglath-pileser I
		1010	David becomes king				
978 – 959	Siamun	971	Solomon becomes king				
959 – 945	Psusennes II						

Period of Judges


THE
UNITED
KINGDOM
Euphrates River
Tiphsah
Hamath
Arvad
Kadesh
Riblah
Tadmor
Gebal
PHOENICIA
ZOBAH
Sidon
Damascus
Tyre
Dan
Hazor
TOB
Ramoth-gilead
Megiddo
Beth-shean
AMMON
Joppa
Gezer
Rabbath-ammon
Jerusalem
Gaza
PHILISTIA
Lachish
Beersheba
AMALEK
EDOM
MOAB
Kadesh-barnea
Boundaries
Ezion-geber
Red
Sea
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0 10 20 30

Kings and Prophets of the Old Testament

Saul	ca. 1050-1010	Samuel (1 Sam 3:20), Gad (1 Sam 22:5)
David	ca. 1010-971	Nathan (2 Sam 7:2), Gad (2 Sam 24:11)
Solomon	ca. 971-931	Nathan (1 Kg 1:34), Ahijah (1 Kg 11:29)

Judah		Israel	
Rehoboam	Shemaiah (2 Chron 12:5)	Jeroboam I	Ahijah (1 Kg 14:2)
Abijah	Iddo (2 Chron 13:22)	Nadab	
Asa		Baasha	Jehu (1 Kg 16:7)
		Elah	
		Zimri	
		Tibni, Omri	
Jehoshaphat		Omri	
		Ahab	Elijah (1 Kg 17:1), Micaiah (1 Kg 22:8)
		Ahaziah	Elijah (2 Kg 1:3)
Jehoram		J(eh)oram	Elisha (2 Kg 3:11)
Ahaziah		Jehu	Elisha (2 Kg 9:1)
Athaliah		Jehoahaz	Elisha (2 Kg 13:14)
Joash	Joel(?)	J(eh)oash	Elisha (2 Kgs 13:14)
Amaziah		Jeroboam II	Jonah (2 Kgs 14:25), Amos (Amos 1:1), Hosea (Hos 1:1)
Uzziah	(Amos [Amos 1:1]), (Hosea [Hos 1:1]), Isaiah (Is 1:1)	Zechariah	
Jotham	(Hosea [Hos 1:1]), Micah (Mic 1:1), Isaiah (Is 1:1)	Shallum	
		Menachem	
Ahaz	Hosea (Hos 1:1), Micah (Mic 1:1), Isaiah (Is 1:1)	Pekahiah	
		Pekah	Oded (2 Chron 28:9)
		Hoshea	
		Interregnum	
		Fall of Samaria	722
Hezekiah	Hosea (Hos 1:1), Micah (Mic 1:1), Isaiah (Is 1:1)		

W.A.M. III

The Sin of Jeroboam I (1 Kgs. 12)

Jeroboam, for political reasons, did not want the people of his kingdom to continue worshipping Yahweh at the temple in Jerusalem (1 Kgs. 12:26-27). Thus he made the golden calves, installing one at the northern end (Dan), the other at the southern end (Bethel), of his kingdom.

Probably Jeroboam did not introduce the calves as idols (new gods) to be worshipped by the people. Rather, these were to be regarded as pedestals on which Yahweh stood in invisible form. Jeroboam may have made a comparison to Yahweh's special presence above the ark of the covenant (e.g., Ex. 25:22). Jeroboam wanted to instill in the people the thought that in Dan and Bethel were authentic Yahweh shrines, Northern Kingdom counterparts to the temple in Jerusalem.

For Jeroboam to have presented the calves outright as idols (new gods) to be worshipped would have been too drastic a change for his subjects, in too short a time. Further, neighboring Near Eastern countries depicted their gods as standing on the backs of calves, bulls, and lions.

Jeroboam was bringing into the Northern Kingdom a new form of worship of Yahweh; he was changing the symbols of Yahwistic religion. One can view Jeroboam as "walking a fine line": he was definitely introducing a new way of worship, but one which was not different enough, or so glaringly wrong, that most of his people would object and rise up in indignation.

