

- I. Introduction to the Old Testament
 - a. Establish the need: Let us all take a quiz on the Old Testament!
 - i. How many books are in the Old Testament?
 - ii. List the books in the Old Testament? (Try to write it in order first)
 - iii. How many Psalms are there?
 - b. Purpose: In this session we shall provide a quick overview of the Old Testament based upon four questions.
 - i. What is the Old Testament?
 - ii. What is in the Old Testament?
 - iii. Why do we believe the Old Testament is God's Word?
 - iv. Is there a unifying theme for the Old Testament?
 - v. Why should we have a survey of the Old Testament?
 - c. Definitions of the immensity of God:
 - i. Wayne Grudem: "God cannot be contained by any space, no matter how large."¹
 - d. What is the Old Testament?
 - i. The Old Testament is a collection of 39 books that are God's Word written before Christ's human life.
 - ii. It is also considered by the Jews as their Scripture of God's Word.
 - iii. It presents God's truth predicating and anticipating Christ that is fulfilled in the New Testament.
 - e. What is in the Old Testament?
 - i. The form of literature in the Old Testament ranges from narratives, poetry, wisdom writings and prophecies.
 - ii. The Jews saw a threefold division of the Old Testament: Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Writings.
 - iii. One way that has been helpful for me to remember what's in the 39 books in the Old Testament is thinking of the number 593-5-593=
 1. 5 Books as the book of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
 2. 9 books of Pre-exile history: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles
 3. 3 books of Post-exile history: Ezra, Nehemiah. Esther.
 4. 5 books of Wisdom and Poetry: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes Song of Songs
 5. 5 book of Major prophets: Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel
 6. 9 books of Pre-exile prophets: Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah
 7. 3 books of Post-exile prophets: Haggai Zechariah Malachi
 - f. Why do we believe the Old Testament is God's Word?
 - i. Jesus Christ believed it is God's Word
 1. Many passages that shows He quoted, believed and interpreted the Old Testament literally.

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 174.

2. *“If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),” (John 10:35)*
 - a. In the context Jesus is arguing with Jewish religious leaders.
 - b. Here Jesus is making the point that *“the Scripture cannot be broken,”* that is it is binding and true.
 3. *“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.” (Matthew 5:17-18)*
 Note how strong Jesus’ Words are concerning the Old Testament as God’s Word.
 - ii. The New Testament writers believed it: There are over 360 quotations in the New Testament of the Old Testament showing how the Testament sees the importance of the Old Testament as God’s Word.²
- g. **Is there a unifying theme for the Old Testament?**
- i. Today a lot of believers and unbelievers view the Old Testament as without a singular theme or unity, if not even contradictory.
 - ii. First the Old Testament is about God’s Promise Plan.
 1. Paul saw the Old Testament has a theme of God’s promise running through it: *“And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers; 7 the promise to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve God night and day. And for this hope, O King, I am being accused by Jews.” (Acts 26:6-7)*
 2. *“For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, “I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you.”” (Hebrews 6:13-14)*
 - iii. Second the Old Testament is about Christ
 1. This is according to Jesus: *“O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” 27 Then beginning with Moses and [c]with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.” (Luke 24:25-27)*
 2. Note again Jesus saying this for a second time: *“Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”” (Luke 24:44)*
 3. *“As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, 11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and*

² Source of chart: <http://www.notjustanotherbook.com/ntcitationsofot.pdf>.

the glories to follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.” (1 Peter 1:10-12)

- a. The Old Testament prophets wrote and knew that they were writing about Christ.
 - b. While they didn't know the full details like those in the New Testament era did, nevertheless there was enough in the writings that they can conduct “*careful searches and inquiries*” (v.10) for “*what person or time*” is Christ and His coming (v.11).
- h. **Why should we have a survey of the Old Testament?**
- i. First we must realize that reading and studying the Old Testament has applications for our lives.
 1. To learn from the Old Testament to not crave for sin (1 Corinthians 10:1-11)
 - a. 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 describes to us Old Testament history from the book of Exodus.
 - b. Note what Paul says is the function of this account from the Old Testament means for Gentile believers in the church age: “*Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved*” (1 Corinthians 10:6)
 - i. Here we see that they are examples for us to learn.
 - ii. What are we to learn? Not to crave evil things.
 - iii. What evil things Paul had in mind is based upon the Old Testament narrative.
 - iv. Paul made it explicit what are those sins are in **verses 7-10**:
 1. “*Do not be idolaters...*” (1 Corinthians 10:7)
 2. “*Nor let us act immorally...*” (1 Corinthians 10:8)
 3. “*Nor let us try the Lord...*” (1 Corinthians 10:9)
 4. “*Nor grumble...*” (1 Corinthians 10:10)
 - v. Note how in **verses 7-10** there is a negative consequences with each sins that we are to take to heart.
 - c. This truth is further reiterated in 1 Corinthians 10:11: “*Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*” (1 Corinthians 10:6)
 2. To learn more of God's Word so as to love God more! Studying the Old Testament we see who God is, what He has done and His promise to us would motivate us to love Him!

- ii. Secondly since we are to apply the Old Testament in our lives we must know and study the Old Testament with its background and its theology in its redemptive-historical context so as to apply it accurately, deepen our application and also guard ourselves from misapplication.
 - 1. Remember the importance of handling God's Word carefully: "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.*" (2 Timothy 2:15)
 - 2. We often think the Old Testament is less relevant to us than the New Testament but much of the New Testament uses terms and teachings from the Old Testament. Thus it is important to learn from the Old Testament even as we study the New Testament.
 - 3. Six of the ten least popular book is from the Old Testament.³ It is worth studying the Old Testament to know!

³ <https://overviewbible.com/10-least-popular-books-bible-infographic/>.

