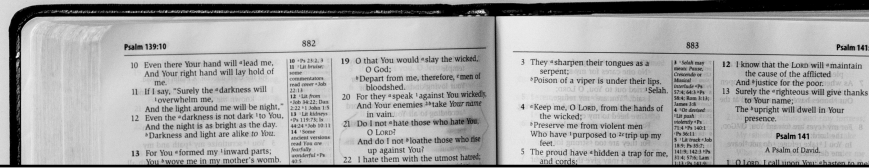


DISCIPLESHIP CLASS

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

WEEK 5



VIDEO NOTES

The Hebrew canon, or Old Testament, refers to the collection of Hebrew (and some Aramaic) books that were recognized as Scripture in ancient Israel. The traditional order we're talking about is referred to as “TaNaK.” The TaNaK is an acronym for the names of the three large sub-collections of the Hebrew Bible: Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim.

IN THE BEGINNING

- The basic plot of the whole Bible:
 - God wants to bless His world and rule it through humans.
 - Humans are under the influence of evil and headed for self-destruction.
 - There has to be a new solution: we need a new kind of human

TORAH

- The first section of the Old Testament, often referred to as “The Torah,” “Pentateuch,” or the “first five books of Moses,” is directly translated as “law” or “instruction”.
- These books tell the foundation story of the Israelites starting with Genesis 1-11 (pre-history), Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses.

- It recounts their covenant with God and their role in human history.

NEVI'IM

- Nevi'im means "prophets," and this section was traditionally split into two groups, the former prophets and the latter prophets.
- This tells the story of God's messengers to Israel, trying to get them back on track.
- The former prophets are thought of as the "historical narrative" books
 - Joshua, Judges, and 1 Samuel - 2 Kings
- The latter prophets are categorized as the major and minor prophets
 - Major: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel
 - Minor: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
 - This design intentionally recalls the 3 + 12 ancestors (Abraham, Isaac & Jacob + the 12 tribes of Judah) from Genesis whose stories of failure contained the seeds of future hopes

KETUVI'IM

- Ketuvi'im means "wisdom writings" and this sub-collection includes the rest of the Old Testament
- The main theme here is how to live wisely in Gods good but often confusing world

A STORY WITHOUT AN ENDING

- The whole TaNaK is pointing to a future Priest-Prophet-King who would come to rescue the Israelites and all of creation from evil, especially the evil of their own hands.

TEACHING NOTES

HOW TO READ THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF LITERATURE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Judges, Ruth 1& 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Daniel

- Refer to notes from weeks 1 - 3

THE LAW

Leviticus, Numbers Deuteronomy

- God doesn't change, but that does not mean the way He has relationship with mankind doesn't change.
 - God related with Adam and Eve in one way, and He related with the Jews through Abraham with a different plan. He relates with Christians now through a new plan, a new covenant.

Different Types of Law

- **Sacrificial Law** - sacrificial system God gave to Moses.
 - These laws detail the requirements and role of priests and how and when to perform sacrifices, and include laws regarding cleanliness, food or diet, festivals, and tithing.
 - While we are no longer under these laws, the core principle (justice—a price must be paid for sin) is still important and points to Christ as the ultimate sacrifice.
- **Civil Law** was given to Israel as policy for all people
 - These laws dealt with the proper resolution of disagreements between citizens and were designed to create and enforce a system of moral values among the people of Israel.
 - We still can use these laws by discerning the embedded principles.
 - For example, we no longer put adulterers to death (Lev. 20:10), but the punishment for this offense in Old Testament law reveals the principle that doesn't change—how gravely God views adultery because it profoundly damages family, God's foundational building block for society.
- **Moral Law** reflects God's character and reveals his design in creation.
 - This part of the law is still binding on Christians today. While we do not obey this moral law in order to gain salvation, we do obey it in order to live in ways that are pleasing to God.

- The Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:1-17) are an example of this type of law. God commands us not to kill. The principle is that we are all God's image bearers with inherent and equal value before him & have no right to take the life of another.

4 Practical Guidelines for Reading the Old Testament Laws - from George Guthrie

1. Ask, "Where does this law fit in the developing Story?"
2. Ask, "How does this law relate to God's covenant?"
3. Ask, "Is this a direct command that is reiterated in the New Testament?"
4. Ask, "Has the New Testament demonstrated that this law is no longer applicable?"

POETIC LITERATURE

Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Lamentations there are large sections of poetry in other biblical books: well over half of Isaiah, over one third in Jeremiah, and around one fifth of Ezekiel, as well as more than half of the materials in the so-called Minor Prophets (Hosea to Malachi)

- God expects us to understand and enjoy poetry because approximately a third of the Bible is poetic in form.
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- Biblical poetry ignites our imagination with great imagery.
- The most important rule for reading poetry is simple: poetry requires us to read slowly and meditatively.

- Most biblical poems include the use of metaphors
- Metaphors compare something that is hard to know or understand in our thinking with something that is more relatable (at least to a reader in biblical times).
- When you come across a metaphor or image that you are unfamiliar with, study what that image would mean to a biblical reader:
 - i.e. what are the specific roles of a shepherd, what did their life look like, what can we assume they would feel situations

WISDOM

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job

- Wisdom literature gives an overview of the kind of world we are living in & describes how to live well in it.
- Understand the true meaning of wisdom: the ability to discern truth from error in real life contexts and to make righteous life decisions in the fear of God.
- All wisdom literature is to point us forward to the only one who made ultimately wise decisions and lived a perfectly God-fearing life in the midst of this broken world.
 - When we see our foolishness we see our need for his grace and his perfectly lived righteousness.
 - If you leave the wisdom literature thinking, 'Okay, now I can live a good life and please God on my own strength,' you've missed the point.