Concerning verse 28: the Hebrew <u>ʾĕlōheykā</u> could be translated as "your God" or "your gods." The following verb ("brought up"), though, is plural in form. However, this may be due to the intentional alteration of a later scribe (in order to make the innovation of Jeroboam appear even worse). Cf. Ex. 32:4, 8 and Neh. 9:18; also, certain apparent name changes.

The majority of the people of the Northern Kingdom were theologicaly "soft," due in part perhaps to bad influence from the latter part of Solomon's reign. Some theological "softness" possibly continued from the days of the judges.

Other changes by Jeroboam likewise may be seen as "walking a fine line." These changes involve the two worship centers, the priesthood, and the religious calendar.

The new worship centers, again, were Bethel and Dan. "Bethel" meant "house of God." This had been a place where Jacob/Israel worshipped Yahweh when Yahweh spoke with him twice (Gen 28, 35).* In Dan, Jonathan, perhaps a grandson of Moses (see the text critical apparatus), had established a worship center and a dynasty of priests for the tribe of Dan during the many years the tabernacle was at Shiloh (Judg. 18:30-31).

Jeroboam still had a priesthood for his new form of worship, but not the one ordained by God (the Aaronic priesthood, from the tribe of Levi). This was probably because most of the Levitical priests had left for the Southern Kingdom. They undoubtedly took with them many of the true believers, those totally faithful to the covenant, from the northern tribes.

Jeroboam did not drop the concept of a religious calendar;

* See also Judges 20:18, 26-28; 21:2 - 4

A CHRONOLOGY OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL

Judah					Israel			
1 Kg	14:21	Rehoboam	17	931-914	1 Kg 14:20	Jeroboam I	22	931-910
1Kg	15:1	Abijah	3	914-911				
1 Kg	15:9	Asa	41	911-870				
					1 Kg 15:25	Nadab	2	910-909
					1 Kg 15:33	Baasha	24	909-886
					1 Kg 16:8, 10	Elah	2	886-885
					1 Kg 16:15	Zimri	7 d	885
					1 Kg 16:21-22	Tibni, Omri	4	885-881
					1 Kg 16:15,23	Omri	8 (8+4=12)	881-874
1 Kg	22:41-42	Jehoshaphat	25	870-846	1 Kg 16:29	Ahab	22	874-853
					1Kg 22:51	Ahaziah -	2	853-852
2 Kg	8:16-7	Jehoram[a]	8	848-841	2 Kg 3:1	Joram	12	852-841
2 Kg	8:25-26 9:29	Ahaziah	1	841				
2 Kg	11:3-4	Athaliah	6/7	841-835	2 Kg 10:36	Jehu	28	841-813
2 Kg	11:4 12:1	Joash	40	835-796				
					2 Kg 13:1	Jehoahaz	17	813-797
2 Kg	14:1,17	Amaziah	29	796-767	2 Kg 13:10	Jehoash	16	798-782
2 Kg	14:17-21 15:1-2	Uzziah	52[c]	791-739	2 Kg 14:23	Jeroboam II[b]	41	793-753
					2 Kg 15:8	Zechariah	6m	753/2
					2 Kg 15:13	Shallum	1 m	752
2 Kg	15:30-33	Jotham[e]	20	750-731	2 Kg 15:17	Menahem	10	752-742
					2 Kg 15:27	Pekah[d]	12	752-740
2 Kg	16:1-2 17:1	Ahaz[f]	28	743-715	2 Kg 15:23	Pekahiah	2	742-740
					2 Kg 15:27	Pekah[d]	8 (12+8=20)	740-732
2 Kg	18:1,9, 10,13; 20:1,6	Hezekiah[f]	42	728-686	2 Kg 15:30 17:1-5	Hoshea	9	731-722
2 Kg	21:1	Manasseh[g]	55	697-642				
2 Kg	21:19	Amon	2	642-640				
2 Kg	22:1	Josiah	31	640-609				
2 Kg	23:31	Jehoahaz	3m	609				
2 Kg	23:36	Jehoiakim	11	609-598				
2 Kg	24:8	Jehoiachin	3m	598-597				
2 Kg	24:18	Zedekiah	11	597-587/6				

Notes

a) 2 Kg 8:16 definitely shows that there was a coregency between Jehoshaphat and his son Jehoram, and that it is plausible to assume coregencies later on in the Southern Kingdom (and the Northern Kingdom).

b) The "fifteenth year of Amaziah son of Joash" in 2 Kg 14:23 is the year (782) when Jeroboam became sole ruler of the Northern Kingdom.

c) 2 Kgs 14:21 (cf. 15:2) should not be interpreted as reporting that Uzziah/Azariah first became king when his father Amaziah died: Amaziah reigned until 767, and 52 years beyond that year (required for the total reign of Uzziah; 2 Kgs 15:1, 27) = 715, long after Samaria fell in 722. A possible historical reconstruction: Amaziah was taken prisoner (to Samaria) by Jehoash in 796 (cf. 2 Kg 14:11-14, 17), at which point the people of Judah made Uzziah king "in place of" (14:21) his father when Uzziah was 16 years old. When Jehoash died (782) Amaziah was allowed to return to Jerusalem, where he reigned (with Uzziah) for 15 more years (cf. 14:17). The "27th year of Jeroboam king of Israel" in 15:1 is when Uzziah became sole ruler of the Southern Kingdom (767).

d) Pekah was a rival king (or was at least claiming royal prerogatives), while the "main" king of the Northern Kingdom resided in Samaria. Later, with his assassination of Pekahiah, Pekah took the throne in Samaria. The date for the death of Pekah (732) is relatively certain because of pertinent events and corresponding years recorded in the annals of Tiglath-pileser III.

e) That Jotham reigned for more than 16 years (2 Kg 15:33) is clear from 2 Kg 15:30. The 16 years mentioned in 2 Kg 15:33 and 2 Chron 27:1 must concern his rule until he was made subordinate to his son Ahaz (in 735); Jotham continued on in a secondary role for four years. Cf. Wood, p. 300 n. 46.

f) The 16 years ascribed to Ahaz in 2 Kg 16:2 apparently is the time when he was reigning as head ruler of Judah, from 735 (see note e above) to 719; in 719 Hezekiah took over as head ruler (Wood, p. 301 n. 52). It is reasonable to assume that in the year 715 Ahaz died and Hezekiah became sole ruler of Judah, because of 2 Kg 18:13 - the date of Sennacherib's campaign in Judah, based on Assyrian records, was 701 ("the 14th year of King Hezekiah's reign"). 2 Kg 20:1, 6 seem to indicate that Hezekiah's illness came at the time of the great Assyrian threat to Jerusalem, and that at this point God extended Hezekiah's life by 15 years (=701-686). The 29 years of 2 Kg 18:2 would be from when Hezekiah became sole ruler of Judah until his death (715-686).

g) Josiah's death can be assigned with certainty (on the basis of extrabiblical records) to 609. Thus, with his reign lasting 31 years, and that of Amon 2 years, the dates for Manasseh's 55-year reign would be 697-642.

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Aug. 16, 605 and on Sept. 7 Nebuchadnezzar was crowned in Babylon as his successor (but the first year of his reign was dated to 604).

In 601 the Babylonians and Egyptians fought a battle on the Egyptian border - both sides suffered heavy losses. The Babylonians had to go back to Babylon and regroup.

This may help to explain why Jehoiakim risked rebellion in 598. Jehoiachin took the throne during the last days of 598. Jerusalem surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar on March 15 or 16, 597. The three-month reign of Jehoiachin can be set with certainty to 598-7.

The contemporary year-by-year Babylonian records go no further than 594. From that point on there are gaps in the information, down to 556. Thus, there is no record from a Babylonian source for the years 588 to 587/6 when, according to Scripture, Nebuchadnezzar was engaged in his final siege of Jerusalem.