- Read all wisdom literature in light of the group as a whole.
- With Proverbs, look for life direction rather than blank check promises.

“The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the cravings of the wicked.”

This is a wise saying to live by. It should shape our character. And it's often true to life. But do Christians experience crippling hunger? All the time, yes. Do the wicked receive what they “crave”? Very often. As you read proverbs like this one, let the wisdom of the saying set the direction for your life. You should read this and be motivated to pursue righteousness. But you can't hold this promise over God's head like some kind of blank check promise. Paul was content to go without (Phil. 4:11–13). Christians do indeed die of starvation. God isn't promising you unwavering material prosperity in exchange for good behavior. He spoke these words in the form of Wisdom Literature to shape your character, not to give you grounds for complaint.

- With Ecclesiastes, walk with “the Preacher” on his journey.

As you read this enigmatic book, follow the “Preacher” as he searches for meaning in life. Experience his journey and resonate with his frequent observation that “all is vanity.” See the futility of life apart from God and feel the weight of the many exceptions he finds to proverbial wisdom (e.g. Eccl. 7:15). And then see the brilliance of his conclusion to this fascinating book (12:13–14).

- With Job, accompany this righteous man in his unjust suffering.

As you read through this sad story, feel the bitterness of the unpredictability of life. Feel the foolishness of offering wisdom in a foolish way, as Job's friends do for chapter upon chapter. Finally, come to the realizations that God offers to Job at the end of the book.

PROPHETS

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Nahum, Joel, Habakkuk, Amos, Zephaniah, Obadiah, Haggai, Jonah, Zachariah, Micah, Malachi, Daniel

3 Ways Prophets spoke

1. Accusation - constantly reminding Israel how they were violating the terms of the covenant

2. Call to Repent - they spoke God's mercy and how he would forgive them
 3. Announced the consequences for breaking God's covenant - when God acts in human history to bring Justice
- All Biblical prophets share in a message of warning and of hope.
 - The hope is a coming kingdom of restoration

When reading the prophetic books, ask these questions:

- What did God want from his people? What form did their obedience (or often, their disobedience) take?
- What promises does God make to his people?
- What does God reveal about his own character?
- How does God save people in this passage?
- How does the work of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit save me from this judgment, secure these promises of God for me, and free me to walk in the obedience that honors the Lord?

OLD TESTAMENT TIMELINE , THEMES & REFERENCES



CREATION - God speaks the universe into existence
GENESIS 1:1-25



ADAM & EVE - God creates humanity in his image to care for his creation
GENESIS 1:25 - 2:25



FALL - Humanity rejects God & is expelled from the Garden of Eden
Genesis 3:1 - 6:8



NOAH & THE FLOOD - God floods the earth, yet saves & makes a covenant with Noah & his family
Genesis 6:9 - 10:32



BABEL - God confuses the language of the world & scatters humanity
Genesis 11



ABRAHAM (ISAAC & JACOB) - God promises to bless Abraham & all people through him
Genesis 12 - 36



JOSEPH/EGYPT- Joseph & his brothers move Israel to Egypt
Genesis 37 - 50



MOSES/EXODUS- Through Moses, God saves Israel from slavery in Egypt
Exodus 1-19, 1 Chronicles, Psalms



LAW- God makes a covenant with Israel to be their God
Exodus 20-25, 35, Leviticus, Numbers 5-6, 15, 19, 28 - 30 Deut 4:44-6:25, 10-30



TABERNACLE- God dwells with Israel in the tent of meeting
Exodus 25



WANDERING- Israel wanders in the desert for 40 years
Exodus 16 -40, Leviticus, Joshua 1



PROMISED LAND - Joshua leads Israel into the promised land of Canaan
Joshua 2 - 24



JUDGES - God raises up judges to save Israel from its enemies
Judges, Ruth (exact time unknown)



SAUL - Saul becomes Israel's first king, but disobeys God & loses his kingship
1 Samuel 1 - 15, Psalms



DAVID - God makes a covenant with David to establish his throne forever
1 Samuel 16 - 1 Kings, Psalms



SOLOMON / TEMPLE - Solomon builds a temple for God in Jerusalem
1 Kings 1 - 11, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs



DIVIDED KINGDOM- The kingdom is divided between the northern & southern tribes
1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 16, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Psalms



FALL OF SAMARIA- Assyria defeats Israel (the northern kingdom)
2 Kings 17 - 23, Psalms



ASSYRIAN EXILE- Assyria takes Israel (north) into captivity
2 Kings 23 - 25, Isaiah, Jonah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Psalms



FALL OF JERUSALEM - Babylon defeats Judah (the southern kingdom)
2 Kings 25, Psalms



BABYLONIAN EXILE- Babylon takes Jude (south) into captivity
Daniel, Psalms, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Obadiah



RETURN FROM EXILE- Persia defeats Babylon & the exiles are returned
2 Kings 25, Haggai, Zechariah, Joel, Malachi, Esther, Ezra, Psalms



REBUILDING- The temple & the walls of Jerusalem are rebuilt
Nehemiah, Psalms 1

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

What tips do you have for reading the Old Testament?

What do you find is the most challenging factor when reading the “prophetic literature”?

Can you find example from scripture of the three ways prophets spoke

1. Accusations
2. Call fo Repentance
3. Call of consequences if the people did not turn from their ways

What book of wisdom literature are you most familiar with? How do you apply it to your life?

Have you ever thought of the 3 books of “wisdom literature” working together in the Bible to give a complete picture of God’s wisdom?

SMALL GROUP APPLICATION

As a group pick one book from the Wisdom, Poetic, or Prophetic literary forms

Read through a section of scripture

Use the tips provided above to apply and discuss the text

SMALL GROUP NOTES