Archer (p. 293): "... since chronology is a branch of historical science, it is constantly subject to revision ... a certain amount of flexibility must always be preserved and appropriate adjustments made as new evidence comes in."

Walter Maier III

A CHRONOLOGY OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

Egypt		Judah		Israel		Syria		Assyria	
22nd Dyn. 945-715									
Shoshenq I	945-924								
		Rehoboam	931-914	Jeroboam I	931-910			Aššur-dan II	934-912
Osorkon I	924-889								
		Abijah	914-911	Nadab	910-909				
		Asa	911-870	Baasha	909-886				
				Elah	886-885	Ben-Hadad I	885-870		
				Zimri	885				
				Tibni, Omri	885-881			Aššur-naṣir-apli II	883-859
				Omri	881-874				
		Jehosha-phat	870-846	Ahab	874-853	Ben-Hadad II	870-842		
				Ahaziah	853-852			Shalmaneser III	858-824
		Jehoram	848-841	Joram	852-841				
						Ben-Hadad III	845-842		
		Ahaziah	841						
		Athaliah	841-835	Jehu	841-813	Hazael	841-806		
		Joash	835-796						
								Shamshi-Adad V	823-812
				Jehoahaz	813-797			Adad-nirari III	811-784
						Ben-Hadad IV	806-		
		Amaziah	796-767	Jehoash	798-782				
		Uzziah	791-739	Jeroboam II	793-753				
				Zechariah	753/2				
				Shallum	752				
				Menahem	752-742				
		Jotham	750-731	Pekah	752-740				
		Ahaz	743-715	Pekahiah	742-740			Tiglath-pileser III	745-728
				Pekah	740-732	Rezin	740-732		
Osorkon IV	730-715	Hezekiah	728-686	Hoshea	731-722			Shalmaneser V	727-722

Judah		Persia		Macedon	
Haggai, Zechariah	520	Darius I	522/1-486		
Temple rebuilt	515				
		Xerxes I	486-465		
		(Esther)			
		Artaxerxes I	465-424		
Ezra arrives	458/7				
Nehemiah arrives	445				
		Xerxes II	424		
		Darius II	424/3-404		
		Artaxerxes II	404-358		
		Artaxerxes III	358-337	Philip II	359-336
		Arses	338-336		
		Darius III	336-331	Alexander	336-323

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"Wisdom," Prov. 1-9

hokmāh - Hebrew term for "wisdom" sometimes used to designate human mental effort; skill in applied knowledge. Can mean wisdom given by God to man, making him wise in matters of proper, godly living; making him wise in spiritual matters for salvation.

In Prov. 1-9 "wisdom" is continually personified.

I. Some view the passages of Prov. 1-9 as poetic personification of an attribute of God or a concept.

"These exalted claims for the lady Wisdom raise the question of her actual status. Is she being presented to us as a member of the angelic hierarchy, or only as an idea personified? To me it is clear that while some of this language was destined to prepare the way for the New Testament's Christology, the portrait in its own context is personifying a concept, not describing a personality. The whole treatment is bold and flexible" (Kidner, 23).

"Although wisdom as an attribute of the Lord is personified for poetic effect, we would not deny that the nature of this composition points toward the ontological meaning of the Logos in the New Testament (John 1:2-3; Col. 1:15-16; Heb. 1:3). Since wisdom is more to be desired than riches (vv. 18-21)* we are directed by the medium of His attribute to God Himself as the moving Desire of human existence. Just as the Lord is eternal, so are His attributes" (Bullock, 180). *Ch.8

II. Some view certain passages in Prov. 1-9 as going beyond normal, poetic personification. In these instances, personified "wisdom" is interpreted as being the Second Person of the Trinity. This view has been put forward as early as the church fathers; it was held by Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Hilary, Eusebius, Epiphanius, Jerome, and Augustine. The view also was held by Luther and later commentators such as Hengstenberg and Matthew Henry.

Grammatically speaking, "wisdom" in Hebrew is a feminine noun. Sometimes the personified wisdom is referred to as "she," or "her." But there are no neuter forms in Hebrew and all nouns thus are either masculine or feminine. The feminine form usually refers, in addition to nouns which are obviously feminine, to those things which are without life, abstract ideas, countries, towns, parts of the body, and powers of nature. The things to which the feminine form is attached are not necessarily feminine. The word "fathers" has a feminine plural ending. So when "wisdom" in Proverbs is referred to in the feminine form, this does not mean that wisdom is a woman. This happens because the noun "wisdom" simply is classified as feminine. (Kauffeld, 187).

195). Whoever refuses to heed Wisdom sins against her and so wrongs his own soul.

These are lofty, advanced claims by Wisdom. Wisdom is eternal. Wisdom loves man and seeks his eternal welfare before God. Wisdom is the hope of man, his source of joy; in her, man finds favor from God and life.

Conclusion: Wisdom is an objectively existing person and, more precisely, a divine Person with divine characteristics. Yet this Person is at the same time distinct from Yahweh.
8:27 - "When He set the heavens in place I was there."
8:30 - Wisdom was the craftsman at the side of Yahweh during creation, rejoicing in his presence.
8:22 - Yahweh possessed Wisdom in the beginning of his way.

Thus "Wisdom" in these passages in Proverbs refers to a divine Being, a Being having all power, holiness, omniscience, grace, justice, and kindness. Also, Wisdom distinct from Yahweh in Person, yet united with him. Since there is only one God - Yahweh - Wisdom must be a Person in the Trinity, a separate Person within the Godhead. Bringing in evidence from the New Testament, Wisdom in these passages in Proverbs is the Second Person of the Trinity.
Luke 11:49 (Matt. 23:34) - Jesus used the phrase "the wisdom of God" as interchangeable with a reference to himself. * cf.
Col. 2:3 - All wisdom is in Christ; cf. Col. 1:15-16.
1 Cor. 1:24,30 - Jesus is called "the Wisdom of God."
Cf. John 1:1-18 - Logos ("Word"). "In the Apocryphal writings of the Intertestamental Period ... and in the works of the Jewish philosopher Philo of the first Christian century ca. 20 B.C.-A.D.50 creative Wisdom is called the 'Word,' Logos. The correspondence of John 1 to Proverbs 8 thus receives pre-Christian validation" (Payne, 171-2).

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Prophecy, Prophets

General Definition of Old Testament Prophecy

A prophecy is an oral or written disclosure in words through a human mouthpiece transmitting the revelation of God and setting forth His will to man. A prophecy was delivered by those who were specially chosen by God to occupy the prophetic office.

The messages which the prophets wrote down make up the major (longer) and minor (shorter) prophetic books of the Old Testament.

Major: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel; **minor:** Hosea-Malachi (12).

Nature of the Prophetic Office

The responsibility of the Old Testament prophets was not principally to predict the future in the modern sense of the word "prophesy," but rather to tell forth the word of God which He had communicated to the prophets by revelation.

A prophet was one called by God to act as His spokesman, to proclaim the message to be transmitted from God to man.

Function of Old Testament Prophecy

1. The prophet had the responsibility of encouraging God's people to trust only in Yahweh's mercy and delivering power, rather than in their own merits or strength, or in the might of human allies (such as Assyria or Egypt).

2. The prophet was responsible to remind his people that their welfare was dependent upon their faithful adherence to the covenant. This faithfulness to the covenant involved not only doctrinal conviction but a sincere submission of their will to obey God with their whole heart and lead a godly life. The prophets regarded a godly life to be the automatic product of saving faith. Godly living involved more than just performing mechanical acts of sacrifice and ritualistic worship.

3. The prophets were to encourage the believers, the faithful. They talked to them about the ultimate triumph of faith - even when the land was being overrun by enemy forces or the people were being taken into exile. God would not forget them; further, God would keep His promise - He would send the Messiah.

4. Hebrew prophecy showed that God's message was authoritative and true when the prophecy contained a message about the future, and that prophecy was actually fulfilled. When Yahweh, through a prophet, foretold an event, and the event then came to pass, this showed that He was indeed the Lord of history, who makes a promise, and then fulfills that promise.